

# *Faces of Glory*



## *Kashmiri Pandit Personalities*

*Page Intentionally Left Blank*

*FACES OF GLORY*  
*Kashmiri Pandit Personalities*

First Edition, *August 2002*



## Contents

	page
Contents.....	v
1 Nityanand Shastri.....	1-2
2 Pandit Govind Kaul.....	2-4
3 Pandit Ishwar Kaul.....	3-6
4 Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri.....	4-8
5 Pandit Sahaz Bhat .....	5-11
6 Pandit Harabhata Shastri .....	6-13
7 Pandit Keshav Bhatt Jyotishi .....	7-15
8 Pandit Saheb Ram Kaul.....	8-18
9 Pandit Anand Koul.....	9-20
10 Prof. Jagaddhar Zadoo.....	10-23
11 Damodar .....	11-26
12 Pandit Prem Nath Shastri.....	12-28
13 Master Samsar Chand Kaul .....	13-30
13.1 Illustrious Teaching Career.....	13-30
13.2 Bird Watching as Hobby.....	13-31
13.3 Development of Kobutar Khana .....	13-32
13.4 As an Author .....	13-32
13.5 Love for Outdoor Life .....	13-33
13.6 An Ardent Star-Gazer.....	13-33
13.7 Books and Articles .....	13-34
14 Shri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'.....	14-35
14.1 Early Life .....	14-36
14.2 Divine Love.....	14-36
14.3 Poetic Sensibility.....	14-37
14.4 Magnum Opus.....	14-37
15 Kalhana - The Chronicler .....	15-39
16 Shrivara.....	16-52
17 Jona Raja.....	17-57
18 Bilhana - The Minstrel.....	18-67
19 Ksemendra - The Peoples' Poet.....	19-73
20 A Brief Life Sketch of Pandit Dinanath Yaksh .....	20-84
20.1 Early Life and Education .....	20-84
20.2 His Career and Scholarship.....	20-85
20.3 His Specialization and Style .....	20-85
20.4 His Genius.....	20-85
20.5 His Association with Research Students .....	20-86





## 1 Nityanand Shastri

### As Scholar and Man



**Pandit Nityanand Shastri**

[ Recently (NSKRI) had the privilege of interviewing Sh. J. N. Pandita, second son of Pandit Nityanand Shastri, the great Kashmiri scholar after whom the institute is named. The octogenarian Sh. Pandita, who had come to Delhi for medical treatment, spoke on various aspects of his scholar father's life and personality, revealing many interesting facts. Some of these are given below. ]

**According** to Sh J.N. Pandita NS was born in 1874 and the time of his matriculation, there were but two matriculates in the whole of Jammu and Kashmir State - Agha Syed Hussain and Ved Lal Zutshi. NS had his preliminary education as a private student as there were no regular schools in the state those days.

Having a firm grounding in Sanskrit, a family tradition, NS wanted to study English also, but his father, for whom learning English was as good as becoming a Christian, was dead set against it. NS however, studied the language secretly, learning it from one Srikanth Khazanchi, and soon mastered it.

His knowledge of English came handy to him when he met the famous orientalist Sir Aurel Stein at Lahore. NS had gone there to sit for his Pragma and Stein was then Registrar of the Punjab University (of prepartition days) which conducted the Sanskrit examination. The meeting of the two great scholars was a great event leading to their life long friendship and commitment to Sanskrit. The two collaborated and cooperated in producing several important Sanskriti works of Kashmir, NS's vast knowledge guiding Stein many a crucial point. Others who benefitted from his scholarship included Grierson, Vogel, Winternitz and Vreese. NS started his career at a young age of 16, teaching Sanskrit at a government school in Srinagar. Later, he obtained the degree of Shastri, the highest in Sanskrit those days, and afterwards became Professor of Sanskrit at Sri Pratap College, Srinagar in the year 1916. NS



distinguished himself by going to college always wearing the traditional Kashmiri attire. He never wore a western outfit.

NS was among the leading Kashmiri Pandits who met Swami Vivekananda when the latter visited Kashmir in 1897. There is a group photograph commemorating the event. He also met Lord Curzon, then the Viceroy of India, and presented to him a welcome address in Sanskrit verse during his visit to Kashmir in 1906.

Among his peers and contemporaries were prominent figures of the times, both Kashmiri and non-Kashmiri and they were not limited to the literary or academic circles. These included Pt. Daulat Ram, Prof. Gyani Ram, Dr. Kulbhushan, Dr. Balwant Singh, Pt. Parmanand and Pandit Narayan Dass. Notable among his students were Shri T.N. Kaul, former diplomat, Shri P.N.K. Bamzai, noted historian and Smt Pupul Jaykar, cultural zarina. When NS retired as Professor in 1930, it was Shri T.N. Kaul who read his farewell address.

Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya was a great admirer of the outstanding Kashmiri scholar. Struck by his vast knowledge and erudition when he met him at the Rawalpindi session of All Hindu Mahadhama Sabha Sammelan in 1929, Malviya Ji invited him to join the Sanskrit faculty at the Benaras Hindu University. When NS expressed his inability to do so due to family obligations, Malviya Ji exclaimed, "The portals of Benaras Hindu University will always remain open for you. You can join whenever it is convenient to you". Sir Aurel Stein too offered him a faculty assignment at Oxford, but NS had to decline, again for the same reasons. NS's fame as a scholar of encyclopaedic range spread far and wide, in the country and abroad, but due to family circumstances he had to stay for the most part of the year in Srinagar. But during the winter months, when his college would close for vacations, he would find time to visit various centres of Sanskrit learning in the country. These included Benaras, Allahabad Prayag, Lahore and Gaya, where he found pleasure in interacting with other Sanskrit scholars.

NS was, however, not only just an academician, he was equally active in the social and cultural fields. While being the president of Sanskrit Sahitya Parishad, a Sanskrit literary organisation he founded in 1930, he also established a charitable trust named Vanita Ashram to help widows and destitutes. As a philanthrop, he had few peers. Throughout his life, every month NS secretly donated one tenth of his income in charity.

*Source: Unmesh*

## 2 Pandit Govind Kaul

### Another Kalhana



**Pandit Govind Kaul**

[ A profound Kashmiri scholar of the late 19th century. Pandit Govind Kaul, who rendered most valuable assistance to Aurel Stein in translating *Rajatarangini*, is today almost a forgotten man. There are hardly a handful of Kashmiri Pandits who may be aware of his great erudition and the range of his scholarly pursuits. Here is a brief sketch of the life and works of the man whom Stein offered fulsome tributes and hailed as "another Kalhana". ]

**Born** in 1846 in Srinagar as the eldest son of Pandit Balbhadra Kaul, a universally respected scholar of his times (1819-96), Govind Kaul (G.K) had scholarship running in the family. His grandfather, Pandit Taba Kaul, too was a reputed scholar, having family ties with the famous Pandit Birbal Dhar who persuaded Ranjit Singh to free Kashmir from the tyranny of Afghan rule. G.K. and Birbal Dhar's grandson Ramjoo Dhar, maintained the ties as friends. G.K. not only studied Persian and Sanskrit in keeping with the family tradition, he also acquired a good knowledge of English as well as western ways of life. To keep the record of history straight, it must be stated that G.K. and Ramjoo Dhar learnt English much before Pandit Anand Kaul and Pandit Shiv Ram Bhan. G.K. came to know a good deal about world affairs also through Ramjoo Dhar who held an important administrative position . Soon G.K. acquired fame for his erudition, particularly as a scholar of Alamkara Shastra (poetics), Vyakarna (grammar), Nyaya (logic), and Shiva Sutras. He was equally well versed in the knowledge of the epics and the Puranas.

By the time he was 28, G.K. was already regarded as a scholar of considerable stature. In 1874, he was appointed incharge Translation Department set up by Maharaja Ranbir Singh. It was around that time that he undertook, jointly with Pandit Sahaz Bhatt, to translate the Sanskrit chronicles of Kashmir into Hindi- a project which he, unfortunately, was not able to complete.

With the winding up of the Translation Department in 1884, it was a trying time for G.K. He lost his job and could not find any alternative avenue to pursue his scholastic goals. Eventually, he had to settle for a teacher's job at the state run Sanskrit Pathshala in Srinagar. But that too did not last and he was again without a regular job.

In the meanwhile, however, George Buhler, that doyen of European Indologists, had spotted the Pandit for his great learning and erudition. It was Buhler's commendatory reference that attracted Sir Aurel Stein's attention towards G.K. and he solicited his assistance in translating Kalhan's Rajatarangini-a job that G . K along with Pandit Sahaz Bhatt did with utmost competence from 1888 to 1896, and to Stein's great satisfaction.

G.K. went into another collaboration with Stein and fellow scholar Sahaz Bhatt when they classified and catalogued more than six thousand Sanskrit manuscripts for Maharaja Ranbir Singh's library at Raghunath Temple, Jammu.

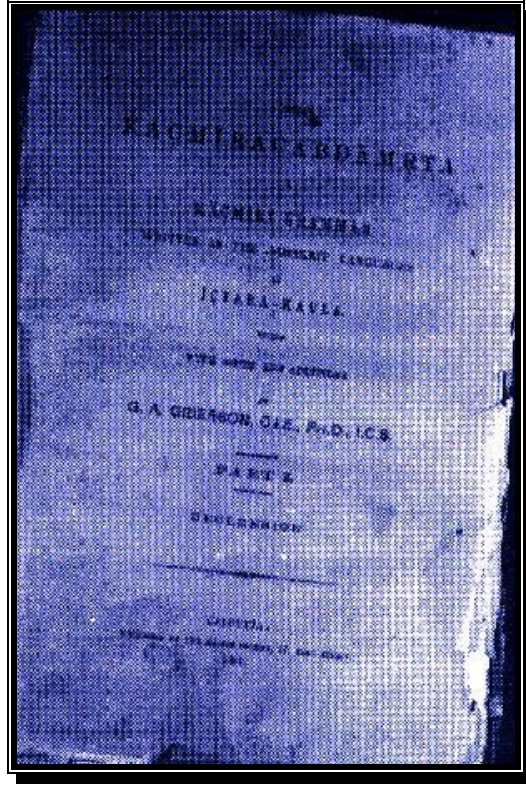
Yet another contribution G.K. made was to compile Kashmiri folk tales with Stein, which the latter formally edited with George Grierson and published in 1917 as " Hatim's Tales". The tales, supposedly told by one Hatim Tilawony, were interpreted by G.K. G.K. also rendered assistance to Grierson in the compilation of his Kashmiri dictionary, but did not live to see the work completed. Grierson went on to record later that G.K's assistance to him was "one of the many debts he ever owed to Stein".

On G.K's death in June 1899, a shocked Stein lamented that G.K., "like another Kalhana departed as my best Indian friend beyond all hope of reunion in this Janma". Paying fulsome tributes to him, Stein wrote: "Whenever Govind Kaul was by my side, whether in the dusty exile of Lahore or alpine coolness of Mohand Marg in Kashmir, I was in continuity with the past as the historical student of India. His personality embodied all that change of ages indicated and showed as the mind and psyche of India."

*Source: Unmesh*

### 3 Pandit Ishwar Kaul

#### Panini of Kashmir



[ Pandit Ishwar Kaul assured for himself an esteemed place in the galaxy of Kashmiri scholars by giving Kashmiri its first grammar - the 'Kashmir Shabdhamrita'. Written in Sanskrit after the manner of the great Sanskrit grammarian Panini, Ishwar Kaul's treatise on Kashmiri grammatical forms bears testimony to his profound study of the language. He also pioneered lexico- graphical work on Kashmiri, though death prevented him from completing his 'Kashmiri and Sanskrit Kosha'. While presenting here a profile of the great scholar, we regret we have not been able to procure his photograph despite our best efforts. We have, however, tried to compensate for it by publishing a photograph of the front cover of his monumental work the 'Kashmir Shabdhamrita.' ]

**The** 19th century saw the Kashmiri Pandit community throw up giants in the field of learning and letters. Contacts with the West set into motion processes that led to an intellectual ferment in Kashmir, inspiring the Pandits to rediscover and reinterpret their past and undertake new and challenging scholastic ventures mostly in collaboration with Western scholars, but also independently. Among the titans of the age who chartered an independent course for themselves was Pandit Ishwar Kaul (IK) of Srinagar.

Born on 4th July, 1833 in a family deeply steeped in Sanskrit lore, IK lost his father, Pandit Ganesh Kaul, when he was just three years old. He first studied under Pandit Tikkaram Razdan, who was one of the most renowned Sanskrit Pandits of that time. Later IK learned from Pandit Daya Krishna Jyotishi of Benares who had come to Jammu in the service of Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Jammu and Kashmir. Equally proficient in Sanskrit and Persian, IK was also fairly conversant with Arabic. These credentials were enough for the Maharaja to offer him the assignment in 1861 of translating Persian and Arabic works in his library into Sanskrit and 'Bhasha' (Hindi). Ten years later, in 1871, IK was appointed the Head Teacher at the Sanskrit Pathshala opened by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in Srinagar.

Kashmiri Pandits are known to have a penchant for producing works of grammar, as is proved by the several grammatical treatise they authored on Sanskrit. The earliest grammar of Tibetan was



composed by a Kashmiri Pandit, and so was the first Gujrati grammar. IK continued the tradition by writing the first grammar of the Kashmiri language, a brilliant work about which George Grierson wrote: "It is an excellent work and might have been composed by the Hemachandra himself." Modeled on the great Panini's 'Ashtadhyayi' and written in Sanskrit, IK's 'Kashmir Shabdarnita' reveals his perfect knowledge of the linguistic structure of Kashmiri. Edited by Grierson with "additions and notes", the work was published by the Asiatic Society in 1897. IK, however, is said to have composed it in 1875, or, perhaps in 1874, as his son Anand Kaul believed, and revised and improved in 1879.

IK was also a pioneer lexicographer in Kashmiri, even though his Kashmiri- Sanskrit Kosha remained half-complete due to his death. Grierson compiled his four volume dictionary of the Kashmiri language from the materials from IK's fragmentary Kosha, compiling it with the assistance of Pandit Mukundram Shastri and Prof. Nityanand Shastri and publishing it in 1932. Ishwar Kaul "never lived to complete, much less revise, his Kosha", writes Grierson in the preface to his dictionary.

It goes to the credit of IK that he was the first to use the Devanagri script for transcribing Kashmiri words both in his grammar and his dictionary. He expressed typical Kashmiri vowel sounds by using diacritic marks, mainly the horizontal bar and the 'halanta'. Grierson, and later Master Zinda Kaul and Prof. S. K. Toshkhani used the Devanagari characters for Kashmiri with a more elaborate system of diacritical notation.

In the year 1881, IK was made Director of Translation Department of the Jammu and Kashmir state. The department, set by Ranbir Singh, was wound up in 1884 after the Maharaja died. His successor, Maharaja Pratap Singh appointed IK as Head Jyotishi or Chief Astrologer at his court, a post that he held until his death on 28th August, 1893.

IK's genius was best summed up by Sir Aurel Stein when he described him as the "**Panini of Kashmir**".

*Source: Unmesh*

## 4 Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri

*A colossus among scholars*



**Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri**

[ From archaeology and paleography to Kashmir history to Kashmir Shaivism to grammar and literature Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri (MRS) strode like a colossus in almost every field of Kashmir studies at the turn of the 19th century and in the early years of the twentieth. Gifted with unusual brilliance, MRS worked with Western scholars of the times like Aurel Stein, Sten Konow, Spooner, Prof. Hiltzch, Pope Ved, John Marshal and George Grierson, helping them with his outstanding erudition and intellectual abilities and winning fulsome acclaim from them. His name inspired tremendous respect in academic circles in India and Europe, making John Marshall to say: " There is no Pandit in India of whom I have heard such consistent and such high praise from all with whom he came into contact. " ]

**Mahamahopadhyaya** Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri was an extraordinarily gifted Pandit of Kashmir whose extensive knowledge and vast erudition won him a dazzling place in Pan-Indian, and even in European, scholastic circles. In fact, his name became a legend during his lifetime, evoking feelings of respect and admiration in scholars of even the highest order.

Born to Kashmiri Pandit parents, Pandit Ganesh Bhatt Ganjoo and Amravati, in the Sathu Barbarshah locality of Srinagar, Pandit Mukund Ram had his early education at the local Sanskrit Pathshala under the tutelage of Pandit Daya Ram Kaul. He acquired the degree of Shastri, then a coveted degree for those who went in for Sanskrit studies, from Punjab University, Lahore. Shastri became an inseparable part of his name thereafter.

Soon the young Shastri found himself translating Persian and Arabic books into Sanskrit under the supervision of Pandit Ramjoo Dhar, which brought him into limelight in the world of Sanskrit academics. This prompted Ranbir Singh, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir state, to offer him the prestigious assignment of translating a Tibetan Buddhist treatise "Kangur and Tangur" into Sanskrit. Learning Tibetan from Thomas Tamsel, MRS completed the stupendous task of translating the 1,50,000 verses

with great competence and ability. This enhanced further his reputation as a scholar and earned him a cash award of Rs.500 - quite a huge sum those days.

Impressed, the Maharaja asked MRS to accompany Lama Gure to Paddar in Kashtwar. Kashmir, where the latter had to conduct research on sapphires in which the area is rich. It was here that he came into contact with the well-known European orientalist Pope Ved, who was engaged at that time in preparing a book on Kashmiri grammar. MRS assisted Ved with great ability, displaying a deep study of Kashmiri syntax and grammatical forms. Soon afterwards MRS was appointed as Sanskrit teacher at CMS Biscoe School, Srinagar, a school run by Christian missionaries, but gave up the job on the request of Aurel Stein who arrived in Kashmir in the year 1899 for translating the Rajataringini. MRS assisted Stein in several ways till his great work was completed. It was on Stein's recommendation that MRS helped Grierson while he was engaged working on his linguistic survey of India. Thus began his two decade association with Grierson which saw publication of works like the dictionary of the Kashmiri language and an annotated translation of Krishna joo Razdan's "Shiva Parinaya."

On the request of A.W. Straton, who was Registrar Punjab University, Lahore from the years 1900 to 1902, MRS wrote "Katak Bhasha Sutra", a work of great value.

As was natural, when the Research Department was set up by the Maharaja's government in 1912, MRS was chosen as its Head Pandit. Later, he rose to the position of Officer Incharge, Research and Archaeological Department, a post he held till 1919.

In 1908, MRS worked closely with Sten Konow, Epigraphist to Government of India, and David B. Spooner, Superintendent Archaeological Survey. MRS was a great help to A.M Francki during the latter's archaeological explorations in Ladakh-Tibet border, in deciphering Sharada and Devanagari inscriptions. Wrote Francki, who was senior Archaeologist, Government of India "The Dras inscriptions which had been given up in despair by Sir William Cunningham became perfectly intelligible under the treatment of Mukund Ram Shastri. This gentleman has extraordinary ability to decipher and interpret inscriptions in Sharada and Devanagari which are in bad state of preservation."

During the years 1903 to 1907, MRS worked on ancient history of Kashmir and ably assisted Spooner in his work on Jonaraja's "Jaina Rajataringini", which covers Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's period. He also proved of immense help to Sir John Marshall in his archaeological explorations in Kashmir. But perhaps the finest hour in MRS' life was when he critically edited a whole series of texts on Kashmir Shaivism during his tenure in the Research Department of Jammu and Kashmir. Of the 29 books brought out by the Department under the title "Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies", as many as 23 were edited by MRS, including "Shiva Sutra Vimarshini", "Spanda Karika", "Tantraloka", "Tantrasara", "Ishwar Pratibijnya", "Paratrimshika" and "Parmarthasara". This series of Shaiva texts is perhaps a monumental accomplishment of the great scholar for which his name shall be ever taken with pride and profound respect.

MRS also edited and published "Mahanaya Prakash" one of the earliest extant works in Kashmiri.

Apart from these texts, the compilation and translation of Lalla Dyad's verses under the title "Lalavakyani" by George Grierson and L.D. Barnelt in 1920 also owes much to the labours of MRS, who also helped Grierson in editing the "Kashmira Shadamrita" by Ishwar Kaul.

With such brilliant attainments to his credit it is no wonder that the title "Mahamahopadhyaya" was conferred upon MRS in recognition of his profound knowledge of a vast range of subjects from Sanskrit language and literature and philosophy to grammar and epigraphy.

MRS left his mortal frame in 1921, leaving behind the imprint of his genius. on his great works of scholarship.

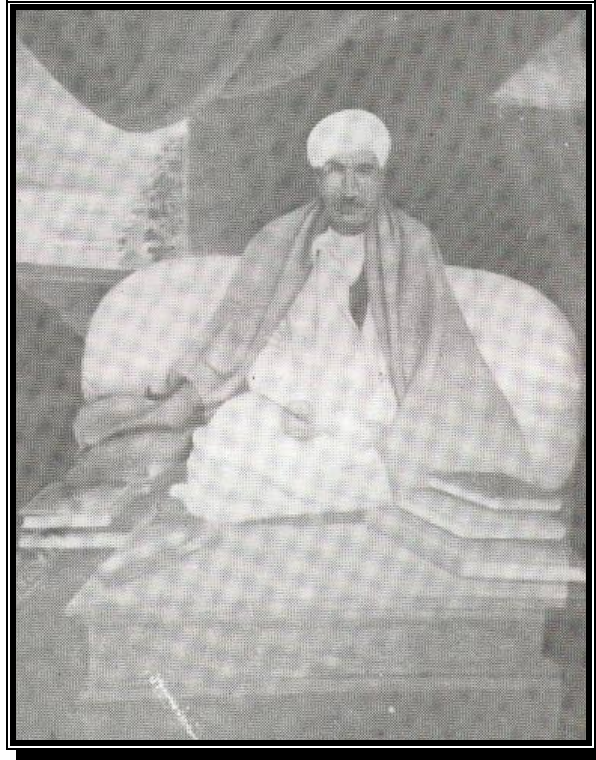
To his Western counterparts he was a kindred spirit. Grierson called him his "old friend". Stein observed: "I shall always be glad to remember him among my friends". Dr. Hutzch records "In him also I hope to have found at once a friend whom I shall never forget". To all those for whom Kashmir is not just a

geographical denomination but a repository of learning and ideas, MRS will ever, remain a guiding star.  
*Source: Unmesh*



## 5 Pandit Sahaz Bhat

*The scholar with a healing touch*



**Pandit Sahaz Bhat**

[ *That the legendary Unani hakim of Kashmir, Pandit Sahaz Bhat, was a profound scholar also, is a fact not known even to his grandson, Dr. R. N. Bhat, till NSKRI discovered it and brought out this unlikely dimension of his personality in a recent issue of 'Unmesh'.*

*And while his miracle cures remain etched on public memory and have given to Kashmiri parlance a proverb commonly used even now, we profile here the other Sahaz Bhat with the help of inputs from his grandson, Dr. R.N. Bhat and great grandson, Dr. Ayushyaman Bhat. To the latter we are thankful for the photograph of Pandit Sahaz Bhat. ]*

**Born** in 1862, Sahaz Kak Bhat, or Sahaz Bhat (S.B.), as he was popularly known, was the last of the six children of his parents. He must have been barely four when he lost his father and was brought up by his elder brother, Pandit Sat Kak, who held the important position of Royal Physician to the Maharaja of J & K State. For his formal schooling, S.B. was sent to the CMS School at Fateh Kadal, Srinagar where English was taught as an essential subject. S.B. was, however, not prepared to learn a language in which 'no' comes before 'yes' and soon told his elder brother that he would rather learn Persian, Arabic and of course, Sanskrit. He started taking Sanskrit and Persian lessons at home from his family guru, but discontinued these when the teacher treated him harshly.

Now on he learned by the self education method, and taught himself not only these languages but also Unani medicine that he eventually adopted as a profession to become a physician like elder brother Sat Kak. His pronunciation of both Arabic and Sanskrit was so flawless that it was difficult to make out in which of these languages he was better versed. If he became the greatest Unani hakim of his time in Kashmir, it was clearly due to his self effort.

A deeply religious person, S.B. was, however, catholic and liberal in his outlook, refusing to distinguish between man and man on the basis of caste, creed or colour. He was always immaculately dressed

wearing a saffron and sandalwood paste tilak on his forehead. While treating his patients, the religiously inclined physician would not depend on his pharmacopeia alone, he would even take recourse to reciting prayers in Sanskrit or Arabic if only for a psychological effect on the patient. Nobility, generosity and philanthropy were his basic character traits that he displayed at the professional level often. He would treat the poor generally free of cost, though he would not hesitate from accepting large sums from his affluent patients as he needed money to run his charitable clinic.

"Pandit Sahaz Bhat was tall and handsome with a longish face and magnetic grace. His gait was majestic, his demeanour kingly, his disposition scholarly. By temperament he was magnanimous and benevolent and his generosity was proverbial. In conversation he was scholarly and inspiring. He had a musical voice and a handwriting that was calligraphic, so beautiful that his patients would often preserve his prescriptions in velvet bags to use them as amulets." This pen-portrait drawn by Dr. R.N. Bhat of his grandfather shows the kind of person that this physician among scholars and scholar among physicians was.

As for S.B. the scholar, it was his phenomenal knowledge of Persian, Sanskrit and Arabic that prompted the then Maharaja of J & K State to draft him into his Translation Department in 1890 as its head where he also looked after the publication of Sanskrit texts on philosophy, medicine, law etc.

With his mastery over Sanskrit, S.B. worked with Sir Aurel Stein and Pandit Govind Kaul in compiling a descriptive catalogue of 6000 Sanskrit manuscripts for Maharaja Ranbir Singh's Raghunath Temple Library at Jammu. Considered a feat in scholarship, the catalogue was printed in Bombay in 1894. S.B. painstakingly prepared extracts from each manuscript for the catalogue. Wrote Stein of S.B.'s labours: "For the most conscientious and scholarly manner in which Sahaz Bhat discharged it, I feel all the more obliged as I can well realize how irksome a great portion of the work e.g. the careful reproduction of innumerable classical errors and apashabdas of the manuscripts must have been to his Pandit instinct. His learning and thorough acquaintance with the methods of Indian scholarship especially in the shastras traditionally cultivated in Kashmir have on many occasions most usefully supplemented my printed source of references".

Another work in which S.B. collaborated with Stein and Govind Kaul was Hindi translation of the Sanskrit chronicles of Kashmir, but it could not be completed due to Govind Kaul's sudden death in 1899.

In 1935, S.B. passed away after a fullfilling life of a scholar and physicican always sought after by fame. Aurel Stein's regard for his scholarship can be summed up in the following excerpt from a nostalgic letter he wrote to Alden, one of his friends in Vienna, in 1905:

"I gathered my old entourage. It was pleasure to talk the language of gods and though my interests have now moved far northward, I shall try to keep my old friend Pandit Sahaz Bhat by me when I occupy winter quarters at Gupkar where he had been with me and Govind Kaul in the old days."

*Inputs by:*

**Dr. R.N. Bhat**

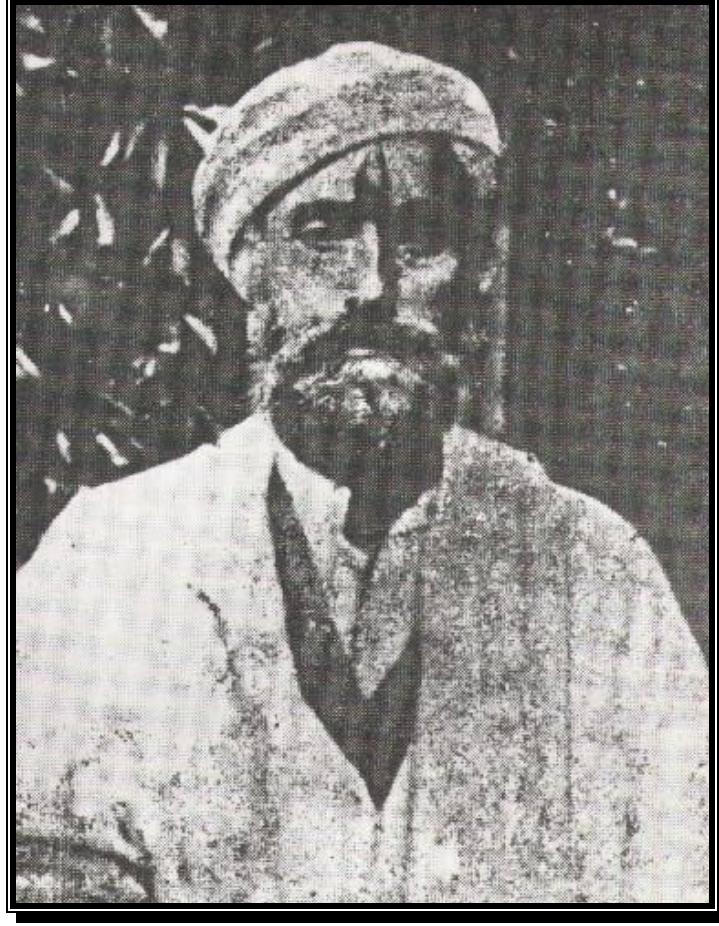
**Dr. Ayushyaman Bhat**

**S. N. Pandita**

*Source: Unmesh*

## 6 Pandit Harabhata Shastri

*The celebrated scholar of Shaiva lore*



**Pandit Harabhata Shastri**

[ *Pandit Harabhata Shastri (HBS) is a name surrounded by a brilliant scholastic aura, though known to very small group of Sanskrit scholars of Kashmir (a tribe that is diminishing day by day). And even these few have nothing more than a sketchy information to give about the life and works of the great Pandit. Sadder still, when we at NSKRI sought to ascertain certain biographical details about him from some of his nearest surviving kin, we almost drew a blank. The great man who wrote the most brilliant gloss on 'Panchastavi' and brought out a series of Shaiva texts of Kashmir, is virtually unknown to most Kashmiri Pandits today.*

*It was an American scholar, Prof. David Brainered Spooner who came all the way from Harvard University to learn at the feet of Sanskrit scholars of Kashmir like HBS. We are giving below a brief biographical sketch of HBS who dazzled Dr. Spooner and came to be known as one of the greatest interpreters of Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir. Yet we acknowledge that a lot of light needs to be thrown on the celebrated scholar. Through these columns we request Kashmiri researchers and scholars who may have had the good fortune of coming into contact with HBS to provide us with more details about his life and works. ]*

**Born** as Harabhata Zadoo in 1874 in a family that has produced some of the top most Sanskrit scholars of Kashmir, HBS had learning running in his veins. His father Pandit Keshav Bhatta Zadoo was the Royal Astrologer in the Court of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, the then ruler of Jammu and Kashmir who was a great patron of scholars and scholarship. His nephew, Prof Jagaddhar Zadoo, has the credit of editing the first



edition of the Nilmata Purana with Prof Kanji Lal. The Zadoos originally belonged to Zadipur, a village near Bijbehara in South Kashmir, but later migrated to Srinagar, their surname being linked to the village of their origin thereafter.

As an atmosphere of Sanskrit learning prevailed in the family, young Harabhata took to it as fish take to water. Studying Sanskrit at the Rajkiya Pathshala in Srinagar, it was in 1898, exactly a century ago, that he obtained the degree of Shastri and came to be known as Harabhata Shastri.

In view of his profound scholarship, HBS was appointed as Pandit, and later Head Pandit, at the Oriental Research Department of Jammu and Kashmir state, a post from which he retired in 1931.

This was the Maharaja's own way of patronising the learned men of his state.

His razor-sharp intellect, his great erudition, and, especially his deep insight into the Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir won him the esteem of such distinguished scholars as K. C. Pandey of Lucknow University and Prof James H. Wood of the College of Oriental Languages and Philosophy, Bombay. His repute attracted the well known linguist Prof Suniti Kumar Chatterji to him and he stayed in Srinagar for two years to learn the basics of the monistic philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism from him.

It was only after David B. Spooner came from USA to Kashmir to learn from scholars like HBS and NS that Sanskrit began to be taught as a subject at the Harvard University in 1905. At that time only nine students were studying Sanskrit out of a total of 5000 at Harvard.

In the meantime HBS engaged himself in scholarly pursuits which were to form the basis of his repute. He wrote his famous commentaries on Sanskrit texts from Kashmir which included the 'Panchastavi'-- a pentad of hymns to Mother Goddess. With his profound scholastic background and his deep insight into Shaiva and Shakta traditions, HBS explained and elucidated Shakta concepts contained in the Panchastavi in his famous commentary, specially on the 'Laghustava' and the 'Charastava' which came to be known as "Harabhatti" after him. These hymns, held in high esteem from quite ancient times in Kashmir, have a special significance for the votaries of Trika philosophy. There was a debate for quite some time on the authorship of 'Panchastavi', some attributing it to Shankaracharya, some to Kalidasa and some to Abhinavagupta. It was HBS who proved it convincingly that it was actually composed by Dharmacharya. This view was shared by Swami Lakshman Joo, too.

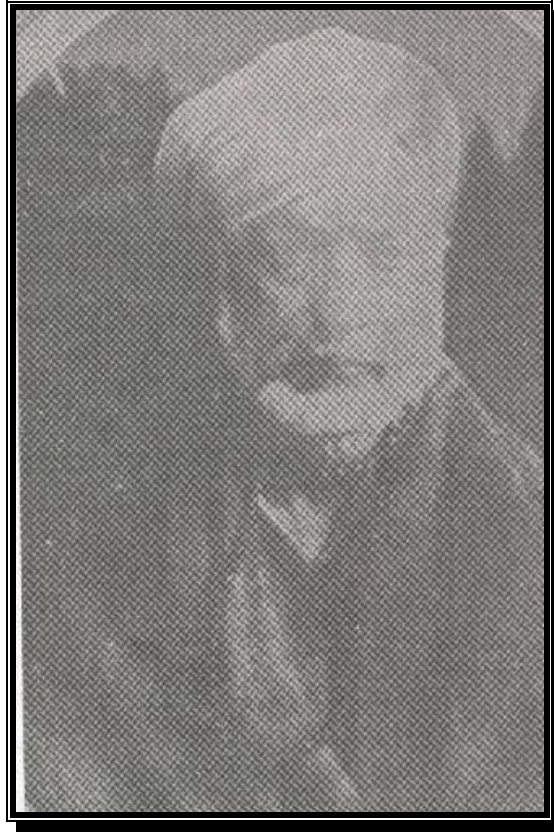
HBS also earned great repute for having compiled and edited nine Shaiva texts, with notes and explanations, which were published by the J & K Research and Publications Department under the general title 'Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies.' Other significant works by HBS include a commentary on 'Apadpramatri Siddhi' of Utpala, Vivarna on Bodha Panchadashika and Parmarth Charcha.

This "celebrated scholar of Shaiva lore", one of the greatest interpreters of the Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir, passed away in 1951. His illustrious American disciple, Dr. Spooner, often wrote letters to him and also to Prof Nityanand Shastri and Pandit Madhusudan Shastri. The letters he wrote to HBS have been lost, but those he wrote to NS have been preserved by NSKRI. In these letters he never forgot to mention HBS and remember "the great days" he had spent with him.

*Source: Unmesh*

## 7 Pandit Keshav Bhatt Jyotishi

*The Pandit who was also a pioneer printer*



**Pandit Keshav Bhatt Jyotishi**

[ A profound scholar of astrology and a pioneer printer in one - that was Pandit Keshav Bhatt Jyotishi. His greatest claim to fame, however rests on his untiring efforts in publishing cheap editions of ancient religions texts of Kashmiri Hindus and making them available to the common people. For this he would go from place to place in Kashmir, almost door to door, and collect original manuscripts from people who were most loathe to part with them. Perhaps he was the only scholar after Buhler to have done that with a good measure of success. But for him many of these texts would have been lost or remained obscure especially those on Kashmiri Hindu rituals and religious practices. The Krishna Printing Press, which he set up in Srinagar, came handy to him for printing the texts and also to eke out a modest living for himself. We at 'Unmesh' feel proud in paying a tribute to the great scholar's memory and in telling our readers about his life and accomplishments.]

**For** the older generation of Kashmiri Pandits, Pandit Keshav Bhatt Jyotishi (KBJ) has been a familiar name, for the Panchang (almanac) he edited and published would reach almost every Pandit household in Kashmir. It evoked, and still evokes, reverence in the hearts of those who are aware of his deep knowledge of Hindu astrology. For them his word in the field bore a stamp of undisputed authenticity. KBJ in turn owed it to his ancestral tradition with proclivity towards astrology running very strongly in the family.

Born in Srinagar in 1873 in an erudite Brahmin family, KBJ, only emulated his grandfather Pandit Sat Ram, his father Pandit Prasad Bhatt and uncle Pandit Mukund Ram when he chose Sanskrit religious texts and astrology as his specialized field of study. Both the father and the uncle acquired proficiency in these subjects under the tutelage of his grandfather, a well known scholar of his times. Uncle Mukund Ram, a Shaivite scholar, rose to be the Chief Astrologer at the court of Maharaja Pratap Singh, while father

Prasad Bhatt also earned a name for his study of astrology. Surpassing both of them, KBJ acquired a mastery over the subject almost to the extent of becoming a legend in his lifetime.

The Bhatt's ancestral house at Jogi Lankar, Rainawari, a locality of Srinagar, overlooked a beautiful scene on the flowing canal, evoking an atmosphere of serenity. It was in this house that young KBJ would remain absorbed in study, sitting on the grass mat near the window on the left with piles of books neatly rising above the floor all around him. Devoting himself entirely to learning the Shastras, he virtually shut himself from worldly pleasures which had little attraction for him. While following his scholarly pursuits, KBJ began his career as a school teacher at Nunar, a picturesque village not far off from Tulumla (Kheer Bhawani). Dedicated to his work and committed to giving quality education to his students, he would traverse all the distance from his home at Rainawari to the school at Nunar on foot - he simply could not afford the bus or tonga fare to his place of work. Fond of him and full of respect for him, his students would often come to his home also where he would clear their doubts and help them in solving their difficulties. An inspiring pep talk on moral values to help them in their overall development was an usual accompaniment.

Clad in an ordinary Pheran and turban and wearing a grass shoe (pulahor) in his feet, the profound scholar could be seen explaining the finer points of the Shastras not only to his pupils but to anyone who came with a doubt or two to clear. Given to simple living, the noble Pandit ate frugal meals, spending most of his time in religious studies. After the death of his uncle, Mukund Ram and father, Prasad Bhatt, the responsibility of editing and bringing out the Panchang fell on his shoulders - a responsibility that he discharged till the end even though the economics of the publication was not on his side. Determined not to disappoint the thousands of the readers of the almanac, he managed to bring it out with his senior peer, Pandit Govind Bhatt Shastri of Rainawari, making the astrological calculations.

Deeply religious in nature, KBJ, regularly worshiped Mahagayatri, performing Havan and Pooja and also recited Mantras which at occasions could go as high as 24 lakh times. He was, however, appalled to see that while some people did have their personal copies of ritualistic books made, most of them could not afford to purchase printed copies of these books. As a result, the texts of such books tended to get either corrupted or forgotten, with their knowledge getting limited to fewer and fewer people, the general public not caring to be versed in them at all. As the printing press had hardly arrived in Kashmir, KBJ got copies of these ancient texts printed from outside presses from his own pocket and made them available at cost price to every one who was interested.

Soon, however, he decided to set up his own letter printing press at Srinagar, becoming one of the pioneers to do so. He did not do so entirely for commercial purposes, but for publishing Kashmiri Pandit religious books for the benefit of the common people, especially the younger generation. The assorted printing jobs that were undertaken by this press, namely the Krishna Printing Press, were expected to generate enough income to have these works printed at on a non-profit basis. It did not take much time for his plan to take practical shape and cheap and affordable editions of books pertaining to rituals, religious practices and customs, and Tirtha Mahatmyas and devotional hymns started rolling out from the press. These low priced books became quite popular and helped a lot in keeping the Pandit community aware of their religious traditions.

KBJ published about two dozen books which were printed at the Krishna Printing Press. These include Nitya Karma Vidhi (3 parts), Shiva Puja, Ganesh-Durga Stotravali, Saundarya Lahri with Panchastavi, Rudra Panchakam, Karmakand (3 parts), Veda Kalpadrum, (related to performance of Havans), Mekhala Pustak, Parthishwar Puja, Yoga Vasishtha Sar, Bhakti Vivek Sar, Bhavani Sahasra Nanavali, Vishnu Sahasra Namavali, Aditya Hriday, Kalash Sthapan, Kashmir Jyotishya Sangraha, Indrakshi etc.

KBJ had to go from village to village to scour for the religious texts before he could publish their low priced editions. It was a search a la Buhler, not without disappointments keeping in view the nature of the people who were reluctant to part from their manuscripts or printed copies, but also one which brought great rewards - not just for KBJ personally but for the whole Pandit community. For this one act, KBJ should be remembered by the entire grateful community.

With KBJ's death in 1946, and with the passage of time, the texts slowly went out of print. Then in 1990 the Kashmiri Pandits were forced to flee from their home in Kashmir. Though the successors of KBJ and the present proprietors of Krishna Printing Press restarted their printing business from Jammu, it was not possible for them reprint the books or bring out the fresh editions. Impressed, however, by the agenda of NSKRI, as explained by the Institute's core member, Shri M. L. Pandit, Shri S. N. Jotshi, the grandson of KBJ, offered the rights of reprinting his series of books to NSKRI. An offer that has been gratefully accepted by the Institute.

*Source: Unmesh*

## 8 Pandit Saheb Ram Kaul

### A Great Sanskrit Scholar of Kashmir

[ There have been two Saheb Kauls or Saheb Ram Kauls in the history of Sanskrit scholarship; both of them have been from Kashmir and both have been great. The first of these Saheb Kauls, the famous author of 'Krishnavtar Charit', lived during the reign of Aurazzeb (1658 - 1707) and was the writer of over a dozen valuable Sanskrit works. It is, however, the second Saheb Ram Kaul we are going to profile in this column, a great scholar at Dogra Maharaja Ranbir Singh's court whose brilliance made him the cynosure of learned men in the Maharaja's Vidya Vilas Sabha or the 'assembly of scholars'. ]

**Among** the Kashmiri scholars of Sanskrit whom Maharaja Ranbir Singh respected greatly was Pandit Saheb Ram Kaul (SRK), a deeply learned man whose study of the Shastras had impressed even the veteran Pandits of Varanasi. There is no clear documentary evidence of SRK's exact date of birth, but he lived during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh which lasted from 1858 to 1885. His father Dila Ram was a revenue official in Maharaja Gulab Singh's service and lived in the Anantnag town. His mother was the daughter of a well-known scholar Pandit Tika Lal Razdan. SRK was only seven years old when his father passed away. His mother then shifted to Srinagar along with her brothers, Pandit Lakhmi Ram and Pandit Lassa Kak.

At first SRK was admitted to a Persian Maktab (school) for his studies, but there he showed no progress even though he remained on its rolls till the age of 18. Persian was not his cup of tea and he finally gave up studying it at the Maktab.

This lack of interest in Persian was, however, taken to be a sign of dullness by his peers in the neighbourhood. They taunted and teased him much to the distress of his mother who asked one of her brothers to examine his horoscope. The brother, Lakhmi Ram, selected an auspicious time and started teaching the boy Sanskrit. Seeing his keenness to learn Sanskrit, Lakhmi Ram later got him admitted to a large Sanskrit Pathashala run by a reputed scholar of the time. SKR developed a great interest in the study of Sanskrit, acquiring knowledge at a pace faster than any one could imagine. Soon he blossomed into a full-fledged scholar mastering Vyakarna (grammar), Alankara (rhetoric), Vedanta and Mimamsa (two schools of Indian Philosophy).

Once, a learned man arrived at his home seeking a solution for some difficult academic problem. SRK's maternal uncle, who was a head teacher, was not there at that time. But SRK surprised everyone around when he offered to explain it to him although it did not relate to his field of study. He cleared the man's doubts and answered his queries in a way that convinced his maternal uncle of his brilliance. Fearing that her son might stagnate there, SRK's mother shifted from her brother's house to a different place.

By this time SRK had acquired mastery over grammar, poetry, drama and Shaiva philosophy. Soon he found that there was no scope for higher academic excellence in Kashmir, as there was no one there to satisfy his deeper quest of knowledge. He quietly decided to leave Kashmir and go to Varanasi, the greatest centre of Sanskrit studies in the country. He left Srinagar on foot and after completing the long, and often hazardous, journey reached Varanasi in quest of higher knowledge. After staying at Varanasi for about a year, exploring the Shastras in greater depth, SRK returned to his home town. He participated in several scholarly debates there, often leaving the Pandits of Kashi stunned by his exceptional learning.

On his return from Varanasi, SRK went to the pilgrim centre of Vicharnag, near Srinagar. In Kashmiri 'nag' means a spring and 'vichar' is to contemplate. It was at Vichar Nag that scholars and saints would assemble for discussions and debates on the Shastras and for exchanging ideas on religious and philosophical matters. The annual pilgrimage to Vichar Nag used to take place on the full moon day of Chaitra. Staying there for seven years, SRK took to sadhana or spiritual discipline. At the end of the sadhana, Maharaja Ranbir Singh sought him out and appointed him as the President of his Vidya Vilas Sabha (the assembly of scholars) and the Principal of the Sanskrit Mahavidyala, founded by him at Baghe-Dilawar Khan, not far from Vichar Nag.



SRK constructed a house for himself in the Drabiyar locality of Srinagar, and this house is said to stand there even today. His wife Poshmal Ded was a deeply religious lady. She used to go Hari Parbat every day without fail and take a five mile circumambulatory round of the shrine. In fact their second child, Daya Ram was born near the Sharika Devi shrine while she was on her morning round of worship. Daya Ram turned out to be a great Sanskrit scholar and so did Damodar who followed him.

Under the influence of Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, a bigot from Iraq who persecuted Hindus in Kashmir in large numbers, Sultan Fateh Shah had vandalised the shrine of Chakreshwari at Hari Parbat, Srinagar destroying the idols installed there. SRK traced out and collected the broken parts of the idols and the shrine, assembled these and reconstructed the shrine of Chakreshwari during Maharaja Ranbir Singh's rule.

In 'Niti Kalpalata', one of the books that SRK wrote, it is stated that he also authored nine other Sanskrit works including the Rajataragini Sangraha, Kashmir Tirtha Sangraha, Pancha Sahayek Vivarnam and Gita Vyakhya Sahibi. His erudition, particularly his intimate knowledge of the history and geography of Kashmir left two western orientalis, Aurel Stein and George Buhler, greatly impressed. In the second volume of his translation of the Rajataragini, Stein observes that SRK was "undoubtedly the foremost among the Kashmirian Sanskrit scholars of the last few". His 'Kashmir Tirtha Sangraha', an abstract of information about the ancient shrines of Kashmir, and his commentary on these, proved extremely useful to Stein, and other scholars too, in locating and identifying many places, and in establishing correct historical dates.

Writes Buhler in his famous Report of 1878: "Pandit Saheb Ram appears to have been deeply versed in the Shastras and the ancient history of his country." Buhler states further that "Saheb Ram possessed a very intimate acquaintance with Kashmirian history. Saheb Ram's explanatory treatises and abstract on the manuscripts of Nilamata Purana and other works, will enable us to restore the text and explain its meaning with greater accuracy than ever before". Unfortunately, SRK's attempt at editing and restoring the text of the Nilamata, was not allowed to be published. Had it been, it would have been the first example of textual editing by a Kashmiri scholar. According to Buhler, SRK's corrections and explanations, his attempt to "fill up all the lacunae, to expand all obscure passages and remove, as far as possible, the ungrammatical forms, prove clearly that Pandit Saheb Ram's restoration is correct in substance and that Kalhana took over some portion of his narrative almost literally from the Purana."

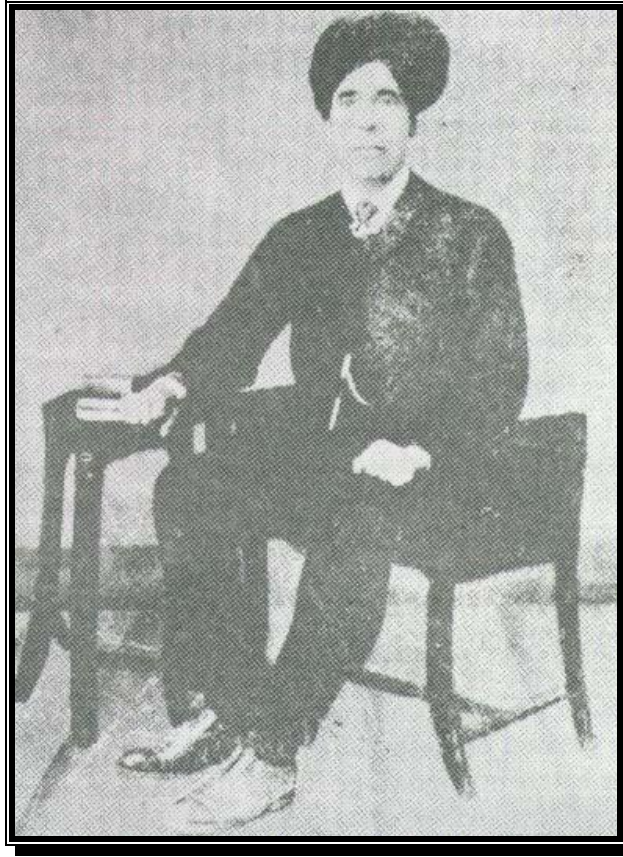
SRK's Niti Kalpalata, which was published in two parts, is a book on polity. It seeks to describe the basic elements that are essential for a successful polity. It was Saheb Ram's knowledge of this subject that must have impressed Maharaja Ranbir Singh. In fact SRK's books reflect his wide range of knowledge of a variety of subjects. No wonder that many Indian scholars have praised SRK without any reservation for his academic accomplishments.

[ *Inputs by Dr. Dhani Ram Shastri* ]

*Source: Unmesh*

## 9 Pandit Anand Koul

*Kashmir's pioneer historical and cultural researcher*



**Pandit Anand Koul**

*Photo Courtesy: Utpal Publications*

*[When Pandit Anand Koul published his first book, 'The Kashmiri Pandit' in 1924, a pioneering work on the history and ethnography of the Kashmiri Pandits, he created history. For the first time someone was writing about a people who had contributed greatly to Indians culture, art, literature and philosophy, out of proportion to their small numerical strength, and who had survived many an onslaughts of history only to be marginalised by inexorable political developments. The publication of the book became an event and its writer followed it up by several works on history, literature, archaeology, folklore and saints of Kashmir -- each enhancing his reputation as a pioneer of modern research and each contributing to a sense of cultural resurgence among Kashmiris. We are giving below a short biographical sketch of this great writer and researcher of Kashmir.]*

**Sitting** in his office on the prestigious chair of the President of Srinagar Municipality, immaculately dressed in a Western suit and necktie, hardly anyone could guess from the outward trappings of this "socially honoured and important citizen of Kashmir" that his mind was set at exploring the cultural and historical past of his native land and studying the sociology of the community to which he belonged. Yet Pandit Anand Koul (A.K.) had all the makings of a great researcher, writer and antiquarian deeply interested in digging out facts from the fog of time.

His modern scientific outlook, his English education, his felicity with words, his grounding in traditional Sanskrit and Persian learning made him ideally suited for the task of a writer on various aspects of his native land and its history, culture and traditions. As an eminent historian and writer V. N. Mehta, the

illustrious father of Mrs. Pupul Jayakar, has put it, AK was every bit "a learned antiquarian and writer who loved to search things in Kashmir."

A.K. was born in Srinagar on April 3, 1867, as the only son of Pandit Tota Koul, an important revenue official coming from an affluent family. A.K. "passed his childhood and youth in easy circumstances", as his biographical sketch in 'The Kashmiri Pandit' says. As was common in his time in Kashmir, he had his initial education in Sanskrit and Persian in a Tsatahal or a traditional Kashmiri school. But like NS, he decided to learn English and acquire modern education.

At the age of 14, AK became one of first Kashmiris to learn English at an English medium missionary school opened by Rev. Doxey in 1881. But for Doxey's first pupil, things did not go so smoothly, for his decision to learn English faced stiff opposition not only from his relatives and friends but also from the Maharaja who feared that the missionaries would convert him to Christianity. But AK's strong will saw him through as he progressed in his study of not only English but also mathematics, history, geography and other subjects which were considered as modern those days.

It was another missionary, Rev. Knowles, Rev. Doxey's successor as the founder of the school, who ignited the interest in research in history and folklore of Kashmir in the mind of young Anand Koul. Knowles was so impressed by AK's intellectual proclivities that he made him the first headmaster of the school in 1893. Soon AK found himself assisting Knowles in writing his famous book, "Proverbs of Kashmir", which was published in 1896. This launched AK on his career as writer and researcher quite early in life -- a field in which he was eventually to make his mark.

AK's sound knowledge of the English language landed him the plum post of Sheriff in the office of Raja Amar Singh's Council of Regency. Later, he did a stint in the office of State's Census Commissioner and from there his reputation led him to work as an assistant of Sir C.G. Todhunter in reorganising the state's Custom's Department. A terribly impressed Todhunter soon gave A.K. an independent charge of the department. But it was as President of Srinagar Municipality, considered a top post those days, to which he was appointed by A.K. Mitra, Home Minister of J & K State for his competence, efficiency and honesty, that AK's career graph as an administrator touched the highest point. AK worked hard to improve sanitary conditions in Srinagar which had earned the notoriety of being the filthiest city in Asia, and eventually he succeeded in transforming its face. He remained on the coveted administrative post for three years from 1914 to 1917, retiring as the highest-paid Kashmiri official of that time with his prestige touching the skies.

Had AK remained content with just his reputation as an administrator, he could have been forgotten with the passage of time. His fame, however, solely rests today on his achievements as a research scholar and a writer. His inner proclivities had always urged him to move in that direction and fortunately for him he did not ignore this urge. Starting as a journalist, he worked as the special correspondent of the 'Civil and Military Gazette' of Lahore and the 'pioneer' of Allahabad besides his official duties in the state, and graduated as a full-fledged writer. He made his debut as a historian by writing a well researched monograph on the fifty lost kings of Kashmir about whom Kalhana did not succeed in procuring any facts. The monograph was published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in its prestigious journal. The Society later published in its journal another monograph by AK on the Kapalmochan tirtha at Shopiyan in Kashmir, establishing his credentials as a researcher.

In 1913 came AK's 'Geography of Jammu and Kashmir', a well-written and authentic book that scored over the so-called guide books written by European travellers giving "wrong place-names and distorted version of facts."

Then appeared his book on the "Life and Sayings of Lalla -- the Shaiva Yogini of Kashmir", which was published earlier aerielly in the Indian Antiquary -- first the part on her "Life" and then her "Sayings". Then came its companion volume on the "Life and Sayings of Nund Rishi". Like Lalleshwari the life and sayings of the saint were serially published in the journal 'Indian Antiquary.' Both the works showed deep and intense study.

Perhaps his most important work was his book 'The Kashmiri Pandit' which was published in 1924. Said to be the first ever historical and sociological study of any Indian community, the book deservedly received widespread critical appreciation.

AK was the first Kashmiri to have contributed in a very significant manner to the study of his native language and its literature. His collection and translation of Kashmiri proverbs and riddles, which was published in the Indian Antiquary, was indeed a pioneering work of great importance. So are his biographical write-ups on the saints of Kashmir like 'Rupa Bhawani', 'Rishi Peer' and 'Manasavi Rajanaka' which highlighted their influence on contemporary society."

Yet another important work of AK was his book on "Archaeological Remains of Kashmir." This was the result of his personal on-the-spot study of Kashmir's ancient monuments. As AK was not a professional archaeologist, he was somewhat diffident to publish the results of his study without authentic critical opinion. So he approached C.E.A. Woldham, an authority on the subject and a friend of Aurel Stein, for a review. And this is what Woldham wrote about it: "It has been a real pleasure reading through the manuscript which discloses such full acquaintance with the remains of Kashmir and includes several not mentioned in other textual books and memoirs."

AK's reputation as a writer gave him an important place in the social milieu of Kashmir of the times. He met Swami Vivekananda when he visited Kashmir in 1897 and hosted a dinner in his honour. He can be seen in the group photograph of the great saint with prominent Kashmiri Pandits, seated with his imposing personality. He also gave a reception to poet Rabindra Nath Tagore at his residence when the poet visited Kashmir with top Kashmiri literatures of the time attending the reception. Some years later, he hosted a reception in the honour of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru too. Tej Bahadur Sapru held the reputed scholar of Kashmir in high esteem. This is evident from the foreword he wrote to AK's book on archaeological remains of Kashmir. Sapru's words sum up all that can be said as a tribute to AK: "He belongs to the soil he has lived all his life in their enchanting surroundings the legend and tradition of Kashmir are a part of his inherited consciousness. He may therefore well claim the right to present to the world the beauties of his country, its history, its legend and its tradition in glowing terms.

Pandit Anand Kaul speaks of the past of Kashmir, whose monuments bear witness to past. May its past, may its natural grandeur inspire the living generation of her sons and daughters to prove themselves worthy of their past and of their inspiring environments and may it be possible for the present generation to cultivate his noble virtues of political, civic and economic life, without which no people, howsoever bounteously endowed with wealth and natural scenery can rise to greatness in the world."

*Source: Unmesh*



## 10 Prof. Jagaddhar Zadoo

### One of the Last Titans



**Prof. Jagaddhar Zadoo**

*[He was a titan among scholars of Kashmir -- that is alone how Prof. Jagaddhar Zadoo (JDZ) can be described for his immense contribution to Sanskrit scholarship. But a very shy and unassuming titan, wearing his great erudition with utmost humility. Be it the first critical edition of the Nilamata Purana which he brought out together with Prof. Kanji Lal, or a part of the Gilgit Manuscripts which he edited with Dr. J. C. Dutt, the Lokaprakasha of Kshemendra or the Udamareshwara Tantra, the works that JDZ took up for study opened a whole world of discovery about life in ancient and medieval Kashmir. He translated profusely from Sanskrit and English and Kashmiri, and even Urdu, edited a number of Shaiva texts, worked with Japanese and Russian scholars, yet preferred to remain away from the glare and glitter of publicity. Mahamahopadhyaya, Vidya Martanda, Doctor of Indology, were some of the titles conferred upon him which could have turned any Sanskrit scholar's head, but not JDZ's. His gravitation towards learning was natural to him, for he belonged to a family that has produced some of the most illustrious Sanskrit scholars of Kashmir.]*

**Soft-spoken, mild-mannered and humble, Prof. Jagaddhar Zadoo (JDZ) never raised his voice to make a point, but he was head and shoulders above many prone to beating their own drums in the world of academics in Kashmir. Even after a lifetime of achievements in the field he chose to adopt, he never thought much of them. Born in November 1890, he came from a family where Sanskrit scholarship was something that flowed in the veins. The great Pandit Keshav Bhatt Shastri who adored the court of Maharaja Ranbir Singh as head astrologer, was his grandfather. The most celebrated scholar of Shaiva lore Pandit Harbhata Shastri was his uncle. And Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri whose unusual brilliance and outstanding erudition won him tremendous respect in academic circles in India and Europe, was his father-in-law. No wonder, therefore, that JDZ took to Sanskrit learning as naturally as fish take to water.**

The Zadoos originally belonged to Zadipur, a village near Brijbehara, Kashmir from where they migrated to Srinagar in the beginning of the 18th century. JDZ's grandfather Pandit Keshav Bhatt, was chosen by Maharaja Ranbir Singh as his Raja Jyotishi and was consulted by George Buhler for his work on the Pippalada Shakra of Atharvaveda. Young JD took his first examination in Sanskrit, Pragma, from the Punjab University, Lahore, in 1904 when he was just 14. In 1915 he obtained the degree of Shastri from

the same university following it with M.A. in Sanskrit in 1920 and MOL (Master of Oriental Languages) in 1921. It was in 1921 that he joined the Jammu and Kashmir Research Department as Head Pandit and worked on that post till 1924. From 1924 to 1927, JDZ taught Sanskrit at the Prince of Wales College, Jammu in place of the legendary Dr. Siddheshwar Verma, who had gone to Oxford for his D. Litt. Eventually JDZ became Professor of Sanskrit at Sri Pratap College, Srinagar in 1931 after completing his second stint as Head Pandit in the Research Department from 1928 to 1931, a post he held till 1946. He taught Sanskrit again at the Government College for Women, Srinagar from 1951 to 1953. In 1953 he became the founder Principal of the Mahila Mahavidyalaya at Srinagar and worked there till 1975 when he retired from active life.

When, in 1924, JDZ brought out the first critical edition of the Nilmata Purana working jointly with Prof. R.K. Kanjilal, it was hailed as a momentous work in academic circles. For the first time that rich treasure house of information about religious, cultural and social life of ancient Kashmir as well as traditions, customs and beliefs of its people was made accessible to researchers and scholars. Yet, sadly enough, this valuable edition of the Nilamata Purana for which alone JDZ's name could have been remembered by generations to come, is unavailable today, not even the nearest kin of the scholar having a copy of it, not to speak of the manuscript prepared by him. Another work of great importance that JDZ edited and brought to light by translating into English was the Loka Prakasha of Kshemendra, the polyglot who used satire for the first time in Sanskrit literature as an effective social weapon. The work contains curious specimen of sale and mortgage deeds and interesting cases of litigation of the times in which he lived. The text of Lokaprakasha was full of interpolations upto the 17th century, written in a curious blend of Sanskrit and Persian words.

JDZ also edited jointly with Dr. J.C. Dutt, Manuscript Number 7/E of the famous Gilgit Manuscripts which throw much light on Kashmir's Buddhist past. Bodha Panchadashaka and Parmartha Charcha are other philosophical works edited by him besides Panchastavi Tika, Paratrimshika Laghu Vritti, Paratrimshika Vivritti and Paratrimshika Tatparya Dipika (an abstruse presentation in Snaskrit verse of a highly abstract idea of anutiara). In all sixteen Sanskrit texts were edited by him during his tenure as Head Pandit of the Research and Publications Department of Jammu and Kashmir. These include, besides the above mentioned works, 'Prasada Mandapam (a brief treatise on Hindu architecture and sculpture), Prakashavati Pradyumna Natakam, Chitta Pradipa, Alankara Kutuhala and Soma Shambhu's Karmakanda Kramavali (which outlines briefly the principles and procedures of Shaivistic Sandhya Diksha and other rituals).

JDZ was the first Kashrniri scholar to work with Japanese and Russian Sanskrit scholars. In 1913, when he was only in his early twenties, he worked on Shaiva texts with the Japanese scholar Momo Moto Kora. About the same period his English translation of Bhasa's Swapana Vasavdattam guided Victor and Luydmil Mierworth in their Russian translation of the famous Sanskrit play. Together with Prof. Nityanand Shastri, JDZ translated Don Quixote, the famous Spanish classic by Cervantes, into the Kashmiri language as far back as 1936. It was the first translation of any European literary work in Kashmiri, although literary historians of the language have never made any mention of it. The translation was part of the project of Prof. Carl T. Keller of Harvard University to have 'Don Quixote' translated into various languages of the world. The duo, JDZ and NS translated the classic into Sanskrit also, and their translations probably are still lying at Harvard JDZ passed on his copy of the translation to "a loved friend" for publications but nothing followed it. The NSKRI is now going to take up publication of the work in view of its historical importance in the development of Kashmiri prose.

JDZ also translated the 'Radha Swayamvara' and 'Sudama Charita' of Parmananda, the famous Kashmir devotional poet of the 19th century, into Hindi.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to Sanskrit scholarship, His Holiness Jagadguru Shankarcharya of Dwarkapitha conferred upon him the title of Vidya Martand in 1955. He was honoured with the title of Mahamahopadhyaya by the Prayag Vidvat Parishad in 1973, the last of Kashmiri scholars on which this honour was conferred. The Sharadapitha Research Institute, Srinagar, chose to recognise his outstanding work in the field of Indology by awarding the honorary degree of Doctor of Indology to him

in 1974, while in 1976 the Pradeshik Snaskrit Parishad of Jammu honoured him for his profound Sanskrit scholarship.

There are many more details and dimensions of JDZ's profile as a scholar, glimpses of which can be had in his unpublished two-volume autobiography in Hindi. It was written a few years before his death in 1981, after prolonged illness. The autobiography, which gives many important details of the erudite scholar's life and times, is replete with his numerous comments and observations on Kashmiri society, culture, religion, literature, language, tradition, customs and even political events of the years in which he lived --- informative, interesting and revealing.

It reveals that his two sons were in the active service of the INA of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. One of them, Kanti Chandra Zadoo was Bose's Personal Secretary. He is believed to have been on board the same air craft which mysteriously crashed in 1945, resulting in the death of Subhash Chandra Bose and Kanti Chandra both. By the time JDZ started writing his autobiography, he was already a forgotten man, partly due to his tendency to stay away from limelight and partly due to the deliberate indifference of the self-appointed cultural czars of post- independence Kashmir.

*Source: Unmesh*

## 11 Damodar

### A true Kashmirian scholar

[Pt. Damodar, son of the illustrious Pt. Sahib Ram Kaul and younger brother of the equally renowned Pandit Daya Ram, was a Sanskrit scholar gifted with unusual brilliance. His scholastic endowments greatly impressed both Geoge Buhler and Aurel Stein who have paid very handsome tributes to his genius. In its issue of October 1997, 'Unmesh' had drawn attention towards his sequel to Rajatarangini in which he had carried the narrative forward from Akbar's reign to his own times. This valuable work is unfortunately not traceable now. Here we have R. N. Kaul, a great-grandson of Pt. Daya Ram, profiling the personality of this great scholar about whom Buhler had said that "he would shake Sanskrit prose or verse alike from the sleeve of his garment ", and about whose life very little is known.]

**Sahib Ram Kaul**, born early in the 19th century in Kashmir, was a renowned savant, Sanskrit scholar, author and researcher, whose contribution to Sanskrit learning and knowledge of Kashmir's history and geography, had received recognition, especially from Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1829-1885), resulting in the Pandit's appointment as president of the *Vidya Vilas Sabha* of the State and as chief teacher and head of the Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, founded by the ruler, in Srinagar. Sir Aurel Stein has referred to Sahib Ram as "undoubtedly the foremost among the Kashmiri Sanskrit scholars of the last few generations". Two of Sahib Ram's sons, followed in their father's footsteps and in their own right acquired unenviable reputation for their scholarship.

The elder son, Daya Ram, authored the '*Linga Purana Bhavarth Sanket*', (preserved in the Ranbir Research Institute, Jammu), was a man of learning of the *Shastras*, achieved high proficiency in astrology and studied Persian, and was an important member of the Maharaja's court, in advising the Maharaja in the interpretation of the *Shastras*, Hindu law and customs, in adjudication proceedings. He had a most charming personality, heightened by a well-kept beard and was always immaculately dressed.

The second son, Damodar, was a brilliant scholar, profoundly knowledgeable and master of repartee, who succeeded his father on his death in 1872, as the Head of the Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, in Srinagar. Damodar had been taken in adoption by his aunt, from which family later emerged two outstanding scholars, both Shastris and brothers, Pt. Mukund Ram and Madhusudhan, who was the last of the scholar from this family. But Damodar retained close contact with the family of his birth, and his elder brother. Damodar is credited with *Praud Lekhak*, a letterwriter and verses in continuation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* of which the present location is not known. This sequel to *Rajatarangini* had brought the account of Kashmir's history from Akbar's time down to the last year of the 19th century.

It is interesting to note that Maharaja Ranbir Singh, shortly after his accession to the throne of J&K State in 1856, initiated a move for the preservation and collection of contemporary and ancient manuscripts relating to the cultural heritage of Kashmir and to facilitate study of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic languages in the State. He built the magnificent Raghunath temple in Jammu, symbolic of *Rama Rajya* concept of rule.

With Saheb Ram in charge, he set up a Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya in Srinagar and another one in Jammu, with a *Sanskrit Mahapustakalaya*, a library attached. He arranged to secure copies of books from the private collection of other native rulers in India and from Varanasi etc.

For the collection of religious manuscripts for the library, select scholars were despatched far and near to secure copies of published and unpublished manuscripts and rare books. For the rare books sold by the owners, high prices were paid and those not sold were copied, through a team of learned scholars including Sahib Ram Kaul. Collection of MSS for the library began in 1869, as also transcribing of Sharada script to Devanagri and in due course the library flowered into a repository of important Sanskrit works.

Meanwhile many Westerners interested in Indian culture studied Sanskrit in Europe (particularly Germany, England and France) and were appointed by the British Government of India, to specially created posts in Sanskrit institutions in India, to explore and exploit the Indian Sanskrit heritage. They



were encouraged to collect, examine, translate edit and arrange distribution of select Sanskrit works of which the government organised allotment among British universities and collections, as well as some Indian societies and institutes. Apparently it was their policy to rescue and secure ancient manuscripts, dealing with India's (including Kashmir's) heritage, not only from a mere academic interest and present the Indian civilization to the world, perhaps with a colonial angle attached to it. The political department of the Government of India was deeply involved in this.

The Government of India appointed Prof. G. Buhler a Sanskrit scholar born in Hannover (1837-98), specializing in oriental languages and archaeology, who had studied Sanskrit in Europe and worked as Professor, Elphinstone College, Bombay (1868-72), who is said to have discovered over 5000 MSS for distribution by the Government. He was also deputed to Kashmir, Rajasthan and Central India, in search of Sanskrit manuscripts.

Prof. Buhler arrived in Srinagar on August 11, 1875. The Political Resident of Kashmir had arranged to deliver to him a memorandum on Sanskrit libraries and books, together with a catalogue of works existing. He was introduced to important Kashmiri Pandits. The following day he met Maharaja Ranbir Singh, who offered him every assistance in his mission. He also visited the Sanskrit School where he presumably met Damodar, the Head Teacher. On 15th August 1875, Pandit Daya Ram called on him, who according to Buhler gave him much valuable information. "Through his father the late Pandit Saheb Ram, who appears to have been a man deeply versed in the Shastras and the ancient history of his country, Pt. Daya Ram has become the possessor of much valuable information on the ancient geography of Kashmir. A good deal of the identification of places mentioned in the Rajatarangini, which I shall have to mention in the sequel, have been made with his assistance", says Buhler.

By the 18th of August, work progressed fast and he arranged with the two brothers, copies of nearly seventy works in the Residency list. He made visits to many places, did minor excavations and compared the locations of certain places described in Sahib Ram's '*Kashmir Tirtha Sangrah*'. From his contact with the other scholars in Kashmir, and in commenting upon the scholastic eminence of others Buhler's remarks on Pt. Damodar are particularly noteworthy as follows:

"As regards the present state of literary activity, I can say that I saw one really distinguished Pandit, who would be able to hold up his head anywhere - Damodar, the son of Saheb Ram, the Chief Teacher in the Maharaja's Mudrissa. He possesses all the characteristics of a true Kashmirian scholar, great quickness and sharpness, a considerable fund of good-natured humour, and an inexhaustible flow of eloquence, combined with a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit poetry and poetics and a very respectable knowledge of grammar, of Nyaya and Shaiva philosophy - he explained to me several verse from Sanskrit poets which had baffled not only myself; but also some of the best Pandits of India. His own poetical compositions - a continuation of the Rajatarangini and a letter-writer, *Praud Lekhak*, which he was good enough to read and explain to me for hours - certainly surpass Shriharsha and Bana and can be only compared to Subhandhu's *Vasavadatta*. Pandit Damodar was not the only man of a scholarly bent of mind. I have already mentioned, his brother Daya Ram as an authority on the ancient geography and history of the country."

What a splendid unsolicited testimonial to the intellectual prowess of a great Kashmiri scholar.

Buhler was greatly impressed by Damodar's ability to "produce Sanskrit prose or verse alike from the sleeve of his garment."

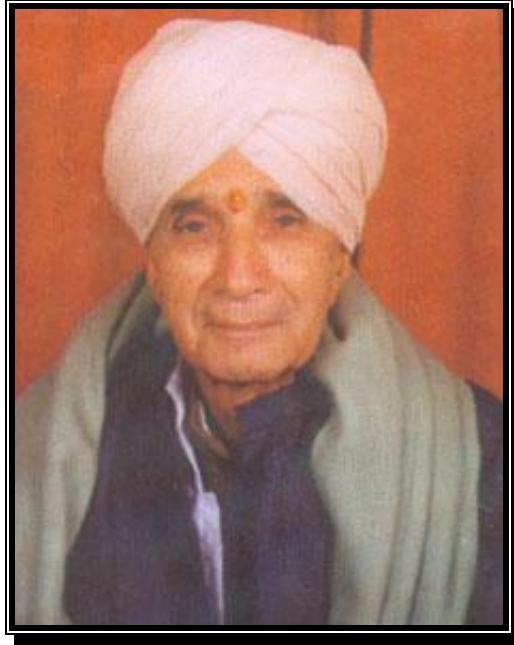
Sir Aurel Stein, Indologist, recognised Buhler's pioneering work on establishing the critical principles as propounded by Pts. Damodar and Daya Ram in correctly understanding Kalhana's Kashmir Kings' Chronicle relating to the history and geography of Kashmir, and their application to Nilamatpurana, the *mahatamayās* of *tirthas* and the Rajatarangini. Stein had seen some parts of Damodar's incomplete sequel to Rajatarangini too, and recorded his views in these words: "Had Pandit Damodar been spared to complete it, his work would have shown that Kalhana could have found generations past no worthier successor."

**Source: Unmesh**

## **12 Pandit Prem Nath Shastri**

### *Epitome of KP Identity*

**Vijay Tikoo**



**Pandit Prem Nath Shastri**

**In** his last words Pandit Prem Nath Shastri attributes the success of his ‘Vijyeshwar Panchang’ to not as much to his own efforts but the overwhelming support of the Kashmiri Pandit Community. These words from a man who knew that his death was not far away convey both a sense of accomplishment as well as feeling gratitude Pandit Prem Nath had reluctantly agreed to give up the job in state education department after completing his education and join his father and Guru Pandit Aftab Sharma to bring out the Kashmiri Panchang ‘Vijyashwari Jantri’ now a household name amongst Kashmiri Pandits.

In fact ‘Vijyeshwar Panchang’ over the years has become one of the most important guides for the Kashmiri Pandit Community in their day to day socio-religious dealings. Not that Kashmiri Pandit Community did not have alternative ‘Panchangs’ to adopt. In fact Brahman Maha Mandal of Kashmir for quite sometime has been taking out a ‘Panchang’ which many Kashmiri scholars opined was more accurate. Yet the Pandit Community almost through a silent consensus chose ‘Vijyeshwar Jantri’ as a guide in their socio-religious dealings. Perhaps for its better presentability and simple language. Or with this confidence that the family of Prem Nath Shastri had carried on this task for three centuries and shall ensure its continuity in the future as well.

Pandits recognise ‘Vijyeshwar Jantri’ as one of the most important institutions for maintaining their identity during such times when pressures for dissolution of the same are multiplying.

Pandit Prem Nath Shastri’s role during his life time did not remain confined to just carrying ahead a family tradition but in institutionalising it in such a way that its relevance in the social life of Kashmiri Pandits only increased with each day. During the years in exile, ‘Vijyeshwar Jantri’ became the most important instruments for Kashmiri Pandit to holding on to his identity. When the news of the demise of Pandit Prem Nath Shastri broke out, displaced Pandits received it with a stunning silence. Pandit Prem Nath Shastri through ‘Vijyeshwar Jantri’ and numerous other works endeavoured to protect Kashmiri Pandit identity and with his demise people feel as if a fulcrum around which they could rebuild their socio-cultural fabric in exile was lost.

During the years after the forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in 1989, Sh Prem Nath Shastri had become acutely conscious and concerned about the dangers to the cultural identity of Kashmiri Pandits in exile. 'Our ritual traditions have become as important as they were never before. Not in their negative degenerated form, but in their positive essence. Our traditions will hold us together in exile,' he once said to us while thinking aloud on the tragedies that befell upon Kashmiri Pandits. Not surprisingly, he undertook the arduous task of commenting and explaining the main ritual traditions of Kashmiri Pandits. He brought out small booklets, audio cassettes on the significance and performance of almost all important religious traditions and rituals of Kashmiri Pandits. These capsules like Karam Kand Deepak, Shivratri Puja, Sandiya, Antim Sanskar, Janam Din Puja has had a marked impact on the Kashmiri Pandit Social life in exile. While as in the Valley such ritual traditions were the forte of only a small section of 'Gaur's'-the priestly class of Kashmiri Brahmins, in exile through these simplified and written and audio capsules practice of the ritual traditions has become possible for one and all. Very gradually the families of displaced Kashmiri Pandits have become active participants in their religious traditions. The simple and erudite expositions of Shastri Ji both in written and audio forms on such works like Panchastavi, Bhawani Sahsranaama, Mahimnapaar, Bhagwat Geeta, verses of Lal Ded have been a profound attempt to bring the spiritual tradition of Kashmiri Pandits within the reach of the displaced Hindu society from Kashmir.

Shastri Ji also understood very well the importance of preserving the Kashmiri language for the survival of Kashmiri Pandits as a distinct ethno-religious group. In all his public discourses and social interactions Pandit Prem Nath Shastri would urge the new generation to speak Kashmiri language, and transmit it to the coming generations. He also wanted the digeneous script for Kashmir to be revived. In fact his '*Sharda Primer*' has been one of the few attempts to revive 'Shardha Script' amongst Kashmiri Pandits.

In his day to day living Shastri Ji was an epitome of traditional Kashmiri Pandit living. He always wore the traditional Kashmiri Pandit Pheran and the turban. His living room reflected not only the style but also the discipline of a Kashmiri Brahmin scholar. No chairs, arrangement of books on the rack, his writing desk, everything bore a traditional mark, besides his strict working schedule. But most significant was his own personality which was typically a Kashmiri Pandit type.

The glow on his face, inquisitiveness of eyes, soft but stern voice and the aura of discipline. He appeared deeply orthodox by looks. But just a small conversation with him would convince about his flexibility of thought.

During his last days he had developed taste for listening to the 'audio cassettes' of Osho. His son had to purchase Rs 10,000 worth cassettes which Pandit Shastri would listen while fighting his disease. 'He (Osho) has been misunderstood by the people of India. But I am a Kashmiri Brahmin. I cannot deny him his due,' he would tell his family during his last days.

One of the last wishes of Pandit Prem Nath Shastri had been to publish a 'Panchang' for Jammu. Most of the work on the same has been already completed under his supervision. His sons as a tribute to him are going to bring out the first issue of 'Ranvireswar Panchang' very soon. When one of us pointed out to the eldest son of Pandit Shastri that the mantle of the social and religious responsibility, which Shastri Ji had carried on his shoulders, now fell on him, he was overwhelmed and said with moist eyes in all humility, "I am feeling the weight. But I will do my best with your co-operation".

*Source: Kashmir Sentinel* - Publication of **Panun Kashmir**

## **13 Master Samsar Chand Kaul**

### **Great Ornithologist of Kashmir**

**Surender Kaul**



**Master Samsar Chand Kaul**

**Master Samsar Chand Kaul** (1883-1977) was a renowned educationist, ornithologist and environmentalist of his time, when subjects like bird watching and study at natural history was unknown in Kashmir. By profession, he was a teacher in the then C. M. S. School at Fateh Kadal, later Central High School, Srinagar, continuously for 65 years and developed interest among the students in the natural history around; besides teaching of his usual academic subjects. His keenness in inculcating aptitude among the students towards glorious and everlasting surroundings of mountains, birds, flowers and forests was appreciated by the then British Principal of the School, Mr. C.E. Tyndale Biscoe, who, while writing a foreword to Master Samsar Chand's book "Beautiful Valley of Kashmir & Ladakh", wrote as under:

"I am most grateful to Samsar Chand for having taught his boys to love birds through his teaching of natural history".

### **13.1 Illustrious Teaching Career**

His teaching career in the C.M.S. School, was of highest educational order. During his long span of teaching career, he travelled to every nook and corner of the Valley along with the students, both native as well as foreign, and his colleagues. He scaled several mountain peaks of Pir Panchal range like Mahadev, Hurmukh and Kolahoi and undertook trekking high-altitude lakes like Tarsar, Marsar, Gangabal, Kolsar, Vishnu Sar, Kausar Nag, Sheeshram Nag, Har Nag Valley and Kolahoi glacier, Har Bhagwan glacier, Thajwas glacier, Botkul glacier and Harmokh glacier, meadows like Toseh Maidan, Bungus, Allapathar, Jamia Galli, Beasam Galli, Gureiz Valley, stepped over boulders and rocks with the students.

This close and practical encounter with nature, in calm and tranquil atmosphere, provided him with ample opportunities to study, to know and to probe into the history of nature and its geographical transformation, which he happily shared with the students accompanying him in these adventures. As a teacher, he had developed his own methods of imparting education. Even on mountains, hills and



meadows, he would explain to his students on the spot the forms of fossils and their formation, he would show the various types of rocks which he came across during trekking or at camping sites. In forest areas, he helped the students to identify various kinds of trees by the shape of their leaves and taught them how to calculate the age of the trees by the number of annual tissue rings in the trunks.



**Pandit Samsar Chand Kaul with his wife Lachchkuji in 1964.**

### *13.2 Bird Watching as Hobby*

His principal area of interest was ornithology, which needed immense patience and perseverance. While on a picnic or in a summer camp among the pine and fir trees in the Valley, he would devote most of his time in watching birds, their little ones, their art of making nests and their melodious notes. He had acquired, with the passage of time, experience to imitate their chirping. For bird watching, he had selected a few places in the Valley where he invariably preferred to go in seasons. These places were Hokursar, Anchar Lake, Feroze Nalla (Tangmarg), vegetative strips of floating gardens in Dal Lake, islets of dense willows and poplar trees - where birds of all varieties, migratory and local, were conspicuous by their presence. He would spend hours there with a binocular to take close views of birds in their nests or on branches of trees and would immediately jot down his observations in a note-book. Many bird watchers of world fame, like late Saleem Ali from Bombay, joined him in such experimentation in Anchar Lake as well as in Dal Lake. Bird watching became his regular activity and he kept his eyes open for birds in high-altitude meadows and mountains during trekking. In mountain ranges, he came across Himalayan black bulbul, Himalayan whistling thrush, Woodpecker, hoopoes, kingfisher, jungle crow, sandpiper, turtle doves, red-bowed finch, Himalayan brown dippler, Indian bushchat, blue headed rock thrush, Stoliczka mountain finch and mountain pigeons.

Master Samsar Chand had a flair for studying wild flowers, plants and mountain herbs which he found during his trekking in meadows and pastures in the mountainous ranges of Kashmir. He made it a point to collect samples of these wild flowers, herbs and plants, and would carefully preserve them in between the leaves of his diary in a scientific manner till his return to his residence. These plants were later studied with the help of expert professors of Botany. This way he was able to identify many plants, flowers and herbs during his trekking and would inspire his students to explore and admire the floral beauty. His collections included flowers like Marino Longifolo, Morino Couterians, Dotentillo, Anemone Tetrascaple, Primula Reptans, Primula Rosea, fund Aquilegia Jueunda, Carydalis Cashemirians, Astra Falconeri and herbs like Indigoffera Lereantha, Sassurealappa, Artemisia, Salviashien which were located in clusters on the high mountain ridges. These herbal plants were preserved by him in grass-made baskets at his home and were gradually used for curing of joint pains, skin diseases, cold and cough, etc.

### **13.3 Development of Kobutar Khana**

With the passage of time, he developed acute interest for the collection of so-called natural treasures and made numberless visits to the remotest and inaccessible areas of the Valley and collected a huge quantity of flowers, herbs, fossil rocks, lime stone, drift roots, plant leaves, hydro plants of lakes, bird nests, egg shells of birds and feathers which were preserved in a systematic manner in cupboards in the school museum called Kobutar Khana. It was the room where he taught geography. The room had been converted into a full-fledged natural history room. The ceiling of Kobutar Khana was covered with large-sized paper with stars, galaxies, planets, moon and constellations printed on its sky-blue background, which gave the impression of a starry sky. Models of British ships like *Drudkot* and *Titanic* were also kept in the museum.

A part of his collections were meticulously maintained by him in large-sized albums at his residence in Motiyar, Rainawari. Their characteristics, date and place of procurement were skillfully and neatly written below each sample. While skipping over the pages of these albums, one would get so captivated, as if one was actually loitering in the high mountains of Kashmir. He would often take foreign friends and his acquaintances around the school to show them the museum developed and maintained by him. Many foreign guests were deeply impressed by his work and honoured him by nominating him as a member of National Geographical Society, Washington, Royal Geographical Society, Canada, and Society of World Watchers, England, in late 1950s. His dedication and sincerity towards his school and its students was so much that he would pass on gift cheques, whenever received from foreigners, to the school account for the welfare and upkeep of the School.

### **13.4 As an Author**

With such rich experience of natural history and sound background of the areas he travelled and trekked with students and foreign nationals, he presented an extensive vivid narration in lucid and facile language in his most delightful books: "*Beautiful Valley of Kashmir & Ladakh*", "*Birds of Kashmir*" and "*Srinagar & Its Environ in 1940s*."

He became an authority on birds of the Valley and was often called for programmes on birds by Radio Kashmir, when Mr. P. C. Chatterjee was the Station Director, AIR Kashmir, from 1955 onwards. He delivered many talks on birds to foreign tourist groups. His contribution in cultivating a habit among boys for natural history and to develop a sense of appreciation for beauty around them, earned him a foreign travel across the Bay of Bengal to Burma in 1935 at the expenses of the school. His students understood the pains and feelings of caged birds and dressed the wounds and balm the wounds of the birds and animals found on the wayside.

Another glorious aspect of his personality was his deep involvement in spiritual pursuits. Compassion and humanism were his hallmarks. He had imbibed the traits of the missionary zeal by remaining hand in glove with British people like late Mr. Tyndale Biscoe, pioneer of education in Kashmir; his son, Mr. Eric Biscoe; the late Col. A.E. Ward, the late Jacob Sahib, Rev. R.D. Thompson; Dr. Smyth Morris; Mr. B.D. Coventry, then Chief Conservator of Forests and many others who visited Kashmir in the pre-independence period. He taught innumerable poor boys and educated them without any kind of remuneration in return and took to such selfless path to satisfy his own inner conscience.

Besides being a scholar of Kashmir Shaivism, Master Samsar Chand was a noble soul totally devoted to God. Parikrama of Hariparbat, followed by prayer and meditation, were regular features of his daily life till his lost breath. In the family, he guided his grandchildren in learning Sanskrit mantras from the scriptures before going to bed and entertained them with stories from Bible, Hindu religious scriptures and some interesting gleanings from Rajtarangini or from Kashmir history, particularly of Pathan rule which was dotted with clumsy whims and fancies of Pathan Governors in the Valley.

### **13.5 Love for Outdoor Life**

He had wonderful aesthetic tastes to enjoy life. In summer vacation, when his school was closed, he would plan programmes for outings along with his wife and grandson. Visiting Khirbhawani was generally preferred because of its being a secluded area with spiritual grace and cool atmosphere of Chinar trees. Here he found harmony and peace for his spiritual exercises. Sometimes he also visited health resorts like Achabal, Anantnag, Gautam Nag, Nag Dandi and areas of old monument sites like Kothyar Won, Parihaspore and Martand. He believed that God was within one's self and did not feel the need to roam about on pilgrimages in search of God. In 1965, he went to Rishikesh, where he attended the discourse of Swami Mahesh Yogi on Vedanta. While listening to the discourse, he stood up and sought Swamiji's permission to recite a "shloka" from Utpalastutaveli, a book on Kashmir Shaivism. Hailing Masterji's knowledge of Shaivism, Swami Mahesh elucidated the aspect of Kashmir Shaivism in detail to the gathering of Indian and foreigners there. Though being a student with Persian-Urdu background in his graduation, yet Masterji had developed great acumen for scientific knowledge and natural history. He was also well versed in religious philosophies and an exponent of Kashmir Shaivism. His urge to learn Sanskrit made him a disciple of learned Sanskrit teacher, late Shri Govind Joo Bhatt of Rainawari, and enthusiastically joined Gita classes on every Sunday at Vital Bhairav Temple. Practical astronomy was his other field of study and observation.

### **13.6 An Ardent Star-Gazer**

Kashmir is endowed with lush green mountains, snow-capped peaks, grating rivlets, gushing streams, dense forests, cool breeze and a beautiful canopy of crystal blue sky. The sky during the cover of darkness appears like a vast umbrella studded with countless glittering diamonds. On such starry nights, Masterji used to point out various stars like Great Bear, Polar Star, Milky Way and other galaxies to his students while campings at Gangabal, Sonamarg or Gulmarg and would narrate details about these planets to students.



**Master Samsar Chand Kaul (extreme left) with his CMS School colleagues Sarvashri Jialal Katal and Isher Kaul at Tarsar Marsar Lake in 1939.**

Despite having attained expertise and excellence in ornithology, Master Samsar Chand Koul could not get due recognition either from J&K Government or from the Centre. Leading political men and personalities of the state, like late Bakshi Ghulam Mohd., G. M. Sadiq, Agha Showkat, former diplomat in Pakistan, Agha Ashraf, P. N. Jalali, Bashir Bakshi, Dr. Nassir Shah, late Prof. M. S. Want and Prof. Ansari were some of his distinguished students in C.M.S. School.

However, the British Government favoured him with the honour of a small war pension; but in the state where he gave wider dimension to the education of the students, he passed away in oblivion.

[ *The author is Master Samsar Chand's grandson and resides in 128/13, Sector I, Pushp Vihar, New Delhi. ]*

### ***13.7 Books and Articles***

- Srinagar and its Environs
- Khir Bhawani Spring
- The Mysterious Cave of Amar Nath
- Pahalgam
- Sonamarg

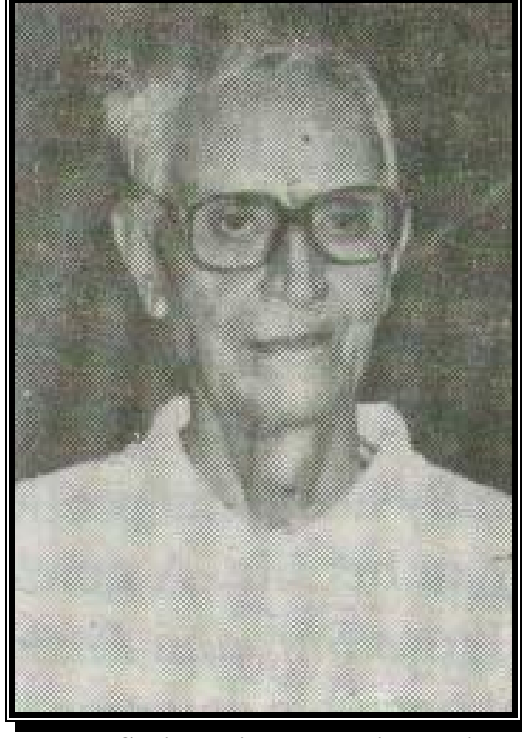
*Source: Koshur Samachar*



## **14 Shri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'**

### *The Man and His Achievements*

Prof. A. N. Dhar



**Late Shri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'**

**Born** at Drabiyar, Srinagar, in 1914, Shri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal' was well known as an accomplished scholar through his writings in the fields of Kashmir Shaivism and Vedanta, which have received countrywide recognition. He attained fame and popularity as a versatile and talented writer and earned for himself a position of special esteem because of his qualities of dedication and selfless service.

All his life, he had been a devoted teacher and scholar, content with his modest earnings, and very proficient in his work. An octogenarian who our community has reason to be proud of, he remained mostly busy in reading and writing, when he was free from domestic and social preoccupations (excluding the hours he devoted to his daily meditation). Of course, he took special delight in delivering discourses on religious and literary topics at his residence or at select places - for which he spared several hours a week in spite of his busy schedule.

His scholarly writings in English, Hindi, Sanskrit and Kashmiri, published in the form of books and articles (that have appeared in standard journals, including the Prabuddha Bharata, Kalyan, Malini and Koshur Samachar), have been favourably reviewed and commented upon by critics and scholars of note. In recognition of his valuable contribution to Hindi language and literature, he received a prestigious award from the Hindi Sansthan, U.P. Government, on Hindi Divas, on September 14, 1992, in Lucknow. On August 15, 1996, on Independence Day, a still more prestigious award - Certificate of Honour - was conferred on him which was presented to him by the President at Rashtrapati Bhawan on June 9, 1997, in recognition of his significant contribution to Sanskrit studies.

Koshur Samachar had the privilege of printing a picture of the investiture ceremony in colour in its issue of 1997. Shri 'Kamal' attended the function which afforded him an excellent opportunity to interact with the other fellow-awardees (all eminent scholars of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic).

### **14.1 Early Life**

Jankinath Ji had to come up the hard way to make his mark as a man of achievement. His mother passed away when he was just 7-8 years old; his father remarried but died when his son had barely attained the age of 13. Facing hardships as an orphan, Shri Kaul lacked the means that would have facilitated his education at school. Thus he could not continue his studies beyond matriculation. After a few years of service in Women's Welfare Trust, Srinagar, he joined the teaching profession at the age of 30 and taught at the D.A.V. Institute, Srinagar, for 30 years until he retired as a senior lecturer in 1974. In view of his competence and meritorious services, the Institute re-employed him for another five years until 1979. It was during his teaching career itself that he Improved his educational qualifications - passed Prabhakar and got his B.A. and B.T. degrees, followed by an M.A. in Sanskrit from the University of Jammu and Kashmir. He worked as Research Officer at Sri Parmanand Research Institute, Srinagar, for 4 years (from 1981 to 1985). Since 1986, he held the post of Editor, Cultural Desk/ Research Officer, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Shivalaya, Karan Nagar, Srinagar, and after his displacement from the Valley in 1989, he had been discharging these functions at Jammu.

A deep interest in spirituality, rooted in his constant quest for truth, had been the main motivation behind Shri Kaul's life-long study of holy scriptures. His proficiency in Sanskrit provided further impetus to his sustained study of Shaiva, Shakta and Pedantic texts in original. Right from his boyhood days, he had the marks of a true Jigyasu and Bhakta in one. No wonder, therefore, that he had read the works of Swami Ram Tirth in English and IJrdu and also those of Swami Vivekanand with passionate zeal when he was a young man in his twenties. He had in him the makings of a poet; it was in his early youth that he started composing lyrics in Kashmiri and Hindi.

### **14.2 Divine Love**

His intense love for the Divine brought him into contact first with a well-known scholar and saint, Shri Nilakanth. It was under his guidance that he studied Bhagwad Gita in depth along with the commentaries of Shankaracharya and Shankaranand. Shri Nilakanth, on his retirement from government service, lived in ShivanandAshram, Rishikesh, from 1957 onwards. In 1963, he took sanyasa and came to he called Swami Nilakanthanand Saraswati. He left his mortal coil in 1988. Before shifting to Rishikesh, he recommended Kamal Ji to the illustrious sahit-scholar, Swami Laxman Joo, known in the country and abroad for his mastery of the Shaiva texts and his attainments in spirituality.

During his long association with Swami Laxman Joo, he wrote several eulogistic and devotional lyrics on hen in Sanskrit, English and Kashmiri. Atter the Swami ji attained mahasamadhi, he wrote several biographical articles on him which appeared in various journals. In all humility, Kamal Ji has acknowledged his debt to the great saint of Ishaber as to how he profited academically and spiritually from his discourses on Kashmir Shaivism and his explication of the Shaiva texts. Some of the valuable lectures of Swami ji have been recorded and rendered into English by him with great care and editorial skill. Likewise, some discourses given in Kashmiri by Swami Laxman Joo on the practice of meditation and Pranayama have been reproduced by him in the Nagri script in a presentable form. During his association with the Swamiji, he also came into contact with a householder saint, Pandit Satram, who lived at Ishaber close to Swamiji's Ashram. From this saint, he learned Vidyaranya's Panchdasi, which he found very useful.

A study of the corpus of Shri Kamal's works reveals three things about him - his capacity for rigorous research, his wide-ranging scholarship and his writing skill as a translator, commentator and creative artist. His achievement as a writer is stupendous, considering the hardships he had to face as a man of modest means.

### *14.3 Poetic Sensibility*

I would first like to talk briefly about his poetic sensibility that flowered early in his life. A quick look at his book of Kashmiri lyrics *Shradha Posh*, brought out in 1942, reveals at once his devotional intensity, his deep mental involvement with the Transcendent, his spiritual aspiration as also his dispassion and his practical grasp of the technique of meditation as recommended in our sastras. The very titles of some of the poems are striking and significant - *Murli Nad*, *Sahana Panai*, *Viji Vav*, *Berang Nundabon*, *Samvit Panchadasi*, *Turya Tirth*, etc. The preacher's tone is marked in the poem *Grahasthiyas Updesh* that exhorts one to combine purity with a satisfactory performance of worldly obligations to maintain the delicate balance between Parmarth and our social conduct. His diction is simple and lucid and his manner straightforward. The diction is usually a mix of Kashmiri words in common use and the appropriate terms derived from the sacred texts. As an illustration, I give below my translation of the first 10 lines of the poem *Siva Sankar Sambu*:

Settle your mind,  
Chanting the mantra  
Siva Sankar Sambu.  
The mind cleansed,  
Light will shine forth  
Dispelling all darkness;  
With true faith  
Aided by self-introspection,  
Utter the mantra  
Siva Sankar Sambu.  
Get into the temple  
At early dawn  
After a sacred bath;  
Then meditate,  
And ponder the mantra  
Siva Sankar Sambu.

Shri Kamal's lyrical genius as a Hindi poet blossomed forth in the volume titled, *Viksipt Vina*. This work has been specially mentioned as the author's valuable contribution to Hindi poetry in the citation that accompanied the award conferred on him in 1992. The poem *Main* strikes the keynote; here is my translation of the first stanza:

I'm the melancholy note  
From a Vina with broken strings;  
I am the wailing song  
That has burst forth  
From the anguished heart  
Of a helpless woman!

The various lyrics strung together in the volume reveal the depth and intensity of the author's feelings and the loftiness of his aspirations. The reader at once feels that a 'lark is singing' in the poet's breast. At the same time, the poems show how sensitive he is to the pain and suffering that life brings in its train.

### *14.4 Magnum Opus*

From the long list of Shri Kamal's publications, I would select three titles for special mention:

i) *Bhavaninamasahastratutih*, which I consider his magnum opus. It is a translation from Sanskrit into English of the hymn containing a thousand names of Bhavani, accompanied by an elaborate commentary, (ii) *Siva-Sutra-Vimarsha*, edited with a critical commentary in Hindi, and (iii) *Panchastavi A Pentad of Hymns to Bhavani*. The Sanskrit hymns are translated into English followed each by an elaborate and

illuminative commentary. Three favourable reviews on the first title (including one by the present writer) have appeared in Vedanta Kesri, Indian Book Chronicle, Koshur Samachar and Prabuddha Bharata. The book has been in great demand and it has been reprinted. His achievement as translator, annotator and commentator is impressive and his perceptive and critical comments in Hindi on the Siva Sutras are thoughtful and lucid. I find this work in no way less useful and, in some respects, even finer than Jaidev's notes in his English commentary on the text. The third title is a fine work, packed with insightful comments on the hymns matched by perceptive allusions to the relevant materials that illuminate the esoteric meanings of the hymns. The book has been very well received by readers all over the country. Swami Ranganathananda of Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, was all praise for this work. He mentioned the book to me when I met him in February 1997 at Hyderabad.

In sum, Shri Jankinath Kaul Kamal was remarkable as a scholar and writer. Tall, slim and pleasant-looking, saintly and erudite, always neatly dressed, he exuded the culture and warmth that evoked admiration from one and all. Those who were close to him and listened to his illuminating discourses found his company invaluable. As a scholar, he was every inch professional.

*Source:* **Koshur Samachar**

## 15 Kalhana - The Chronicler

by Prof. K. N. Dhar

**Chronicle-writing** is not foreign to the imagination of the Kashmiri Brahmins. A host of histories Charitas and Mahatmyas amply testify to this assertion. However, the history as it is taken in the modern parlance, is absent in Sanskrit literature. History is not an account of rise and fall of kings but should embrace in its ambit the political, social and religious attainments and aspirations of the people at large. To glean such fool-proof material from Kalhana's Raja Tarangini (River of Kings) will only mean love's labour lost. In the first instance in his time such a conception of history-writing was not at all known; Even the earlier Greek memoirs cannot be deemed free from this defect. I before accusing Kalhana of inefficient handling of the subject-matter, it is to be borne in mind that he holds brief only for the "Rajas" i. e. Kings, and does not dabble in any other literary or historical pastime concerning people. He has very faithfully and aptly captioned his chronicle as "The River of Kings". Hence he limits his poetic description to the kings for and about whom he has written this Kavya. Thus it can safely be stated that Dr. Meadonnel's remarks about the non-existence of truly historical material in Raja-Tarangini is only partly true.

Among the galaxy of such writers of Historical Kavyas Kalhana shines the brightest. He is the only Kashmiri author who has taken his assignment seriously. He is the first and the best in the line.

Obviously enough the name Kalhana is non Sanskritic but may have had some meaning in the local dialect at that time; this is not even now intelligible to Kashmiri people.

Kashmiri writers have shown a preference for coining their names in local dialect instead of Sanskrit over which their command was praise-worthy. So names as, Bilhana, Mammatta, Kayatta etc are striking examples of this trend.

However, Dr. Stein in his masterly introduction to Raja Tarangini has taken pains in establishing the affinity of "Kalyan", as given in the Srikanthacaritam of Mankha, with "Kalhana" of RajaTarangini:

Moreover, the commentator of Sri Kantlia Caritam, jonaraja has said that "Alakadatta was actually the "Sandhi-Vigrahaka" or the minister of war and peace." He further says that the stories (Kathas) in which "Kalyan" is said to be proficient are the stories from Mahabharata and other epics. But being himself a man of letters and having taken up the thread of chronicle-writing from Kalhana has also given his local name and has not cared to identify it with "Kalyan." Even though phonetically "Kalyan" can be rendered into "Kalhana" Apabhramsa, yet we have to rely on the verdict of Dr. Keith who seems to take this conclusion with a grain of salt.

Kalhana is silent about his pedigree or the sort of life he lived. His name only appears on the colophons of his work including the direct reference to him by jona-Raja who wrote some three centuries after him. This establishes beyond doubt that inspite of his being shy about self-introduction unlike "Bilhana" the tradition had not forgotten him and his merit.

Some scholars have tried to identify certain names in the text of the Raja Tarangini as the relations of the Chronicler e.g. "Canpaka" as his father and "Kamaka" probably his uncle. It is true that this name occurs frequently and with evident respect also:

<verses>

"When Canpaka who was stationed as incharge of the 'gate' was ready to go in for that assignment under the orders of the king, Vataganda (Ananda) endeavoured to stop him."

Unless this surmise is corroborated by any other, evidence contemporary or later, we are constrained to dismiss it as extraneous.

Fortunately for us Kalhana has not left us into guessing the date of his composition. He explicitly says that he began the writing of his chronicle in year 4224 of the Laukika era i.e. 1148-49 AD. and finished it in the year following.



Kalhana does not brag about the originality of his Kavya but instead very humbly says:

<verses>

"If I again narrate the subject matter of tales which have been related by others earlier, still the virtuous ought not turn their faces from me without hearing my purpose".

He very frankly admits that the tradition of chronicle-writing was very popular even before his advent, but to his dismay these chronicles no longer existed in a complete state in his time. He further says that the loss of such chronicles was due to the fact that one "Suvrata" condensed all these chronicles into one book, hence nobody bothered for the originals; having fallen into disuse, these in course of time, were consigned to the forgotten niches of the houses.

Before embarking on his task of writing the chronicle, Kalhana very rightly wants to be dispassionate in narrating the events. He would like to sit on the fence recording the events in a most judicious and unprejudiced manner; He believes that:

<verses>

"That talented one is alone praiseworthy whose intellect devoid of love or hatred relates the past anecdotes like an umpire."

The chronicler acknowledges the debt of Eleven works of former scholars containing "the chronicles of Kings" including the Nilamata Purana. Out of these eleven chronicle only three are named by him and about other eight he is silent. The first title he refers to as his source, is Ksemendra's Nrpavali or List of Kings. However, this useful book is now lost along with the works of "Padam Mihira" and "Helaraja" who had also composed a List of Kings (Parthivavali)." In view of his giving a direct quotation from "Chavillakara's" uncaptioned work which furnished him with the name of Ashoka and five other ancient kings it can be safely inferred that this work was extant at that time but subsequently could not stand the ravages of time, hence was lost.

Besides this, he made ample use of inscriptions and edicts for building the chronicle upto date. He could not also ignore the popular tradition which has occupied a sizable portion of his chronicle.

However, on even a cursory perusal of the chronicle we can very safely infer that he had studied the "VikramankaDevaCaritam" of Bilhana, a fellow-poet of his. He has not at times refrained from quoting his phraseology and style even. Another earlier work which he must have consulted is Bana's "Harsacarita". It is a well-known fact that this historical record of King Harsa Vardhana of Kanauj enjoyed popularity in Kashmir as Mammatta in his KavyaPrakasa has quoted a passage from it. It cannot also be gainsaid that Kalhana was very well conversant with the epics-Ramayana and Mahabharata. In this connection copious examples can be culled from the RajaTarangini. Having armed himself with all this material, he took up his assignment in all seriousness and tried to overcome "the difficulties arising from any errors".

The oldest manuscript (in Sarada characters) of 'Raja' is in the possession of Govt. Research Library, Srinagar. There is another manuscript of this chronicle prepared by one Pt. Gana Kak, with explanatory notes by Pt. Saheb Ram.

Kalhana originally wrote in Sarada and subsequently it was transcribed into Devanagari. However, it is to be borne in mind that the scribes (lipikaras) engaged for this purpose seem not to have mastery either over the language or the script. Hence many errors crept into it. Moreover, Sarada is a very intricate script and the resemblance of several words with each other could only be detected by scholars of profound learning. Unfortunately the lack of command of the transcribers over the language has corrupted and even ruined the text at places. This is mainly responsible for the defects inherent in the Calcutta edition of the "Raja". Confusing 'Rilhana' with 'Bilhana' is a glaring example of such neglect. This edition was so corrupt that the translation of this gave rise to many controversies.

Taking cue from Dr. Buhler, who first of all pointed out the defects of the Calcutta edition, the search for a more authentic manuscript was continued by the subsequent indologists. The efforts of Dr. Stein were crowned with success, when he could find access to the "zealously guarded Codex Archetypus (date of

composition from 1648. A. D. to 1685 A. D.) of Rajanaka Ratnakantha by his successors," through the good offices of Pandit Suraj Kaul, member of the Kashmir State Council and his son Pandit Hari Krishen Koul. This genuine Kashmiri recension of Raja Tarangini solved many mysteries and a trustworthy text of this great chronicle, in the hands of Rajanaka Ratanakantha, was unearthed in 1890 A. D. Moreover, Dr. Stein could also lay his hands on the Lahore edition of Raja Tarangini in 1895; it was in the possession of a Kashmiri Brahmin named Pandit Jagmohan Lal Hundu, who had migrated to Lahore from Srinagar. These two valuable finds were instrumental in dispelling doubts regarding the authenticity or genuineness of Raja Tarangini. Earlier, Dr. Buhler had also been able to procure a manuscript of Raja Tarangini, in Sarada, from one Pt. Keshava Raina in Srinagar. This MS according to the learned scholar, was only hundred or hundred and fifty years old.

However, the credit of introducing this Kashmiri chronicle to the world goes to Professor Wilson. In 1825 A.D he compiled an essay on the first six cantos (tarangas) of Rajatarangini and published it in Asiatic Researches. Thereafter the text was published also from Calcutta in 1835 by the Asiatic Society and later on Mr. Troyer undertook the stupendous task of translating all the eight cantos in 1840 and completed these in 1852.

His knowledge of Sanskrit being faulty, he made the confusion arising out of the Calcutta edition, worse confounded. Then onwards, in addition to this, many other European scholars have made references to this chronicle and have gleaned much useful data from it. Prof. Lassen, in his Encyclopedia of Indian Antiquities, has given a complete analysis of this work. General Cunningham treated its chronology in an admirable article in the 'Numismatic chronicle' of 1918. In spite of all this, Prof. Wilson had to concede that a close translation of these cantos in such a pretty mess with regard to linguistic inaccuracies, would have been impracticable. It is noteworthy to mention here that none of these scholars had seen the MS in Sarada characters. They based all their conjectures on Devanagari manuscripts. Professor Wilson, in particular had seen the MS sent by Mr. Moorcraft from Kashmir and two copies in Devanagari gifted to the India House Library London by Mr. Colebrook. Dr. E. Hultzsch also utilized the material brought to light by the above mentioned scholars for many of his thought-provoking articles. Among the Indian scholars Shri Yogeshchander Dutt's English version and R.S. Pandit's translation also deserve mention. Both these works are based on Calcutta edition.

Before we proceed, it is desirable to allude to a controversy raised by Mr. Troyer. He contends in his introduction to the translation of Raja Tarangini that the last two cantos of this chronicle have not been written by Kalhana but are the composition of some other poet. To substantiate his theory he argues

- i) He (Kalhana) allots to the last two hundred and fifty years double the number of verses of what he devotes to the preceding three thousand and odd years.
- ii) The references and resumes given in the VII and VIII do not tally with those of the first six.
- iii) Canto VIII relates events which occurred after 1148 A. D.

Prof. Lassen also notes the difference in style between the first six and last two cantos. In meeting his arguments it is useful to bear in mind that:

- i) Last two cantos can roughly be called the contemporary history delineated by the chronicler. It definitely deserved more space, because Kalhana was sure about the ground under his feet. The first six cantos are based on different sources coupled with tradition; so Kalhana wanted to skip through these. The matter he was treating was more or less not so authentic from his view-point and so was given lesser space.
- ii) The so-called varying references are mainly, due to the bad and faulty MS; and to crown all, his incorrect translation. No such contradictions have been detected by, subsequent scholars, more recently by Dr. Stein because of the correct text. Mr. Troyer's hold on Sanskrit was not so good. He has translated Mukhtapida and Lalitaditya as two different personalities while actually they are one and the same person. With regard to this Dr. Buhler has to say "He (Troyer) undertook a task very much beyond his strength for which he was qualified neither by learning nor by natural talent;

iii) With regard to the third argument it may safely be said that he began to write his chronicle in Saptrsi Samvat 24 which works out at 4224 (Saptrsi Samvat) i.e. 1148-49 A.D. It contained thousands of slokas, hence could not be completed in the same year by any stretch of imagination. If he mentioned events happening nine years later (VIII book) in Saptrsi Samvat 33, it only proves that the poem was not completed until after that year.

iv) The so called difference in style referred to by Prof Lassen is not at all detectable.

The most unassailable evidence regarding the authenticity of the last two cantos of 'Raja' is furnished by Jona Raja when he took up the thread from Kalhana (nearly three centuries after him) and completed his Raja Tarangini. He explicitly mentions that Kalhana finished the "Account of Kings" with the reign of Jaya Simha. One fact should not be lost sight of that canto VI, ends abruptly which can never be termed as the conclusion. Hence it has been made sufficiently clear that, all the eight cantos are from the fertile pen of one and the same author and that is Kalhana. However, it is to be conceded (with all that is said and done) that Kalhana's text of 'Raja', as it is available to us at present, does suffer from some shortcomings. After making due allowance for the corruptions which might have crept into the text by careless transcription and, at times, deliberate interpolation's, yet some unpardonable oversights have been made by the 'renowned' chronicler. Kalhana's mastery over the language is also at times doubtful when he repeats the Alankaras word by word particularly in the Canto VIII. At times consistency with the anecdotes related earlier is not maintained and it seems that he was either in hurry in completing the assignment or treated the subject - matter towards the conclusion in a slipshod manner. In view of his accurate detailing and exactness, it can only be surmised that he did not care to revise his manuscript for one reason or another, or he could not find time to do so.

As regards the over-sights, he has made a glaring error : while describing King " Sacinara" in Book I he extolls him like " Sacipati"; Indra, or the husband of saci (queen), but in Book VIII while giving the resume of the reigns of different kings he mentions "Sacinara" as the "son of Saci" (queen Mother):

<verses>

"Thereafter his son (Janakas's) the illustrious Sacinara like an Indra on the globe protected the earth. He was forbearing and his commands could not be disobeyed."

<verses>

"The latter's son (Suvarna's) was Janaka, whose son was Sacinara born of Saci (queen mother).

Even if we may contend that Kalhana has play on the word Saci, yet it is not in good taste to describe "Saci" as the wife and the mother at the same time in respect to one and the same person. Moreover in Book VIII he has altogether forgotten to mention King Nara I whom he has treated at length in the Book I. Also while giving the names of the lovers of Srilekha queen of Samgrama Raja in Book VII he has not mentioned Vyaddasuha who plundered the treasures of the King and courted his consort as given in the Book VIII. To crown all, at some places we are confronted with bad Sanskrit and even wrong metres employed.

Besides this, he has been so much influenced by Bilhana's Vikramankdeva-caritam and Bana's Harsacaritam that he has not refrained from borrowing their words and even phraseology. From epics also he has enriched his vocabulary and has not resisted the temptation of quoting Verbatum from these. Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa has been also used by him for his treatise and even the thought and diction have been borrowed from it :

<verses>

"(He King Kalasa) had approached the woman (daughter in-law of Jindu Raja of licentious Character), having sent in advance the noselessman (His vita). That very inauspicious man because of his disfigurement was responsible for the frustration of his amors".

Evidently the books which have attracted Kalhana to borrow do come also under the purview of chronicles, e.g. Ramayana, Mahabharata, Raghuvamsa etc., hence he could not but get acquainted with these so as to make his own composition more authentic and traditionally accurate. The point to be

emphasized here is his freedom with which he has drawn upon these and has even quoted the words, vocabulary and to crown all imitated the style.

But such lapses are few and far between, and do not, in any way, tarnish his image as a chronicle-writer. Out of a compendium of some 8000 Slokas such defects are quite natural when, the canvas is very wide before the chronicler.

In his introduction to his 'Raja' Kalhana very clearly indicates that he would prefer to be a poet because:-

<verses>

"Who else but the poets resembling Prajapati in (creative power) and able to bring forth lovely productions, can place the past times before the eyes of men ."

He thinks that transformation of the past into the present can be attained by the deft pen of a poet only. A Kavya has been defined as a composition in prescribed metres, being devoid or blemishes (Dosa) having meaningful words containing Rasa (sentiment), Guna (quality) and embellishments. Such and other ingredients of Kavya presuppose a thorough study of Rhetorics, poetics and embellishments. Kalhana has not cared to give any account of his literary attainments. To whatever poetic horizon he reaches is to be gleaned from this chronicle. Therefore, we may assert that he is a poet by intuition and a historian by profession. Primarily his concern was to put into words the hierarchy of Kings which ruled Kashmir; poetry was used by him only as a convenient vehicle.

Having read other Kavyas, Raghuvamsa and Vikramankadecaritam and the epics about which we are sure very thoroughly, he must have gained proficiency in the art of Kavya-writing and there can be no surprise, in noticing that at times he rises to the heights of poetic prowess also:

<verses>

"Having come out of the grove off lowery creepers, (a young Brahmin visakha) saw before him two virgins donning blue robes and having very sweet eyes. The corners of their eyes were very attractive and were smeared with a very thin line of collyrium, as if this was the stalk of the red ruby-like lotuses used by these as ear-ornaments. To their two shoulders were pinned their faces, as it were like flags, the ends of which in the shape of their captivating eyes were fluttering in the gentle wind."

The similes used in these stanzas are not only very beautiful but also homely.

In his benedictory tribute to Siva and his consort Parvati in book III, the dialogue between the two, reminds us of the same situation in Kalidasa's Kumar Sambhavam. Herein Kalhana has most poetically justified the otherwise ugly demeanour of Lord Siva:

<verses>

"May Siva protect you who in his form composed of two halves (male and female, Ardhanarisvara) gives these replies (to Parvati's queries):

"Leave away this elephant-skin". "In the inner recesses of the frontal globe on his fore-head are pearls which can effortlessly adorn the tips of your breasts." "Why this fire on your fore-head." "From these you may take the collyrium for your eyes" and who even, if objection were raised by his beloved to the Snake, would suffer such an answer."

In the Stanzas below the use of Alankaras (poetic, embellishments) has been made dexterously

<verses>

While describing the burning of the Cakradhara temple in the reign of Sussala 1121 A. D. to 1128 A. D. the poet in Kalhana weaves a graphic panorama of words and images:

1. "The sky was densely screened by huge columns of smoke from which shone moving flames resembling the bushy and tawny red-hair and beards of goblins.
2. The tongues of the flames emanating from the fire the smoke of which was spent-up, gave the impression of waves of gold coming out of a golden cloud which had been, as it were, melted by the excessive heat.



3. The columns of fire strewn on the sky looked like the red headgear fallen from the crests of gods fleeing in scare before the conflagration."

Even if Kalhana tries to live up to the norms of a Kavya as enjoined by the Alankarashastra, yet his 'forte' being chronicle-writing, he has therefore conveniently ignored many of the tenets laid therein. Even though he employs a variety of metres yet his mastery over these is deficient. Some scholars are forced to label it as "versified prose." In view of what has been shown to illustrate his poetic prowess earlier, this verdict seems unjust. Many such examples can be copiously quoted from the 'Raja' to show that Kalhana is no poet of mean order, even if he cannot catchup with his fellow country-man Bilhana.

The didactic import of his work is also distinctly pronounced. In this branch of his poetic fancy he has amply drawn from the epics, Dharamasastras and Nitishastras

<verses>

"The diamond can be held as proof against all metals and stone-dykes against the waters, but nothing (is proof against) the false." His mastery over the pun can be sufficiently illustrated by the following stanza:

<verses>

"There Gauri though she has assumed the form of Vitasta still keeps her wonted inclination. (For in her river-shape) she turns her face towards the ravine (Guha), just as (in her godlike form) she turns it towards (her son) Kumara, (Guha) (in her river shape) the mouths of the Nagas (Naga Mukha) drink her abundant water (Apita bhuri Paya) just as (in her god like form) elephant faced (son Ganesha Naga Mukha) drank her abundant milk (Apita bhuri Paya).

Alankara Shastras also lay it down that every poetic composition should have a Rasa (sentiment) permeating throughout. the length and breadth of the Kavya. To live up to this tenet Kalhana says:

<verses>

"Suddenly coming to life of living beings and their transitory nature is to be seriously thought over ; sothe Santa (indifference to worldly objects and pleasures) sentiment will reign supreme here-in in this book)."

This Santa Rasa is very much pronounced in Mahabharta. While defining Santa Rasa Vishva Nath Kaviraja has to say:

<verses>

"Wherein there is no Sorrow or joy, nor fear, as neither apathy nor attachment and no desire. The great munies have called such a state of mind as shanta, where in all sentiments and their consequent expression are equal in measure.

One point needs clarification here. Raja Tarangini is composed of thousands of anecdotes in which individual "Rasa" in view of its subject matter, should naturally run. So in the description of war vira is there; in the details giving amors of various queens "Srinagar" is present. The intrigue and court conspiracies arouse "Jugupsa" and the sad end of some kings excites "Shoka". These sentiments are all subservient to the motif of the chronicle i. e. "Santa". Perhaps this is the reason that Kalhana ends four out of eight Tarangas of his chronicle with the description of such kings who gave up their thrones by acts of pious resignation and renunciation. He has emphasized off and on that despite regal glory and affluence, every king, one after another, had to renounce this by the everlasting natural law that nothing is permanent in this world.

"What is born is to die definitely." Hence every one should take a lesson from this and try to remain resigned and cultivate in himself an attitude which remains unruffled in pleasure or paid, plenty or penury; herein the patent influence of Mahabharata is clearly seen on the chronicler.

Without mincing words we are alive to the fact that Kalhana's poetical prowess was limited by his assignment of chronicle-writing. He wants to be a poet and a chronicler at the same time. Kalidasa did combine poetic acumen with history in his "Raghuvamsa" but therein also his talents and unparalleled skill have suffered a jolt-especially towards the closing chapters of his Kavya. Kalhana has also tried to



emulate his example. Let us now discuss how far he has been successful in making a happy compromise between the two.

Perhaps sensing some such insinuations Kalhana has very succinctly made a confession:

"Though in view of the length of the narrative, diversity could not be secured by means of amplification, still there may be found something in it that will please the rightminded."

Hence the chronicler is aware of the fact that his treatise cannot boast of diversity by elaborate events, because that would lengthen his narrative and as such he has to be brief and factual. This axe of brevity is to be employed even though the chronicler may not have liked it. Important events need to be emphasized and minor ones skipped over. This very fact goes a long way in proving that Kalhana even though wanting to retain the poet in himself does actually make it subordinate to his skill of chronicle-writing. Not only this he has also set a norm for his chronicle-recording:

"Only that person of merit is worthy of praise who while relating the past does keep himself away from partiality or otherwise like an Umpire."

So, it is abundantly clear that Kalhana would not like to indulge in fanciful hyperbole or otherwise like a poet, but would like to record the facts as these took place, in an unattached bent of feeling. The vehicle for this he has chosen is the poetry, otherwise his motive is to write a chronicle upto date which had become fragmentary.

The inference that Kalhana is a chronicler first and a poet afterwards, can very safely be made from the preceding stanzas. Poetry to him was only a means to an end, the end being pure and simple- chronicle-writing. The soul of a chronicle is art of narration. Hence Kalhana's merit as a chronicler can be measured by his deftness in narrating events. Narration 'does not mean only flow of events but events should also admit of impartiality of the narrator. Secondly, the individuality of characters and their personal traits have also to be taken into consideration. Thirdly, historicity of the narrative is the touchstone on which the merit or otherwise of the chronicler is to be tested.

About the impartiality and independence of judgment as depicted by Kalhana we have earlier shown his attitude to his assignment. However, as practice is better than precept we have to see the veracity of his professing an "Umpire-like attitude."

Happily for us, Kalhana has lived upto this maxim. He has been a close witness of the rise and fall of kings from Sussala to Jayasimha of whom he was a contemporary. In narrating the events of the reign of Jaya-Simha he has not hesitated to bring into relief his defects also. He has not been a panegyrist. He has very emphatically criticized the conduct of high-ups in his own times, the omissions and faulty judgment of the king under whom he wrote. At times we feel that such trenchant criticism could not have been publicised at that time for fear of punishment.

About the exploitation of their subjects, Kalhana records:

<verses>

"The riches which the kings amass by tormenting people go to the rivals or enemies or are consumed by fire." Ill gotten wealth does not last long. In order to illustrate his point he says:

<verses>

"The treasures of King Kalasa which he had contrived to get through malpractices were very soon squandered by his son on unworthy persons and by his wife on lovers."

Ordinarily like all other Kavya-writers even in his own land Kalhana should have followed a policy of safety first and painted the kings only in white splendour; but like a true chronicler he does not hesitate from using black paint whenever occasion arises. In this connection he has placed a host of rulers in the dock.

In this respect we should remember this fact that Kalhana was alive and a close witness of events of Sussala's and his son's Jayasimha's reign. About Sussala, the father of the reigning king, he has not a single 'kind word and even for Jayasimha he does not ignore to pen down his bad points.

This needs high order of courage and that also at that time when political murders and diplomatic reprisals were a common feature. He also gives a graphic account of Sycophants, parasites and flatterer of the kin, Jaysimha who definitely held high office in his government. He is not at all afraid of their revenge and very faithfully paints their detestable figures.

The ruling king also does not escape his chastisement:

<verses>

"Uneven, indeed are the features also in his (Jayasimha's) character. Not perceiving the excellence of their (aggregate) result, the people have concluded that-these were faults."

Now we come to the moot point of historicity in Kalhana's chronicle. He has given us the eyewitness account of at least three kings- Harsa, Sussala and Jayasimha. Herein his historical acumen is at its highest. However in the first six books he has relied on the sources which he has described at length in the beginning of his chronicle. He has also taken help from tradition which he could not ignore at any price. In this way if the events are treated in a very loose and general way in the first six books, it is the fault not of the chronicler but of the sources at his disposal. He has tried his best to weave into one the scattered threads of history.

The first king of Kashmir has been named as Gonanda I by him and he has been shown a contemporary of Yudishthira of Mahabharata. The date of accession to throne by Yudishthira is given as 653rd year of Kali era. Kalhana has given this very date as the start of Gonanda's rule or Kashmir-history on the authority of Nilamata Purana. However, from Gonanda III he gives the length of reigns regularly. For this he supplies a cogent reason in as much as " fifty two lost kings" he has not been able to identify or locate. Among the fifty two lost kings he has given us names of seventeen perhaps on the basis of the tradition. Still there is a veritable gap of thirty five kings between Gonanda I and Gonanda III which he has not succeeded in filling. Out of these seventeen kings whom he has retrieved, he has given us the name of Ashoka (B.C. 300) - the great Buddhist monarch of Pataliputra who had also annexed Kashmir. Kalhana's record about Ashoka is corroborated by his inscriptions and by the Chinese travellers. One of the famous deeds of this monarch was to found the city of Srinagar which was called "Srinagari" at that time:

<verses>

"That illustrious king (Ashoka) founded the important city of Srinagari with ninety six lakhs of houses full of wealth".

"The Turkish incursions into Kashmir have been amply dealt with by Kalhana while mentioning the names of great Kushan ruler Kanishka and other two Huska and Juska, while describing these foreign, kings Kalhana has shown extreme sense of catholicity. They had embraced Buddhism and as such this religion - a virtual reaction against Brahmanism- also was popular in Kashmir, for which Kalhana a staunch Saiva has no regrets; instead he praises this religion and its founder.

These kings founded the towns Huskapura, Juskpura, and Kaniskapura now known as "Vushkur, Zokur, and Kanispur respectively, the first and last are in the vicinity of Baramulla (Varahmulla) and "Zokur" near the famous Naseem Bagh. The chronicler also refers to famous Buddhist philosopher "Nagarjuna" having lived here at Sadarhadvana (the first of six Arhats-Buddhist mendicants). This place has been identified as the present "Harwan" where on the hillocks remains of the Buddhist monasteries are still visible.

Another alien king who retired to Kashmir as narrated by Kalhana, is the white Hun Mihir Kula whom he refers as "Trikotihan" - killer of three crores. After perpetrating countless atrocities, he embraced Saivism here and later out of penitence consigned himself to flames.

Out of the indigenous kings Kalhana has given us illuminating accounts of the following. These illustrious kings are very renowned in Kashmir:

Pravarsena II (A.D. 580 roughly): This king has been portrayed as a valiant warrior; when he was invited to occupy the throne, he was leading an expedition in Trigarta (modern Kangra) to recover the kingdom of his fore-fathers. He is said to have built his capital named Pravaraपुरा, (Pravarasenapura) perhaps on

the same site on which modern Srinagar stands. However, on further scrutiny and reading through the lines, it can be safely established that the new city was founded on the outskirts of Sharika parvat or Hari parvat in Kashmir. In Kalhana's own words this hill was situated in the centre of the new city.

Lalituditya Mukhtapida (A.D. 750) has been painted in very profuse colours and also at length by Kalhana. Here-in the evidence of foreign notices and monuments is so striking that Kalhana's account does not seem only credible but also accurate, Lalituditya was a great conqueror and inflicted crushing defeats on Yasovarman, the king of central India, Tokharians (Dwellers of upper oxus or more precisely Badakhshan of the Muslim Historians) from where he brought a very astute person Cankuna by name and made him his minister, and also some Turks who lived in the upper Indus. Not only this, he invaded Baltistan and Tibet with Chinese connivance and subjugated Dard tribes. He has also been portrayed as having crossed the sand-ocean perhaps in central Asia. In this way we are told that the whole of his life was spent in wars and he perished while with an expedition to distant North in the excessive snow. Not only this he made the king of Bengal his vassal.

Even though his hands were full with waging wars, he did find some time to build some famous buildings in Kashmir. One of these is the sun-temple at Martanda which the king constructed at the site of the Tirtha of the same name. Its massive walls of stones with a lofty enclosure have been clearly mentioned. He also founded the city of Parihasapura which served as the royal residence also. He also built a cluster of temples around it. This city had been built by the king for merrymaking (parihasa) as a respite after strenuous wars. "The karewas of Paraspur and Diwar are situated at a distance of fourteen miles from Srinagar on the Baramulla road." Another two towns namely "Lalitpura" and "Lokapunya", "Lalitpur" an abbreviation of Lalitudityapura can be identified easily. It is called "Letapur" now, but no remains are seen there above ground. May be these lie buried under the saffron-growing udars.

The "Loka Punya" is the "Lookabhavan" of to-day; the former town did not find favour with the king as it had been designed and built by his architect in his absences. This great king also made elaborate arrangements for the irrigation of villages by water- wheels drawing water from the Vitasta.

The reign of Avantivarman (A. D. 855-883) has been rightly called the period of consolidation for the country. Even though the suzerainty of Kashmir was not extended beyond its frontiers as in the time of Lalituditya, but the king gave ample attention to the internal problems of the country, which had become more pronounced during the reign of weak successors of Lalituditya.

The king founded the town of "Avantipur" situated at a distance of some seventeen miles from Srinagar on Srinagar Jammu Highway. The fame of Avantipur is still preserved by the huge temples he built there, which are still erect though in dilapidated condition. Among these ruins the most valuable are a series of sculptures which have been placed in the Srinagar Museum. His very astute and wise Minister Sura was also as pious as the king. He also founded a town after his name Surapura called Hurpora at present. The landmark of his reign is the dredging of the Vitasta undertaken by Engineer Suyya. By his ingenious methods he regulated the course of Vitasta and the scare of famine looming large every year by excessive floods was warded off for ever. New land was also reclaimed and on one of these tracts Sayya built a township named "Suyyapur," Sopore of today.

King Avanti Varman died of an affliction at Jyeshtheshvara shrine overlooking the "Dal" lake where he had retired earlier. This shrine is called "Zeethayar" at present near the Chismashi spring. In his court there were such luminaries as Muktakana, Sivaswami, Ananda Vardhana and Ratnakara.

Among the most powerful women who changed the course of the history of Kashmir by their irresistible personality "Dida" deserves full mention. Actually being the consort of "Khemagupta" (A. D. 950-958) she wielded the real regal power, as her consort was a weakling given to licentious habits. She was the daughter of "Simha Raja" the king of Lohara. She tried to give clean administration to the people by getting rid of corrupt ministers and even the prime-minister Phalgun. Many rebellions raised their head but were quelled by Dida as she did not show any mercy. After the death of her husband she ruled the country as a regent for minor Abhimanyu. However, Abhimanyu died prematurely and his son Nandi Gupta was installed on the throne by Dida his grandmother. He ruled for one year only and died of "witch

craft" employed by her grandmother. Her other grand sons Tribhuvaha and Bhima Gupta were also despatched to other world in the same way and path became clear for the queen to ascend the throne herself. She had a love affair with Tunga a cowered boy from Poonch and made him the prime-minister.

After anointing her brother's son "Samgrama Raja" as the Yuva Raja she died in A.D. 1003 121 after having ruled for 53 long years both as a regent and a monarch in a most ruthless way. After the assassination of Sussala (A.D. 1123), Jayasimha ascended the throne in the face of conspiracies, intrigues and famine. This is the last king of Kashmir as narrated by Kalhana. His reign was marked by the revolt of Damaras and in the end the king had to make a compromise with them so that the troubles in the land would end. In this way the chronocler had described the reins of 109 kings from Gonanda I to Jayasimha spreading over a period of 1182 B. C. to 1149 A.D. As has been said earlier, Kalhana has given the tenure of reigns of each king from Gonanda III and prior to him the dates have been given in a hyperbolic manner; these have not been consequently added to the span of years given above. The exact number of verses he has employed to condense this account is 7126.

Kalliana is at his best when he gives an exact topographical account of ancient Kashmir. The veracity of his interest in this field can be very conveniently established even now after such a lapse of time. It seems probable that he had visited each and every place before describing it in words. The exactness of their position and accurate description are a feather to his cap. By even a cursory perusal of the chronicle the geography of Kashmir can be built with precise dexterity. Copious examples can easily be gleaned from the chronicle to illustrate this point. About the sanctity of the soil of his land he does not exaggerate when he says:

<verses>

"(Where in my county) Keshava (Visnu) and Isana (Siva) shine like Chakrabrt and Vijayesa and also in other forms, there is not space even as a fraction of sesamum seed without having a Tirtha."

To this day, the whole valley is strewn with holy places, springs and temples and even every pebble of this land has been deified.

The names of towns and villages have Nagara, Pura, Bhoga, Dhama, and Grama, as endings respectively, but in Kashmiri pronounced as Nagra, Pora, Bug, Homa, Gama, respectively; Srinagar e. g. Lyatapura, Shalabug, Danyahoma, and Chandigama. Perhaps the best tribute we can pay to the the precision with which Kalhana has penned down topography is the route of vitasta with its serpentine flow. The names of places through which it flows have been faithfully recorded. The Kashmiri Buga is evidently derived from Bhoga meaning property.

Even though Kashmir valley is hemmed in between continuous chains of mountains, yet. Kalhana has given us a lucid description of the 'Dvaras' or gateways to Kashmir. Through these 'dvaras' invasions took place as also the traffic on both sides was maintained to and fro.

At the eastern corner of the Pir Panjal range Banasala has been mentioned. A castle had been built there perhaps as a watch-tower also. This pass be easily identified as Banihal nowadays. Anantvarman's Minister Sura built a town Surapura, modern Hurpor which has been also mentioned as an entrance to the valley. Herein also a watch-tower was built. This route connected RajaPuri, (Rajouri) with the valley. This road was also known as "Salt road," as alluded to by Ksemendra, as the salt has been all along an imported commodity into Kashmir.

The other route, which connected Kashmir with Lohara (modern Lohrin) and Parantosa (Poonch) passing through the Tosamaidan was very well known at that time. The ancient name of this route was Karkota Dranga.

Even though the village Dranga situated at the foot of the hill still bears that name, yet Dranga in Kalhana's time was an equivalent of watch station. The mountain-ridge known nowadays as Kakudar (Kashmiri) is a corrupt form of KaraKota dhara. Tosa maidan of present day is made up of "Tausi" the plain of "Tohi" as known in Poonch and the persian 'maidan' (a plain).



The frontiers of ancient Kashmir as narrated by Kalhana should also deserve mention here. The actual territory on which the monarch at Srinagar ruled can be ascertained by the reference to chiefs and independent Rajas bordering on the outskirts of the valley beyond mountains. On the southeast Kashtavata (modern Kishtwar) and Bhadravakasa (modern Badarwah) were ruled by the local Hindu rajas. The Rajas of Chamba (ancient Champa) often had matrimonial alliances with the Lohara Kings which reigned over Kashmir. To the west of Champa and south of Bhadravakasa was situated Vallapura the Billavar of to-day in Jammu district. The chieftains of this territory were independent and have been described by Kalhana often.

To the south west and west of Kashmir lay the hill-states of Darvabhisara. Actually it is combination of Darvas and Abhisaras finding mention in Mahabharata also. The prominent principality of this region was Rajapuri known as Rajouri today. Owing to its strategic position of being on the route to plains, the rulers of Kashmir always tried to subjugate it. To the North-west of Rajapuri was the territory of Lohara-the moden Lorin (now in Poonch district). The chiefs of this family ruled Kashmir also for some time. In those times Parantosa, (Poonch) was included in Lohara.

On the North west of Parantosa the valley of Kashmir was situated. Vitasta flowed in between the valley and further to the west lay the Kingdom of Urasa, district Hazara of today to which many expeditions by kings of Kashmir were led.

The tract of land now known as Keran or Karnaha bore the old name of Karnaha, though under local rule, paid tribute to Kashmir kings. The valley of Kishenganga was known as Drava derived from Duranda as given by Kalhana. This was a feudatory state of Kashmir and one of the most sacred Tirthas of Kashmir 'Sarada' is situated therein. This is now under the unauthorised rule of Pakistan.

At the other end of this valley the territory of Dards (Dard-Desa) is located. It was a separate kingdom though small in extent. This is, therefore, in nutshell the political topography as given by Kalhana about the Kashmir of his times.

As has been said earlier, Kalhana is concerned only with the rise and fall of kings and people at large have been left untouched by him directly. However, the mercurial fate of kings which at times smiled at them and at times frowned also, has afforded sufficient opportunities to him to study the behaviour and character of his people.

The most noteworthy trait of Kashmiri character is its tolerance and catholicity. There are numerous examples in his chronicle to show that Buddhist viharas and stupas were built side by side with Visnu and Siva temples. The great conqueror Lalita Ditya though himself a Vaisnava erected a massive Buddhist vihara at his newly built capital Parihasapura. Even though the king professed a certain faith, his ministers or people could subscribe freely to any other faith. King Avanti Varman was a Vaishnava but his minister Sura was a Saiva and there was no tension between the two on this score. Even the Kashmir rulers did not hesitate to appoint ministers of foreign descent and foreign faith. Cankuna the Turk was the minister of Lalitaditya 'Sarada' Mukhtapida. The secular outlook towards life was ever present in Kashmir even in those hoary days.

The foreigners like Khasas, Bombas, Turuskas, Dards and Bhatitiyas etc were free to practise their own faith and if they felt impressed by Hindu or Buddhist outlook on life and embraced one of these, there was no compulsion in this behalf. Not a single communal trouble is mentioned by Kalhana in his chronicle. The holicity of a Kashmiri can very faithfully be proved the existence of Turuska-Raja Bhairava, a Siva shrine at the new colony Narsingharh, Srinagar. As the name conclusively suggests that a foreign Turk has been made into a Bhairava and is being propitiated even now regularly. The foreign kings like Huska, Juska, and Kanishka ruled over the country and have left the annals of Kashmir history by founding cities after their names.

Kashmiris according to him are also fatalists of the highest order. They ascribe all their woes and otherwise to the unseen and unknown fate, perhaps this trait in their character has to a large extent deprived them of their initiative but at the same time has also afforded them calm composure at the changes which so frequently took place at that time:



<verses>

"He (Guru Isana) was amazed and thought how this would come about. Pondering for long he said (to himself) that the power of fate is unpredictable." The people of Kashmir were so much enthralled by this unseen power of fate that Kalhana says that "fate is the mine of all miracles."

<verses>

The firm belief in what is ordained already can be illustrated eloquently by this:

<verses>

"The lightening of good fortune, the crane of fame, the thunder of bravery, and the rainbow of glory come in the wake of the cloud of fate."

As a natural corollary to the above trait, Kashmiri character has firm belief in Divine retribution. Evil doer can in no way reap a harvest of virtue. Only good actions can be rewarded and bad deeds will receive punishment sooner or later. There is no escape from this:

<verses>

"Cursed by the oppressed subjects, the king's (Shankar Varman's) who was taking to evil path, some twenty or thirty sons died without being ill (suddenly)."

The Kashmiri subjects being powerless before tyrants invoked the Divine wrath over them and felt gratified to see that such despots fleecing their subjects did lose family, life, name, and even glory.

Since good deeds are rewarded, hence the Kashmiris have all along been charitable-this being a good deed, helping the needy. The importance of charity has been extolled and consequently practised. Alms giving has been stressed in Niti Shastras as well as in the Mahabharata also, and is an inalienable ingredient of Hindu culture. Kalhana says that even if wealth may be got through fraud but becomes righteous if given in charity.

As a matter of fact, a peoples' revolt has never taken place in Kashmir as narrated by Kalhana.

The kings often squeezed blood from their subjects who were already groaning under the weight of their abject poverty. Moreover the favourites of kings exploited them to their fill. Perhaps they drew satisfaction from the Fatalism and the Divine retribution present in their character. Indigenous rule at times changed hands with foreign domination. Intrigue, treason and lust reigned supreme in royal courts. To all this, Kashmiris reacted in a most stoical way. Whenever counter-conspiracies are hatched, it is not the Kashmiri but a foreigner finding favour with the king. Sometimes revolutions of far-reaching consequences rocked their native land but they sat with fingers crossed. This clearly shows that they did not feel any sense of participation or belonging with high-ups above them. Hence Kalhana very faithfully draws the picture of idle and indifferent crowds in the bazars:

<verses>

"The indifferent crowds without any feelings whatsoever, looked at their king fighting with his contenders at the bridge, as if it was a horse-show on the first day of Asvin Month."

In view of such a pacifist and indifferent attitude to life, Kashmiri character has obviously been nonmilitant. Inflicting injury on others could not be their blood as they believed in Divine retribution, Violence in any form cannot be termed as a noble act, being essentially an evil action, the Kashmiris refrain from indulging in such actions. Absence of militant traits in their character has given ample opportunities to Kalhana to jeer at his own countrymen:

<verses>

"Canga etc who were the confidants and advisers of Tonga became dumb-founded with terror like women, though being armed."

Consequently Kashmiri soldier was undependable and the kings had to employ mercenaries from fighting clans in the adjoining areas. The people detested war and when a foreign army came to invade them, they felt despondent. They could never think of giving it a fight:

<verses>

"At the sight of a hostile army the people felt their bodies aching as if paralysed by the sudden appearance of untimely clouds, and their energy began to give way."

A Kashmiri could never be a spendthrift in as much as he had to provide for the rainy day. Such "rainy days" were legion in his time in the shape of famines, sieges, and invasions. So, he is calculating in expenditure and does not waste his hard-earned money. Even the kings learnt the utility of such wise-spending:

<verses>

"(The king Uccala) a Kashmiri as he was, did not invest his riches in building and dismantling palaces time and again; or purchasing horses only to make these apart of the dust or the robbers (respectively)."

These pages have most succinctly brought into bold relief the claims of Kalhana as a chronicler. Since he is the first to initiate this form of literary-writing yet, as has been shown, he is humble and does not brag about his prowess in this field. He may not touch the high water-mark of historical attitude of mind, but is very careful about his shortcomings also. All the criticism that is levelled against him does not ruffle him.

No better tribute could be paid to the denizens of this land of "learning, palatial houses, saffron, icy water and grapes difficult to find in heaven even," for their piety and spiritual attainments:

<verses>

"The inhabitants of this land can be conquered only by spiritual force and never by brute-force of arms, hence they have the fear of the other world only."

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

## **16 Shrivara**

**by Professor K. N. Dhar**

**Without** beating about the bush, Shrivara straightway adduces two reasons for taking up the thread of chronicle-writing from Jona Raja. Firstly, he writes "I have taken this assignment simply to complete the unfinished History of Kings written by Jona Raja, whose disciple I am". At the same time he, in all humility, confesses his diffidence, to reach up to his guru's heights. Secondly, he acknowledges the filial affection which Sultan Zain-ul-abdin nourished for him and to repay his debt towards him elected to write history, so that posterity does not forget him altogether. He pays back what he owed to the Sultan, not in terms of gold which is perishable, but in words throbbing with his gratitude for him, imperishable of course. No better deal than this could be imagined. He made his name immortal while his treasures and regal splendour lie buried in the womb of past. Shrivara makes the Sultan live in the present even though belonging to the days of yore.

As has been indicated earlier Jona Raja could not write the account of penultimate eleven years of Budshah's reign. He was snatched away by the icy hands of death. So in all sincerity Shrivara records that Jona Raja mounted the funeral pyre in the 35th year of the local calendar which works at 1457 A.D. So, the commencement of his treatise can be taken safely from this year, and he also could complete the account of Kashmir Sultans upto the year 1486 A.D. only, much against his wishes. Therefore, Shrivara records the events of more or less 29 years as an eye witness. Even though he has veneration for his Guru Jona Raja, yet he has arranged his chronicle on the pattern used by Kalhana; he alone seems to be his ideal in this field. Jona Raja has given verses serially without breaking these into sections or subsections. Shrivara has revived the "Taranga" form of dividing history into cantos. He has also indicated the subjects he has treated in a particular canto at the end of each. With this astute wakefulness on his part, he got rid of the interpolations whatsoever. Beginning the History of Kashmiri Sultans with the last eleven years of Budshah he has ended it with the Sultan Fatehshah's accession to the throne. In between these he has treated profusely Haider Shah, Hassan Shah and Mohammad Shah - a span of Kashmir History covering nearly 29 years. In the colophon of his last canto he only says that "This canto has ended", but does not indicate that Zaina Tarangini, as a whole, has come to an end. This clearly establishes that he was also not destined to complete whole of the project. His untimely death must have intervened to leave it incomplete like his guru Jona Raja. He has captioned his "River of Kings" as Zaina Tarangini directly as well as at end of each canto, which proves beyond any doubt that his forte was to describe the reign of Budshah only in the first instance. Budshah's successors have been described only to preserve the continuity of the Sultan. At that time many compositions were named after the Sultan - N oth Soma composed "Zainacharita", Yodha Bhatta : "Zaina Prakash" and Bhatta Avtar : "Zaina Vilasa". Shrivara also took after the fashion of the time; hence instead of christening his chronicle as Raja Tarangini, he gave it the title "Zaina Tarangini". Shrivara while unfolding the events of reign of the Sultan clearly mentioned that he would describe the rule of the king along with his son - presumably Haji. Perhaps this insertion proves that towards the closing year of his reign Zainul-ab-Din had become ineffective and the power was actually concentrated in the hands of his sons; so this historian could not afford to ignore the authority of the son while describing the reign of his father. Furthermore, Shrivara spares us the trouble of making unnecessary conjectures in this behalf by recording that the Sultan was so much scared of his other sons that he kept Haji always with himself, perhaps as a veritable shield for any surprise attack on him. His tactics were to play one brother against the other, so that he would himself remain unscathed and steer safe between the two. Shrivara has described the reign of Badshah in a more detailed manner than his predecessor Jona Raja. While Jona Raja has dispensed with the first 39 years of the rule of the Sultan in 267 verses, Shrivara has treated a far less span of years in 786 verses.

Two unforeseen natural calamities befell Kashmiris in those years. The first was the unprecedented rains in Chet i. e. March and April. Shrivara even says that dust did pour down from the sky which obstructed the prospects of rice-sowing with the result that food shortage loomed large before the denizens of this

land of plenty. Perhaps to accentuate the conditions of famine snow fall was unexpectedly witnessed in the month of Maghar i.e. October. The crops already hit by unprecedented rains earlier, were engulfed by early snow. Whatever food could be salvaged from the fields was turned to dust before ripening. The cycle of famine was thus complete. Shrivara gives a vivid, yet pathetic, description of people tormented by hunger. The thieves breaking into houses at night left gold, silver and money untouched, but ransacked every utensil for laying hands on food. The people were forced to eat vegetables, roots and fruits. When these got exhausted the people did not spare the leaves of the trees, more especially the "Bandhujiva" (sustainer of the kind literally, actually the name of the sun-flower plant). One 'khari' of paddy which used to sell at three hundred dinars was now available at fifteen hundred dinars and that also with much difficulty.

The Sultan rose up to this misfortune without losing his nerve. He devised many means to ameliorate the sufferings of his people. He purchased paddy at a very high cost, even imported it and gave it to people at subsidised rates. The black marketeer were brought to book and artificial scarcity created by these was reduced to a large extent. He also opened free 'langars' for the most poor section of his people. To crown all, he opened avenues of work for people, so that they could earn wages and thus keep wolf out of the door. Earth-work camps were installed; edible oil was got extracted from the walnuts and other kinds of greases from the pines and other forest trees. Above all he enforced moratorium on debts - the agencies of lending and borrowing were abolished.

Zainul-ab-Din had also to contend with the runaway habits of his son Adam Khan who even tried to snatch the throne from the Sultan. Consequently the King had to bring him to bay at Pallasila, near Shopian where a fierce fight took place between the father and the son. Adam Khan was repentant, hence his life was spared by the orders of the Sultan. Conspiracies and counter-conspiracies in his court were as much responsible for this rebellious character of Adam Khan. The Sultan returned to his capital and erected a pyramid of the skulls of Adam Khan's soldiers, put to sword in his war. This was the reason why the Sultan annointed Haji Khan as the heir-apparent. Adam Khan went into self-exile. On the heels of the earlier flood and consequent famine in the thirty sixth year of the reign of the Sultan, i.e. in 1460 A.D., orily after two years, this scourge repeated itself. Another bolt from the blue made the conditions in Kashmir far more worse. All the rivers, namely Vitasta, Ladri, Veshav, Sindh and Kuta Kol were in spate due to torrential rains and vied with each other in recording the highest water-level. The king, in order to see for himself the ravage wrought by this flood, toured the districts submerged under water in a boat. He felt grieved to see the paddy under water, foreboding shortage of cereals. At last the swaying waves found respite at Sonawari. Persian historians have not described this second flood at all. Since Shrivara's evidence is of contemporary importance, hence his testimony to this effect cannot be discredited.

Fireworks were also introduced in Kashmir in the reign of Budshah. Shrivara has profusely described the different varieties of these made by Kashmiri artisans, e. g. the arrows, the discs, the sheets, the tubes tied with string and waved in the air, the petal-shedding flowers, the wavy-serpents etc. The mastermind behind all these inventions was one "Habib". Salt-petre and sulphur were also harnessed into making guns and cannons. For the first time in the history of Kashmir such missiles were invented and used. Shrivara even gives the date of this marvellous invention, which is 1465 A. D. He further says that it was called "Top" in Muslim language and "Kanda" in popular dialect. The Sultan had also maintained a river-army, more or less a navy in miniature. This wing of the arm was provided boats for the mobility of soldiers, on water ways where the floats would take place, Shrivara has penned down that one "Deva" by name was the chief of this force.

The Sultan was also very receptive to fine arts. He was not only a gifted singer (vocalist as well as instrumentalist) himself, but also showered limitless bounties on talented singers. The musical instrument "Rabab" is actually indigenous. Out of ignorance some Persian historians have asserted that it was imported here from Iran. Shrivara's contemporary evidence in this behalf cannot be contradicted. He says "The invention of this musical instrument Rabab Behlol and other Vocalists were munificently rewarded by the King."

The Sultan was torn with grief towards the closing years of his life. The sole cause for his dismay, which eventually broke his health was the feud between his sons. His eldest son Adam Khan did not refrain from waging war against his father. The King died with a broken heart on Friday, the twelfth of Jeth, in the year 1527 Bikrimi (1470 A. D.), having ruled for fifty-two years. In the words of Shrivara - "On that day the houses were devoid of smoke, as no cooking was done in the city. The people became life-less and speechless with grief on being bereaved of their master."

He was laid to rest in his ancestral graveyard (Mazari-Salatin) near the grave of his father Sikandar. A gravestone glittering like transparent crystal was erected there with an epitaph inscribed on it. However this stone is missing at present in the Mazari-Salatin. If it were discovered, the exact date of the Sultan's demise could be found out without any brain-racking whatsoever.

In view of the strife amongst his sons, his advisers had suggested to the Sultan that he should name his heir - apparent in his life time. Adam Khan had already revolted against his father and was living at Jammu with his maternal uncle. The youngest Behram was not also looked upon kindly by his father, the Sultan. Even though he (the Sultan) had a soft corner for Haji Khan, the second son, yet he refrained from nominating him as his successor. He simply said, "I will not confer my kingdom on any one of my sons during my life-time. He, who is strongest amongst them all, will definitely get the throne after I am no more."

So, when Budshah breathed his last, Haji Khan his second son ascended the throne on the first day of dark fortnight of Jetha in 1470 A.D., but was destined to reign only for one year and ten months. Adam Khan the eldest was in self-exile and the youngest Behram Khan was paid the price of 'Nagam-jager' for renouncing his claim to the throne. Moreover, the Kuchhais, a local clan were in favour of Haji Khan. All these causes contributed to his coming to power. He assumed the name of Haider Shah as sultan and issued his royal-seal under this very name. He was anointed as the king, by the Royal Treasurer, Hassan Kuchbai with due religious formalities. Herein it may be said without any fear of contradiction that Sultan Haider Shah ordered the performance of age-old Hindu rites of "Raja-Tilak" along with the Muslim ceremonies pertinent to the assumption of kingship. On that auspicious day whole of "Sikandar - puri" (present Nowshehra), near Srinagar was profusely illuminated.

His first act as the Sultan was to confer the Jagir of Nagam "of fertile soil" upon his younger brother Behram Khan. He also gave away Ikshika (Pachhagom near Damodar udar) and Kamraz to his son Hassan and proclaimed him as his heir-apparent. The rulers of Rajori and Indus (Sindhu) who had come to take part in his coronation were honoured by the Sultan.

An extraordinary event during his reign has besmeared the reputation of tolerance built brick by brick by his father Budshah. The Sultan was actually a nincompoop and given to licentious addiction to wine and women. One barber, a neo-convert "Purna" by name earned his confidence and also acted as his pimp and tout. This barber lost his head by the unbelievable protection he received from the Sultan, for reasons obvious, and began to unleash a reign of terror on the people, especially the Hindus. The limbs of offenders were got amputated on a light excuse. Being suffocated by such tyranny the Hindus gave expression to their pent-up feelings by damaging the "Khanqah" of the Sayid. The Muslim subjects of the Sultan being exasperated by this sacrilege prompted him to teach a lesson to the Hindu subjects by inflicting most inhuman atrocities on them. In this context Shrivara has recorded: "The Sultan, torn to the quicks by this, got the hands and noses of many Hindus amputated. He even ordered the demolition of the idol at the Bahu-Khatkeshwara, the presiding Bhairva of the City."

Intensity of such atrocities compelled many Hindus to forsake their own faith and dress, and declare that they were not Bhattas. In this connection it may be safely asserted that 'Nabatu', the colloquial phrase in Kashmiri even current today, denoting total annihilation of Bhattas has its origin in 'Na Bhatta Aham' (I am not a Bhatta). This is the second 'Nabatu' in the series on records, the first being in the reign of Sikandar. Adam Khan, the eldest son of Budshah and virtually having an undisputed title to the throne, thought this time most propitious to invade Kashmir and snatch away kingship from his brother Haider Khan. He was not far from wrong in choosing this time for his attack. The king was oblivious to his



duties and a sizable portion of his subjects was disgruntled. About the law and order situation prevailing at that time in Kashmir, Shrivara has remarked- "The thieves, the jackals, the cruel, the adulterors, the criminals and the deceitful roamed about during the day even." Adam Khan wanted to invade Kashmir through Poonch. In the meanwhile the Sultan smelling the perfidy and collaboration of Hassan Kuchhi (who had anointed him as the Sultan) with Adam Khan, got him assassinated. On hearing this Adam Khan retreated to Jammu. But he was not destined to live long. While fighting on the side of Manikya Deva of Jammu, his maternal uncle, against the Moguls, Adam Khan was killed. Haider Khan got his dead body to Srinagar and he was buried beside his mother at Suhyar, on the bank of Jhelum between Ali Kadal and Nawa Kadal.

The Sultan had become so weak-minded and suspicious that he did not accord befitting reception even to his son Hassan returning from his victorious military expedition outside Kashmir. His Nero-like disposition has been graphically delineated by Shrivara when the Lakshimpur, a town founded by Shahabud Din (at the foot of Hari Parbat), was in flames and the five annexes of his own residence (as the prince) were burning the Sultan ascended the roof of his palace and felt so much jubilant (on seeing the ravages of fire) that he began to indulge in drinking there and then." While attending a drinking party in his lotus-palace, his foot slipped on the marble floor. He fell down and his nose began to bleed profusely. He swooned into a coma from which he never recovered afterwards. He breathed his last in the month of Baisakh on Basant Panchmi in 1472 A.D. At that time the Royal power was swinging between his uncle Behram Khan and the prince Hassan, like a person of suspicious disposition not knowing on whom to depend."

Shrivara has clearly indicated that a knotty problem of succession to Haidar Shah confronted the courtiers when the Sultan died. One Ahmed Yatu (whom Shrivara calls as "Ayukta" or the Commissar), after having consultations with the nobles offered the crown to Behram Khan, the youngest son of Budshah on one condition that he would declare Prince Hassan as his heir-apparent. He did not agree to this. Ahmed Yatu, with the consent of the ministers, thought it more expedient to confer sultanate on inexperienced Hassan than on turbulent and haughty Behram. The learned historians of this period, Dr. Parmu, Dr. Mohibul Hassan. Dr. Kapur have applied the axe there and have erroneously inferred that Prince Hassan got the throne without any murmur from Behram Khan. The actual facts are that Behram Khan did collect the forces loyal to him when the negotiations with Ahmed Yatu broke down. Skirmishes did take place, but the royal guards under the command of Abhimanyu thwarted the plans of Behram Khan. Moreover, Shrivara has recorded unambiguously that when Prince Hassan was informed that the city was cleared off of the enemies and he himself was safe and secure, he ordered the coffin of his father to be taken to the ancestral grave-yard. About Hassan's contender for power (Behram Khan) Shrivara goes on to say, "On hearing about the exploits of his nephew (Prince Hassan) and the very low morale of his own forces, Behram Khan left Kashmir along with his son." The chronicler has implicitly narrated that Behram Khan wanted to usurp the throne through force, but Prince Hassan with his bravery overwhelmed his (Behram's) army which ultimately got depressed. No other course was left to Behram but to flee the country of his birth like his eldest brother Adam. He took his son with, so that he would escape the usual reprisal. If we care to read between the lines about the mention of burial of Haider Khan by Shrivara, the natural inference would be that the burial was delayed because of the uncertain conditions in the city. There must have been street fights between the adherents of Behram and admirers of Hassan. That is also the reason that the Prince had to postpone his coronation by sixteen days. The culmination of this internecine feud we find later, at the very outset of Hassan Shah's rule. Only when calm was restored in the city and it was declared safe for the royal cortege to move to the ancestral burial-ground, Prince Hassan accompanied the coffin of his father to the grave-yard and laid to rest his father Haider Shah towards the feet of his parent Budshah at Mazari Salatin. Everybody present at the funeral threw a handful of earth over his grave. When it got filled up with earth a grave stone higher in the middle was raised on it with the epitaph that "the Sultan was relentless in war." With all his defects, as enumerated earlier, Haider Shah was a great lover of music and fine arts. He composed poetry in Persian and also in the "Language of Hindustan" i.e. (doubtlessly) Hindi. He was also very adept in flute - playing and was considered a

past- master in this art. The rabab - players like Bahlol and others were generously rewarded by him. The disciple of Khwaja Abdul Qadir Mulla Daud taught him to play on Veena.

Before concluding we may refer to some points on general information as narrated by Shrivara. Due to excessive use of liquor here in Kashmir, or the decline in the growth of grapes, wine was extracted from suger-beet for the first time here. This "Fairy land of Grapes", so dear to Kalhana and Bilhana, had now declared its bankruptcy in producing this sweet luscious fruit any more.

Shrivara also for the first time gives the synonym of Vitasta as Jhelum. Till his time we nowhere find this notice of Jhelum in Sanskrit chronicles.

The Sultan though a chronic addict would sometimes pass off nights in vigil listening to the Puranas and other scriptures (of Hindus) laying down the guidelines for salvation. He felt very much impressed by these. Perhaps this was the sole reason which prompted the Sultan to entrust his son, Prince Hassan to Shrivara for his all round upbringing. Shrivara would narrate the tales from Brhat Katha to him. Shrivara has for the first time made mention of the Dal Lake, which name persists even today. Prior to him this lake was known by the name of "Sureshwari Sara." He also refers to the floating gardens on its surface and the twin 'lankas' (islands) of 'Ropa' and 'Sona' there. He writes "spread over twelve miles this Dal Lake has for its constant companion the Hari Parvat which in the hope of reaping virtuous reward always drenches itself with its holy water - (is reflected in its water always). According to Shrivara the bank of Dal Lake was a hub of cultural and social life of Kashmiris at that time. There, on its bank, were the places of pilgrimage, monasteries, palaces, hostels for students and the pennance-groves so more sanctified than Varanasi." Likewise he has used the epithet "Ullol" for "Mahapadmasar" - the name of the Wular Lake then. One glaring fact comes to surface while going through the reigns of Budshah and his son Haider Shah: that is the ascendancy of Sayeds. In a sense this clan, which got power firstly through the magnetic personalities of Syed Ali Hamdani and his son Syed Mohammed and also through matrimonial alliances with the reigning kings, can be safely called non-Kashmiri. They are supposed to be the direct descendants of Prophet Mohammed. Budshah offered his daughter to Syed Nissar and made him the governor of one of the provinces, probably Beerwah, as it is known now. Budshah had even himself married Bodha Khatoon, a Sayed. He also got a Sayed spouse for his son Prince Haibat. Sultan Haider Shah married his son Hassan to a Sayed girl, daughter of Miyan Hassan. In this way, the three Sultans - Budshah, Haidershah and Hassan Shah, the grandfather the father and the son, had Sayed queens. Therefore, the Sayeds had ample opportunities to come to power over and above the heads of the local factions of Maliks, Magreys, Kuchhais and Yatus. The 'History of Sultans' heretofore is actually a continuous strife between these clans to capture power. At times the helpless Sultan had to surrender to the chief of the victorious faction and appoint him as his Prime Minister.

The Sayeds, commanding respect in the 'harem' got intoxicated by the power they enjoyed with the Sultans and did not behave well and had to be exiled from Kashmir many a time.

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

## **17 Jona Raja**

**by Professor K. N. Dhar**

**Jona Raja** at the very commencement of his Raja Tarangini acknowledges the debt he owes to Kalhana - the doyen of chroniclers of Kashmir. He treats him as his ideal and his reputed dictum in respect of history writing as his guide-line for supplementing suitably the course of events, where Kalhana had left it. Kalhana has very aptly remarked:

"That noble-minded (poet) is alone worthy of praise whose word like that of a judge, keeps free from love or hatred in relating the facts of the past."

Jona Raja has faithfully striven to live upto this maxim. There are some omissions and commissions here and there, still this most illustrious, Sanskrit historian of the Muslim period, being the first in the line, is also the best, by any standard whatsoever.

In those insecure times the safety of the chronicles was the prime concern. The fear of interpolations can also not be ruled out. Before we proceed to examine critically the narrative of Jona Raja, it will again be useful to allude to erroneous inferences of modern scholars on this subject. Dr. Parmu has remarked that "His (Jona Raja's) besetting defect is that he generally puts the poet above the chronicler". Herein the learned scholar has innocently betrayed his ignorance regarding Sanskrit language and literature. Actually the reverse of it is true which is a compliment to Jona Raja. Kalhana's Raja Tarangini is classed under historical poetry in Sanskrit literature. No such honour has been bestowed upon Jona Raja's Raja Tarangini. It is at places versified prose, to borrow the epithet from Dr. Buhler. In this respect Dr. R. N. Singh has to say "Jona Raja after I recording an event proceeds further; he even skips over the chain of events at the slightest possible hint. He does not stay behind to explain it, but transfers this burden to the reader." Further on, the learned scholar has remarked, "The Raja Tarangini of Jona Raja is history. It is neither a biography nor an eulogy."

Without mincing words, Jona Raja admits that his chronicle is merely an "Outline history of King". He does not make tall claims for elaborating the events or sitting on judgement on these. Moreover, he very candidly owns that he was commissioned to write his chronicle by King Zain-ul-abdin, through the good offices of Shirya Bhatta, the Head of Judiciary. Therefore, it may be contended that he being a professional chronicler and also in the pay of the sultan, his account might have tilted in favour of his benefactor. Dr. Mohibul Hassan does refer to this seemingly believable handicap by saying, "Being a courtier of Zain-ul-abdin, Jona Raja is inclined to exaggerate the virtues of his master and gloss over his failings." On careful scrutiny of the account given by Jona Raja about Budshah (Zain-ul-abdin) and his father (Sikandar) it seems that he has safely steered clear of personal inclinations.

While describing the vandalism of Sikandar in razing temples and places of pilgrimage of Hindus to the ground, which would have alienated Jona Raja's sympathy for reasons obvious, he like a faithful reporter does pay tribute to the king's administrative acumen. He does not spare his Sultan from chastisement when it is due. He vehemently chides his co-religionists, the earlier Hindu Kings, for their lack of political foresight and also for being the slaves of lust.

All told, Jona Raja has given an account of twenty three rulers of Kashmir, out of which thirteen are Hindus, one a Bhautia and nine Muslims. This account covers a span of 459 years, He has been the contemporary of Sikandar and Zain-ul-abdin, by virtue of which his description about these two kings is not only lucid but also authentic. The general impression gleaned from the account of Hindu kings is that their hold on the reins of their kingdom was tottering under the irresistible weight of court intrigues, corruption, avarice, lust and sex. These failings were all the more beamed with physical and moral cowardice. Therefore, the occupation of Kashmir by Muslims was a natural culmination of this chaos and confusion. Degeneration of the highest order had already permeated the soul of Hindu society and the astute Muslim struck when the iron was hot. Hindu rulers had to blame only themselves for this catastrophe. Their levity did not even allow them to lick their wounds. Cultural conquest of Hindus had

already commenced when Islam entered the valley a century or more before Muslim rule was installed here. Jona Raja treats the reign of these last Hindu kinds in a very cursory and brief manner. He has disposed of some Hindu kings in four or five verses. The brevity he has employed can be assessed by the fact that the description of thirteen Hindu Kings is dispensed within 174 verses out of a total of 976 verses comprising his chronicle. Jona Raja has himself adduced the reason for his lack of sympathy for these kings, as alluded to earlier. The chief cause for this unconcern was that Jona Raja wanted to pick up the thread from where Kalhana had left it, only to induct continuity into his chronicle. His main forte was Muslim Rule, for which alone he was responsible to King Zain-ul-abdin.

Jona Raja has described the Muslim Rule at length and a span of 140 years is covered by him. He could not complete the assignment of the King as he was probably cut short in life before he could do the last eleven years of Budshah's reign have however been commented upon by Shrivara - a professional heir to Jona Raja.

Jona Raja treats Shahmeer as the first Sultan of Kashmir. He ascended the throne of Kashmir under the name of Shamsud-Din and ruled for 3 years from 1339 to 1342 A.D. Prior to his snatching the throne by deceit and guile from Kota Rani, he was her chief adviser and also a paramour. After sharing the same bed for one night with Kota Rani, he got her murdered alongwith her sons. Thus the last symbol of Hindu Raj in Kashmir ended. Shahmeer was not an indigenous sultan, but came perhaps from Persia as a refugee. Dr. Mohibul Hassan takes him to be a Turkish adventurer. Even though Jona Raja prefixes the epithet Sultan with Renchan, the Buddhist also and the implication from it may be that he has taken Renchan as the first non-Hindu ruler, yet it was a very brief interlude which was followed by the restoration of Hindu monarchy. The Muslim rule entrenched itself in Kashmir, without any break whatsoever, with the reign of Shahmeer. Hence he earns the right to be called the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir.

Jona Raja has not referred to the episode of "BULBUL SHAH", who according to Persian chroniclers converted Renchan to Islam. He only alludes to one Deva Swami who refused to admit Renchan into Hindu fold. Furthermore, Jona Raja asserts that it was the manouering of Shahmeer which got Renchan initiated into Islam.

Jona Raja has given us a graphic description of three invasions on Kashmir prior to the establishment of Islamic rule here : one by Dulcha, the other by Renchan and the third by Achala. Dulcha, a Turk with a retinue of sixty thousand strong cavalry swooped on Kashmir "like a lion forcing its way into a deer den."

King Kurushah, whom Jona Raja has taken as the grandfather of Shahmeer, tried to buy Dulcha off with a very good amount of money. Dulcha, whose sole intent was loot and carnage, did accept the money, but stayed back to unleash his cruelty over Kashmiris. Jona Raja has given a heart -rending description of the invasion of Dulcha :-

"Those Kashmiri people who had eluded destruction, after the Dulcha-cat took to heels, came out of their holes like the mice. When the scourge let loose by Dulcha did abate (when he was sent away) no son could find his father, nor father his son, and brother his brother."

The second invasion was that of Renchan Buddhist, who came down from northern mountains to loot and plunder Kashmir. Jona Raja has said in this connection:

"As a kite swoops on the birdling having dropped from its perch, in the same manner the invincible army of Renchan dispossessed of all belongings Kashmiris."

Afterwards Renchan also occupied the throne of Kashmir in collaboration with Kota Rani.

The third invader, Achala was prevailed upon by Kota Rani not to unleash his sword on the innocent people. He was invited to adorn the throne which was lying vacant, as the king had fled to Ladakh. Achala was taken in and he disbanded his army. Once he did this, it was very easy to see him off. Consequently, when Shahmeer came to the throne, he had a stupendous task of rehabilitation awaiting him. He acquitted himself very well in this field and proved to be a very competent administrator. In the



words of Jona Raja "He changed the face of Kashmir." The salient facts come to surface while describing the ascendancy to power by Shahmeer. Jona Raja alludes to the oracle of the great Goddess wherein She predicted to him (Shahmeer), in a dream, that his progeny would rule Kashmir henceforth. By putting this anecdote to pen Jona Raja seems to have reconciled mentally to the change of power in Kashmir and also adduced Divine sanction for it. He has also called Shahmeer as "Kula Natha", the chief of the Muslim population in Kashmir, which could put its counter-weight against the machinations of landed aristocrats, such as Damaras (Dhars), professional fighters like Lavyanyas (Lones) and also Bhatta (the entire Brahmin faction). Perhaps that was the reason why Kota Rani took him into her service and confidence. This very influence with his co-religionists facilitated him to grab power without a single leaf fluttering in the valley. His seige of Anderkot (near Sumbal) proved as the last nail in the coffin of Hindu authority over Kashmir.

Shahmeer did not live long to consolidate the ravaged Kashmir. He breathed his last on the full-moon day in Ashadha in 1342 A. D., after a brief reign of three years and five days.

Jona Raja, for reasons obvious, has cursorily treated the reign of Sultan Jamsheed (1342-44) and that of Sultan Alla-ud-din (1344-56) sons and successors of Shahmeer. As he (Shahmeer) was an astute politician, he transferred the burden of the kingdom on those two sons jointly, so that they did not feel foul of each other afterwards. But the two brothers could not carry on with each other and the reign of Jamsheed, for two years, was only a tragic interlude of conspiracies and brotherly feuds. He was such a weakling that Jona Raja has aptly used the words "Being a king in name only, he actually suffered incessantly till he was relieved by death." Herein we shall have to refer to the observation made by Dr. Sufi; he has come to the conclusion that, as soon as Jamsheed was crowned king, he was deposed by his brother Ali Sher (Alla-ud-din) and spent the two years before his death rather in exile and penury. Dr. Parmu has written that Jamsheed was killed in 1344 and Dr. Mohibul Hassan has suggested that "Jamsheed finding himself not strong enough to fight (against his brother) fled and after aimlessly wandering about in the valley for a year and two months died in 1345."

In this context the account given by Jona Raja does not confirm the views given by these learned authors. He unambiguously records that Jamsheed put to sword so many followers of his conspiring brother Ali Sher at Avantipur, that "the current of the Jhelum began to flow upwards due to the heaps of corpses thrown into the river." He records further that Sultan Jamsheed made "Sathya Raja" (Shiraz) responsible for the safety of the city of Srinagar and himself went for a trip to Handwara. It has nowhere been suggested by him (Jona Raja) that the Sultan was forcibly deposed and also killed. In the words of Jona Raja he died a natural death after being a Sultan for two years less by two months.

Jona Raja does allude to Jamsheed's holding the charge of 'Commissioner of Guards' stationed at one of the mountain passes, leading to Kashmir Valley. Perhaps this very reference of his becoming the 'Commissioner of Guards' has led these learned authors to do a bit of unfounded kite-flying. Jona Raja explicitly lays down that Sultan Jamsheed got fed up with wars, when Ali Sher inflicted a decisive defeat on his son. Moreover, Ali Sher broke the truce of two months cease-fire, offered initially by him. All these factors prompted him to relinquish the royal authority voluntarily, and during the closing months of his life he did accept an assignment much below his status. Therefore, it is sufficiently clear that he was neither deposed nor killed.

Ali Sher, assuming the name of Alla-ud-din (1344-1356 A.D.) ascended the throne of Kashmir by guile, deceit and statecraft. Despite these defects he was a master-mind in politics and a dauntless warrior. Two great events of his reign have been narrated by Jona Raja. The first being a direct reference to a bevy of Yoginis (females possessing magical powers), whose leader has been identified as 'Lalleshwari'. In Kashmiri tradition, Lalla is not credited with having found any order of 'Yoginis' at all. She lived by herself and also in her own thoughts. Therefore the use of the word 'Chakra' does not confirm the views by Persian scholars. It might also connote the host of eight Yoginis - attendants of Durga, Shiva's consort. Again, Kashmiri tradition makes Lalla-Arifa contemporary with Syed Ali Hamdani (Shah Hamdan), about whom Jona Raja is surprisingly reticent. It may be inferred here that Jona Raja did not mention the name of Shah Hamdan, as he was the sole instrument for transplanting Muslim faith in place of Hinduism



in Kashmir. The crusade for mass conversion in Kashmir was initiated by him. Even if he (Jona Raja) would have liked to refer to Lalla, Shah Hamdan's mention would have been a natural corollary to it, as far as Kashmiri tradition goes. Therefore, he chose to skip over both these personalities in Kashmir history. The chief of 'Yoginis' (Nayika), narrated earlier, may be construed to be a female Tantric worshipper, otherwise she would not have offered a 'goblet of wine' to Alla-ud-din. Subsequent Persian scholars have tried to replace 'wine' by 'milk'- as former is forbidden by Islam. But Jona Raja has no such aberrations. Here again, 'Lalla' is never associated with wine etc in Kashmiri tradition like the left-hand ritualists. Therefore, to infer from 'Yogini' the existence of 'Lalla', in that period at least, according to testimony of Jona Raja, is not only far-fetched but also preposterous.

However, the silence of Jona Raja about Lalleshwari and Shah Hamdan should not erroneously lead us to believe that these two personages never existed in Kashmir and are only the figment of imagination. Kalhana has not at all referred to Abhinavagupta, the reputed Shaiva Scholar, though other such erudite scholars like Udbhatta, Rudratta, Vaman and Anandavardhan have been mentioned profusely by him. Yet Abhinavagupta did live in Kashmir on the basis of the colophons of his works, in which he has indicated the year of composition of a particular treatise. He has bequeathed to us his own genealogy also. The force of tradition is always irresistible and cannot be dispensed with cheaply. What is actually meant to be conveyed here is that although Jona Raja's chronicle, as it is available to us, does not contain the names of Shah Hamdan and Lalleshwari, yet their having breathed the air of Kashmir cannot be doubted.

The second event of Alla-ud-din's reign is the terrible famine which shattered the economy of the country; but Jona Raja does not write that remedial measures were taken by the Sultan to offset its unsalutary effect on the people. Some scholars have wrongly quoted Jona Raja and ascribed this compliment to Sultan by him - "But he did all he could to alleviate the sufferings of his subjects". Actually, Jona Raja dismisses this calamity in one verse. He says, "In the nineteenth year of the local calendar (i.e. 1343 A.D.) a ghastly famine, tormented the people as a reproof for their bad deeds". Just after it he gives the date on which the Sultan breathed his last.

Again, another scholar has indicated that Sultan Alla-ud-Din transferred his capital from Anderkot to Alla-ud-din Pora, a new city founded by the Sultan. The description given in this behalf by Jona Raja reveals that the Sultan re-established his capital at Jayapida Pur - another name of Andrakot. Alla-ud-din shifted his capital back to Andrakot from Srinagar. Shahmeer, his father had made Andrakot as the first capital of Muslim kingdom in Kashmir. He had sentimental attachment with it for being associated with Kota Rani. His elder son Jamshed transferred the capital to Srinagar, but Alla-ud-din, from the view point of safety, shifted it back to Andrakot.

One redeeming feature during the reign of the first four Sultans comes to full view. Even though the pace of proselytisation was gathering momentum every day, during this period of only three decades or more, yet the influence of Hindus at the royal court did not wane. The Hindus occupied the position of counsellors, advisers or ministers. Sultan Jamsheed confided in his counsellor Lakshman Bhatt. Udayashri was probably the prime minister of Sultan Alla-ud-din and Chandra Damar his commander-in-chief. In the company of both these, the Sultan had caught the glimpse of the Yogini, as referred to earlier. Similarly Sultan Shahab-ud-din, when away on military campaigns, depended upon Kota Bhatt for internal administration of his kingdom.

Jona Raja is all praise for Sultan Shahabud-Din and compares him with Lalita Ditya - the famous warrior-king of ancient Kashmir.

In the wake of his illustrious predecessor, Shahab-ud-din also undertook many military expeditions and even went as far as Peshawar and Ghazni. His appetite for extending the borders of his country was unquenchable. It was also necessitated by the fact that the kingdom of his predecessors was shrinking by their incompetence. Several scholars have doubted the veracity of these campaigns and termed these as highly exaggerated. Their scepticism is perhaps based on the misnomer that Kashmiris only knew how to defend and could never venture to indulge in offensive. On the testimony of Jona Raja this assumption is

not only unjust but also unfounded. He (Jona Raja) has narrated that the Kashmiri Sultan Sikandar was offered a gift of two elephants by Timur the Lame. Timur, who looted Delhi without compunction and called himself invincible, could not have parted with his two elephants for the King of Kashmir, for nothing in return. It was definitely the scare of Kashmiri army, which the Mongol scourage tried to pamper, so that it did not attack his forces while returning.

Where diplomacy could not work, Kashmiris were behind none to defend their Motherland by a call to steel. Law and order in the country was firmly established; no conspiracies or schism polluted the placid atmosphere; hence the need for moving out for annexations was keenly felt by the Sultan. The political geography of Kashmir was now turning a new leaf. Therefore, the testimony of Jona Raja regarding the military conquests of Shahab-ud-din need not be taken with a grain of salt. Kashmiri armies have penetrated deep into Kishtwar, Bhotia Pradesh, Lorin and Poonch. The military prowess of Kashmiris also did show itself off admirably well later, when Mughals were repulsed not only once but twice. Jona Raja like an awake artist does presage that "posterity might take this account of the superhuman exploits of the Sultan as mere flattery". This leaves nothing for us to guess otherwise.

Shahab-ud-din was not a religious zealot. He was catholic to the marrow of his bones, not by expediency but by conviction. When it was suggested to him that the huge idols of copper and bronze be smolten and converted into coins, as the imperial mint was running short of these, he promptly declined to order this vandalism and said: "How paradoxical it will seem that I would like to amass fame by breaking these immortal idols which have been installed and worshipped by certain people who have earned approbation (by doing this)".

An unprecedented flood engulfed Srinagar in his reign, when the surging waters even mounted the surrounding hills. The Sultan, therefore, founded an alternate city at the foot of "SHARIKA SHAIL" (HARI PARVAT) and named it after his consort Lakshmi, as Lakshmipur and not Sharikapur. This city extended from modern 'Hawal' to Lal Bazar. He also founded one more city, at the confluence of the Vitasta and the Sindh after his own name, as Shahab-ud-din pur (modern (Shadipur).

Unfortunately some Persian historians have painted Shahab-ud-din as an iconoclast in their misguided enthusiasm for the propagation of Islam. Jona Raja has prophetically smelt this and has consequently warned the future generations: " The king Shahab-ud-din had broken, the idols of gods; this preposterous and unfounded assertion should not in any way unnerve the posterity." Jona Raja was born in 1389 and died in 1459 A. D. Shahab-ud-din's span of reign ranges from 1354 to 1373 A. D.; so it is abundantly clear that Jona Raja's account of Shahab-ud-din's rule is only 16 years anterior to him. In the face of such a brief interval between the death of Shahab-ud-din and the birth of Jona Raja his testimony can never be dismissed cheaply, while the Persian chronicles. e. g. Baharistan Shahi (1586-1614 A. D.) Haidar Malik's Tariki Kashmir (1618 A. D. ) and, to crown all, Peer Hassan's Tarikhi Kashmir ( 1885 A. D. ) depended upon for what they have recorded about Sultan Shahab-ud din. Theirs is only a hearsay or wishful thinking while Jona Raja, from the point of historicity, is more reliable.

To sum up, Jona Raja has every sort of admiration for this benevolent Sultan of Kashmir; only Zainulab-din (Badshah) possesses a slight edge over him according to this Hindu historian. Kutub-ud-din (Kudadin) succeeded his father Shahab-ud-din as the Sultan of Kashmir from 1373 A. D. The Sultan had to undertake military campaigns against Raja of Lohara (Lorin) and the Khashas (Khokhi), inhabiting the south western belt of Pir Panchal range (Rajori) and also in Kishtwar. He brought these erring vassals to book under the generalship of Lolak the Damar. The Sultan also started a free 'langer' for the people in view of recurring famines in the valley, every, year at very huge cost. Through the blessing of one Yogi Brahma Natha he got the desired progeny; he had been without any son or daughter earlier.

He also founded a township within the city, after his name, as Qutab-ud-din-pora. Modern scholars have identified it as the tract of land now known as Mohalla Haji Peer Mohmad Sahib, (also called as 'Langar Hatta' bazar near Islamia College to-day). There is a mohalla in Srinagar bearing this name even now. It is situated on the left bank of the Jhelum between Zainakadal and Ali Kadal, some distance below Gurgari

Mohalla. I am led to believe that the Sultan was in some way the founder of this locality/habitation. Future research may unfold some relevant information regarding this.

Sultan Qutub-ud-din breathed his last in 1381 A.D. At time his son Sikandar was only eight years old. Being minor, mother Subhatta acted as his regent and appointed two advisers, Uddak and Sabak, for efficient governance of the land. Shri P. N. Bazaz gives her name as Bibi Hora but does not indicate any source. The mother had such an immense love for her elder son Sikandar, that she did not hesitate to put to sword her own daughter and son-in-law Mohammed, when it was suspected that they were conspiring against the reigning sovereign. The younger son Haibat was also similarly done away with by poisoning. In such a callous yet judicious manner the fondling mother paved the way for her son to ascend the throne without any impediments, whatsoever. On assumption of regal power Sikandar started a campaign of exterminating his foes; his own brother-in-law (brother of his first wife Shri Shobha) was not even spared. The two advisers during the regency of his mother were done away with. Here-in we shall have to refer to a controversy regarding the status of Shri Shobha in the harem of Sultan Sikandar. Persian chroniclers have termed her as the second wife of the King ; but according to Jona Raja this seems to be a wild guess. He clearly indicates her position as "Mahadevi", the senior - most queen. When Sikandar married Mera, the daughter of King of Ohind, Udbhandpur near 'Attak' in west Panjab, Shri Shobha suffered in her rank. Mera, being a Muslim by birth, got precedence over her. Till then the Sultan was not much biased against Hindus. Again, Jona Raja pays a compliment to him in as much as the queen Shri Shobha got the Shiva-temples renovated, presumably with the consent of the Sultan. The valour and terror of the Sultan made him quite safe and secure on the throne. Perhaps the most note-worthy event of his reign is his diplomacy with which he bought peace from Timur the Lame, who had earlier sacked Delhi. The scanning eye of the Sultan could not under-rate the invincibility of this barbarous Turk; hence smelling his invasion on his land, he sent an emissary to him when he was camping at the Indus and conveyed his unflinching loyalty to him. The whimsical Turk felt flattered by this gesture of servility and sent a word back to the Sultan to meet him along with his army at Dipalpur. The Sultan had hardly reached Baramulla with his retinue when he was given to understand that Timur had already left for his homeland Samarkand. This good tidings gave great relief to the Sultan. The Turk-invader had been touched by the loyalty of the Kashmiri Sultan and sent him two royal elephants as a present.

Jona Raja does not give all these details. He only refers to the gift of two elephants sent by the "Malchha" King (Timur), while returning from Delhi, to the Sultan. But in this very verse he has also unfolded in one word the cause for this unbelievable kind gesture from this cruel and callous invader. He uses the word "the suspicious Malechha King". Herein this Sanskrit historian would make us believe that Timur feared an attack from the Sultan when his army was returning to Samarkand with invaluable booty. In order to keep him in good humour the Turk sent two royal elephants to him. Jona Raja further extols the towering stature of these beasts which were definitely a rarity in Kashmir. Jona Raja acknowledges the superiority of his Sultan over Timur and in a subdued tone does hint that the latter wanted to buy neutrality of Sikandar, for which end in view he sent the gift of two elephants to him. Like an astute general, Timur could anticipate Sikandar's sending reinforcements to Sultan Mohd Tughlak of Delhi. In order to forestall these designs he overwhelmed Sikandar with this unique but, all the same, very respectful gift. During the sack of Delhi it was free for all, but Sikandar's intervention would have made a veritable difference. Persian chroniclers, Hindus as well as Muslims, are unequivocal in asserting that it was Sikandar who was actually scared of vandalism of Timur, which seems more probable. Jona Raja has tried to be over-patriotic in delineating this incident. At the same time, he deserves credit also for not skipping over this great event in Indian History, when he refers to the sack of Delhi by Timur.

During the initial years of his rule the Sultan was very forbearing and charitable. Jona Raja has most graphically described this trait of the King. He has recorded "Nobody can describe his charitable disposition; the lotus-hands (of the Hindu subjects) would always feel drenched with water." It is a convention with the Hindus to receive alms or 'dakshina' (fee etc) with hands wet with water so that in return they spray the benefactor with this very water, showering blessings on him. It is therefore clear that Sikandar treated the Hindu subjects also kindly along with the Muslims. Unfortunately the Sultan could

not maintain this policy for long. The visit of Syed Mohammad Hamdani, the illustrious son of Amir Kabir, changed his Catholic out-look on life to a large extent. Jona Raja very diplomatically ascribes the reason of this great change in the Sultan to the vices rampant in his (Hindu) subjects. But at the same time he acknowledges the over-all superiority of this missionary from Hamdan. He tells us that "He was a shining moon among the stars; though very junior in age, he was adored as the senior-most in scholarship." The Sultan was in his grip and under his spell and through his exhortations an era of unprecedented proselytisation was inaugurated in Kashmir. Shariat was for the first time proclaimed as the state religion. He appointed the ministers, all of them neo-converts: Ladda Raja, Vaidya Shankar and Suha Bhatta, perhaps with this unflinching belief that the converts are more rabid than the originals, hence will not hesitate to perpetrate every kind of tyranny on their erstwhile co-religionists.

At the instance of Syed Mohammed Hamdani the Sultan married Mera, the daughter of the King of Ohind, who was a born Muslim. Naturally Shri Shobha, his first queen, had to get degraded in status. Her sons were killed. Mera, gave three sons to the Sultan: Mer Khan, Shahi Khan and Mohammed Khan. Dr. Mohibul Hassan has somehow or other inferred that Shri Shobha had adopted sons. While, quoting Jona Raja on this subject, incorrectly, he has mentioned no other source for this inference. Jona Raja has actually used the epithet "artificial" with the sons of Shri Shobha. According to Hindu Dharmashastras adoption is of two kinds - one "Dattak", the offered and taken, the other "Kratrim", only for completion of certain rites of a sonless father, after his death. In the first the consent of the adopted is not necessary, while it is imperative in the case of second, who acts as a water-son. Even though adoption is banned in Islam, yet this custom of adoption is not wholly extinct among the Muslims of Kashmir, even today. Therefore, we can safely assert that the sons of Shri Shobha were actually the water-sons. The word used "artificial" can have other intonation also. It may mean "unreal". Since the sons were the progeny of a Hindu queen, hence they were not real Muslims though given Muslim names. So they were banished from the state. The sole motive for their being shunted out of Kashmir seems to be to keep the throne safe for the (real) Muslim sons of Mera.

The Sultan founded a new city at the foot of the Sharika Parbat. Muslim historians have called it as "Nowhatta" - the name which has survived to date. They refer also to his building of the imposing Jama Masjid, adjacent to the new city.

Actually the arch-intriguer against the Hindus was Suha Bhatta. He came under the influence of Syed Mohammad Hamdani, and was converted to Islam with the name of Saifud-Din - "the sword of faith." He may not have proved as much a defender of his adopted faith, but he did definitely unleash his sword on Hindus. Herein his name proved prophetic. Jona Raja equates Suha Bhatta with the ancient King Harsha - the Turk, the epithet given to him contemptuously by Kalhana, for the wholesale destruction of temples and idols. The massive temples at Martand, Bijbehara, Ishabar (near Nishat Garden), Triphar (at the foot of Mahadeva mountain) and in Baramulla district were razed to the ground.

After demolishing the temples, the relentless crusader against Hindu faith, Suha Bhatta turned his attention towards the persecution of Hindus. He enforced Jazia and compelled thousands of Hindus to embrace Islam. Those who resisted were put to sword; some fled the country for fear of reprisal. But there were also dauntless believers in Hindu faith who did raise a banner of revolt against this mass conversion. Jona Raja gives their names as Sinah Bhatta and Kastuta - the grocers and Nirmalacharya. The last mentioned spurned the royal patronage and preferred penury to change of faith. The excesses committed by the subordinate officers cannot absolve the reigning king from the infamy thus earned and sins committed; hence the tyranny let loose by Suha Bhatta paid its toll back in the shape of the Sultan's incurable malady. Seeing his end near, he annointed his eldest son Mir Khan (Ali Shah) as his successor and breathed his last on the eighth day of the dark fortnight or Jeth in 4489, the year of the local calendar. It comes to 1413 A.D. according to the English calendar.

Before the account of Sikandar, as given by Jona Raja, is concluded it will be pertinent to refer to the meticulous caution with which the historian has tried to cover up the mis-deeds of the Sultan by keeping Suha Bhatta only in the dock. Perhaps Jona Raja did not like to malign the parent of his benefactor (Budshah) for reasons obvious and consequently shifted all the odium to Suha Bhatta and to Hindus. But



at the same time he does say that the Sultan could not wash his hands off these atrocities. His tacit consent must have been obtained by Suha Bhatta through the good-offices of Syed Mohammad Hamdani, who was actually the big boss in those dark days. The Sultan was always at his beck and call and could not go against his wishes. Persian historians have advanced many reasons for Suha Bhatta to wreck vengeance on his erstwhile co-religionists, but Jona Raja has simply written that he came under the magnetic spell of Syed Muhammad Hamdani and at his bidding took to heaping inhumanities on Hindus and their religion.

In discharging his mission of persecuting Hindus he had to prove that he was more loyal than the king. His over-enthusiasm in this respect can be squarely explained by the fact that being a convert his go-slow policy could have been misunderstood, and also misinterpreted; hence he had to look like the most devout Muslim and the most zealous partner in this "Jihad" against the Hindus. The fanciful inferences of Persian historians in this regard have no credence as the contemporary record of Jona Raja is silent on these.

Mir Khan assumed the name Ali Shah on ascending the throne. He, after fruitless flirtation with regal splendour, decided to undertake pilgrimage to Mecca and nominated his brother Shahi Khan (Zainulabdin) as his successor. But being prevailed upon by his father-in-law, the Hindu Raja of Jammu, he changed his mind and returned to Kashmir. Shahi Khan did not resist his taking up the mantle of Sultan once again. Later he was killed in a battle with Khokhars, thus paving the unobstructed way for Shahi Khan to ascend the throne. These two incidents are perhaps sufficient to prove that the inherent tenets of Muslim faith had not made any substantial headway in the Valley, though the population was being admitted into its fold by hook or by crook. This was only a political expediency. The King Ali Shah had married two daughters of Hindu Raja of Jammu, which is un-Islamic, since a Muslim has been ordained to marry a non-Muslim only when he or she is converted to Islam. It is also enjoined in Islam that two real sisters cannot be wives to the same spouse concurrently. Moreover, once a 'Kasab' (resolution) is made to undertake Haj, it should not be revoked in any case. This very background facilitated Budshah to rehabilitate Hindus, as the loyalty of the people to their new faith was not even skin-deep as yet. It may well be called just a change of label from Hindu to Muslim, the neo-converts were still finding their feet, their only hobby was to pay off old scores under the garb of religious crusades. Shahi Khan (Budshah) as a prince already had a foretaste of this, when the adjoining Hindu tribes and neo-convert tribes of Thakurs and Khokhars had helped him to regain the throne from his brother. Therefore on assumption of power he elected to own benevolence instead of violence. Sultan Sikandar and his evil-genius Suha Bhatta failed to cash on this policy of conciliation instead of confrontation, thereby mutilating their image in Kashmir history.

Jona Raja has very rightly referred to this change of heart in Budshah. The Sultan effected far-reaching and sweeping adjustments to make the Hindus comfortable and thereby he made amends for the sins of his predecessors.

So much ink has been spent in delineating the golden reign of Budshah, that it would seem redundant to repeat all this. However, some light needs to be thrown on two or three points which have been more or less glossed over by the authors.

The first point which deserves emphasis is that Zain-ul-abdin was never under the influence of Hindus. He was a devout Muslim and would consult the Shaikul-Islam on every measure he would like to introduce. Perhaps this is also the reason that "Shariat" as the state-religion could not be replaced. In accordance with its dictates, Jazia also was not revoked entirely, but fixed at a lower rate. Zain-ul-abdin could not dare to go totally against the current of public opinion, built brick by brick by his forefathers, so far as treatment towards Hindus was concerned. Fanatics did raise their eye-brows on his attitude towards the Hindus and for this very purpose Syed Sad Ullah came from Mecca with a huge load of books. He tried to cajole the Sultan into reversing this tolerant policy, but the latter did not oblige. Budshah seems to have been more awake than those zealots who would try to foist their faith on others not by persuasion but through coercion. He therefore first of all called upon his own kinsmen to set their house in order. Muslims had multiplied themselves into different sects; Shias, Sunnis, Sayeds, Sufis and were vying with each other to show the other sects down. The Sultan could very well anticipate that once



the object of their combined hatred - the Hindu was gone, they would fall out among themselves. Once such a nihilistic propensity is nurtured, it can express itself in any shape whatsoever. Therefore like a true follower of the Prophet he tried to consolidate the Muslim Brotherhood and exhorted them to sink their differences and close their ranks. It would have done more harm than good to the spread of Islam. How prophetically Budshah hinted towards this, can be easily corroborated by the subsequent Chak rule over Kashmir. Therefore, reinstatement of the irritant - the Hindu - did not only do good to him but also made the Muslim society cohesive and viable.

The second point which needs explanation here is the appointment of the Hindus to very responsible posts. The neo-converts, thinking themselves dandies, could not be expected to handle the intricate problems of statecraft. Moreover, they were actually the scum of the Hindu population; hence their credentials for running the government could not be depended upon, and the proverbial Eleven had survived the tyranny of the earlier Sultans. The state was in the doldrums owing to lack of foresight on the part of the predecessors of Budshah. Draught and flood in his reign made the state poorer all the more. In this predicament a hunt for Brahmin talent was made, so that the state be entrusted to it to set things in order. Moreover, the Hindu, unbelievably elevated to such position after an interval of condemnation, had to perform to appear more loyal than the king and would apply his heart and soul together to prove his capability. Thus the state was again put on the rails and attained the speed which it had squandered earlier. Tilakacharya, Shriya Bhatta, Sinhabhatta, Ruyya Bhatta, Karpura Bhatta, Ramananda, Gaurak Bhatta, Jaya Bhatta and a host of such luminaries administered the land of their birth with unparalleled devotion and to the best of their capacity. In the bargain Budshah made double gain. He became the champion of the underdog - the Hindu - and also gave his state a very good government.

The third point regarding the renovation of the temples and grant of lands to the Hindus can also be explained in this manner. During the reign of earlier Sultans, more-so when Sikandar through Suha Bhatta unleashed an era of unprecedented tyranny over the Hindus, the temples were annihilated and the Hindus were fleeing the country, leaving behind the jagirs attached to these temples fallow and desolate. The neo-converts only relished in bringing death, destruction and loot, but never cared to attend to these jagirs for getting produce out of them. At best they could think only of converting temples into mosques but that sentiment alone could in no way act as the substitute for sustenance.

Budshah's scanning eye could very well locate the disease; so he not only pledged safety to the bidding Hindus, but also coaxed those, who had left, to return to their homeland. Renovation of temples was executed under the supervision of Shriya Bhatta, which restored confidence into Hindu folk. Once again the lands attached to these temples were brought under plough and the food prospects of the country improved substantially.

Moreover in the wake of building a network of canals and water feeders, he rehabilitated the Hindus also on the land thus reclaimed. It served the purpose of replenishing the government treasury with the revenue these lands yielded. Whatever the inherent motive of Budshah regarding these steps, it is laudable on his part to usher in liberalism, despite the resentment of his Muslim subjects. He stood his ground firmly well and that is perhaps the indisputable reason which makes him the tallest of all the sultans in Kashmir. He possessed an unbending sinew and could never be swayed by passion. His reason thoroughly groomed was not only precise but also perfect. When the neo-converts under instructions from Syed Sad Ullah, who harboured a grudge against the king, as alluded to earlier, got arrowed to death a Yogi who had blessed the Sultan with male issues, he at first sought the counsel of the Shaikhul Islam, who decreed that "eye for eye" treatment be meted out to him. But the king did not like to act in haste and also alienate the sympathies of the Muslims. He introduced a novel method of punishing Sad Ullah by making him ride a donkey with his face towards its tail and his beard singed off. The people were asked to spit at him wherever he was conducted in this plight, but the King spared him his life. In other words he extended immunity from death to Syeds also, as was the practice regarding the Brahmins in earlier Hindu period. Undoubtedly the Sultan resurrected the dying human values, nursed these with his sharp intellectual prowess and tried to sell these out to his co-religionists. Nature willed otherwise. When his reign, like the flicker of a glow-worm in engulfing darkness, came to an end, his successors could not appreciate the

exact import of his emancipated outlook, but reverted to wholesale repression on Hindus, that also with vengeance.

Jona Raja has given us an eye-witness account of the first thirty-nine years of the reign of this gracious Sultan. He concludes the account abruptly at verse 976, without adducing any reason for it. The account of penultimate eleven years of his rule has been narrated by Shrivara in his Zaina Tarangini, as already indicated.

This benevolent Sultan, by commissioning Jona Raja to pen down his history, has been instrumental in doing permanent good to the annals of Kashmir. No contemporary Persian chronicle has come down to us in this respect. The earliest Persian reference to Kashmir is contained in 'Tarikhi-Feroz Shahi' (1285-1286 A. D.) by Zia-ud-Din Barni. Obviously this is a historical record about Feroz Shah Tughlak of Delhi. Mention of Kashmir has come there-in in a casual manner. Mulla Ahmad's 'Tarikhi Kashmir', was composed after the reign of Budshah. It can conveniently be treated as the first Persian chronicle of the Sultans of Kashmir. In view of this, by getting the events recorded by contemporary Hindus, the king not only provided an authentic base to these, but also bequeathed to the future scholars enough material to build up his personality, after exchanging the notes of Sanskrit and Persian histories. It will not be an exaggeration to say here that his period alone can take rightful pride in being authentic in Kashmir History. Jona Raja has performed his mission with honesty of purpose and dedication to his profession. His account of Budshah, though incomplete, is not wanting in any thing. It is neither magnified nor played down. The subsequent Persian chroniclers, without any exception, have profusely drawn from him and then only built, their respective theses. Kashmiris owe a debt to Jona Raja for erecting the contours of a light-house of accurate historicity which reduces to nullity thankless pastime of groping in the dark.

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

## **18 Bilhana - The Minstrel**

**by Prof. K. N. Dhar**

**Kashmir** of yore has been the cradle of Sanskrit lore and learning. From 9th century A. D. to 12th century A. D. brightest luminaries in Sanskrit literature have shone on its firmament. These four hundred years, roughly speaking, form the crux and the culmination of what may be called the creative and original literary activity of Kashmiris in the realm of Sanskrit language and literature. A galaxy of rhetoricians, philosophers, poets, and historians all by their own right brought fame and lustre to the good name of 'Sharada Desa', (the land of speech) as Kashmir was popularly known then. They marvellously contributed to the richness of "Deva Vani" (Speech of gods) and immortalized its flavour and fragrance in their thought-provoking treatises.

New theories pertinent to the soul (content) and body (form) of literature were propounded. Tenets of literary Indian criticism were established for the first time in Kashmir. New standards and norms for evaluating a literary composition were enunciated; old ones were refuted by persuasive argumentation. "Aesthetic element" got its cherished place for the first time in the books on Poetics and rhetorics. To quote Dr Raghavan "If there is a prominent Indian Aesthetics which could be applied to all fine arts, it is to Kashmir we owe it ." Among these literary giants Anandvardhana Vamana, Mammatta and others are prominent.

Such diverse subjects like dramaturgy and philosophy could ably be handled by one and the same person like Abhinavagupta. The versatile genius of Kashmiri scholars is irrefutable and their erudition unquestionable. Even the minutest details did not elude their attention. Their command over language is faultless and their thought rejuvenating.

Out of such intellectual climate, enriched all the more by Nature's extravagant disposition, a unique system of philosophy was evolved known as "Saiva-Darshan", which is "the synthesis of the realistic, idealistic, voluntaristic, absolutic and mystic current of thought then prevailing in Kashmir." This system of philosophy, to speak more precisely, is a happy compromise between "the personal and the impersonal and the monistic and the dualistic approaches punctuated with the traditions and terms of thought and practices of the Buddhists and the orthodox. " Dr R. K. Kaw has one more explanation to offer :- "It has laid emphasis on the need of 'recognition' (Pratyabhijna of 'Self' (Atman), viz the supreme inheritance of man. The necessity of supersensuous experience for self-realisation is recognized owing to the limitations of man's sense and reason". Among the host of such philosophers the name of Somananda and Utpala, the propounders, and Abhinavagupta the interpreter deserve special mention.

While all these sons of 'Saraswati' or 'Sharada' (Goddess of speech or learning) revelled in their ethereal imagination understandably forgetting the environments in which they were living, one polymath Ksemendra did not lose sight of the society in which he was born to breathe and could feel the ground under his feet, as the idiom goes. A realist by nature and a satirist by disposition he tried his hand on a variety of subjects including poetry, history, rhetorics, prosody, etc, but his realistic approach is pronounced throughout. He might indulge in didactics but the sting of satire is there. He has given a graphic picture of contemporary society rampant with seductive Gourtezans, cheating 'banias' and cunning and corrupt clerks. In the words of Dr. Surya Kanta, "Ksemendra's comprehensive style, his clarity of expression, his power to use satire to the best advantage and his critical insight into literature have earned for him a place among the masters of Indian literary tradition."

"History" says Macdonnel, "is the one weak spot in Indian literature. It is in fact non-existent."

The conspicuous absence of historical spirit among the ancient Indian writers is more due to their outlook on life than to their incompetence to handle this form of expression. In spite of this obvious discomfiture, Kashmir has made a substantial contribution to the art of recording chronicles in the person of Kalhana whose torch was kept alive by Jona Raja, Srivara and Prajya Bhatta in later years. 'Raja Tarangini', a chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir, is to this day the solitary work on history pure and simple. Even though with intermixture of the supernatural and the marvellous, the historical content of

this book is not altogether authentic, yet it cannot be gainsaid that Kalhana is certainly the greatest historian in Sanskrit literature."

Sanskrit as such could not understandably have been the language of the elite only as it is often contended, but could fairly be understood by the people in general. In the absence of such a hypothesis, such a gigantic literary activity could not have fructified. This very fact is further elaborated by Bilhana himself when he says :

<verses>

"Where even the women in their household speak Sanskrit and Prakrit as fluently as their mother-tongue".

This inference is furthermore corroborated by Stein when he says, "The continued popular use of Sanskrit even among Mohammadans is strikingly proved by the Sanskrit inscription on a tomb in the cemetery of Bahau- Din -Sahib at Srinagar (A. D. 1484).' It is, therefore, erroneous to assume that Sanskrit as a spoken word had lost its pristine glory. "Brief Sanskrit inscriptions without dates have been found by me on a number of old Mohammadan tombs in Srinagar, near Martand and elsewhere." During this renaissance when Sanskrit was not only the vehicle of mental gymnastics at the hands of Kashmiri scholars but also the spoken word of the people at large, Bilhana saw the light of the day. He had already a tradition behind him, a background worth its weight in gold, forming an indissoluble part of his soul even if he was physically away from his motherland.

The first extant reference about him is given by Kalhana :

<verses>

"Bilhana who had left Kashmir in the reign of King Kalasa had been made by Parmadi, the Lord of Karnata, his Chief Pandit"; when travelling on elephants through the hill-country of Karnata his parasol was borne aloft before the king. When he heard that the liberal Harsa was like a kinsman to true poets, he thought even so great a splendour a deception.

Some of his verses are also found in 'Kavya Prakasa' of Mammatta and 'Balabodhinivriti' of Katantra; some of his didactic verses not found in the works ascribed to him are also given in the anthologies, This also goes to prove that Bilhana had attained sufficient amount of popularity in his home land even though he had been physically away from it.

However, the credit of unearthing this "Jewel amongst Kashmir Poets" goes to Dr. Buhler and that also, paradoxically enough, outside Kashmir. In 1877 A. D. while in search of Sanskrit manuscripts, he came across an old palm-leaf edition of "Vikramankadeva Caritam" in Jaisalmer, formerly a central Indian State and now a part of Rajasthan.

In the Calcutta edition of Rajatarangini Rilhana is given instead of Bilhana. The astute doctor without any hesitation identified this Rilhana as Bilhana- subsequent research on this subject only confirmed his view. In the Sarda characters "Ra" and "Ba" are apt to be confused owing to their seemingly alike symbols; so the scribe while transcribing the original Sarda characters into Devanagari script must have made this mistake unwittingly. In a later critical edition of Rajatarangini by Dr. Stein, the name Bilhana is correctly given.

The name as such is not of Sanskrit origin. Perhaps it has a Dardic base and might have connoted some meaning in the local dialect. This needs to be looked into. The same can be said about Kalhana whom some critics have identified with Kalyana, given in Mankha's "Sri Kanth Caritam". But this inference does not hold water. Barring some prominent names which have a Sanskritic base, the majority of names seems to have been derived from the local dialect e.g. Mammatta and other names ending in "tta".

Bilhana does not leave us guessing as regards his birth place "He does not wish to remain under a bushel." He gives a candid description of the village in which he was born :

<verses>

"There is at a distance of two and a half kosas from Pravara Pura (Srinagar) a rising plateau named Jayawan in which there is a spring of Takshaka (serpent king) of crystal clear water, veritably a disc to

chop away the head of Kaliyuga ready to annihilate the "Dharma". Quite close to it is a village endowed with the virtues, opulence and all fame named Khonmukh."

This Khunmukh Village is even to-day as exactly situated as it was given by Bilhana some eight hundred years ago. In some editions the name Khonmusa is given which according to Buhler is the correct word. He had advanced a theory that the copyist must have been a Jaina who pronounce "Sa" and "Kha" alike, such as Katimosha: Qaimoh, Ratimosha: Romoh. This theory cannot be termed as correct as it is a conjecture only. I have tried to provide an answer to this controversy like this. The final "ausa" sound is generally changed to "oh" in Kashmiri as in 'Pausa' to 'Poh', and the medial sound "O" and "U" are not clearly distinguished by Kashmiris. So the "Khonmukh" as given by Bilhana has come to be pronounced as "Khunmuh". In modern vernaculars also "Mukha" (Sanskrit) has changed to "Munha". There may be one more cause for this confusion of "Kha" and "Sa". Again the "Sarada" characters might be responsible for this. Even today the Pandits of Kashmir knowing Sarada script sometimes refer sarcastically to a new entrant to their ranks in the words: "can he differentiate between 'sa' and 'ma" ? This clearly goes to prove that the various symbols in Sarada are apt to be confused; only a profound scholar with an immaculate knowledge of the intricacies of this script can be relied upon for genuine text.

This "Khunmuh" village is situated on a 'rising mound' (a table-land, exactly speaking) near the Srinagar Jammu National Highway, when it branches off to the left near Pandrethan at a distance of five miles from Srinagar. In this volcanoic range are situated Zevan, Wuyan and Khrewa also. It is at a distance of seven miles from Srinagar as pointed out by the poet one and a half "gavyuti". 'Gavyuti' is roughly taken to be equal to four miles.

The 'Takshaka Naga' as alluded to above in the Sloka under reference has undergone cultural conquest. There is a grave-yard adjacent to it. The water is not as crystal clear as was known to the poet. It is not also altogether circular in shape now. The saffron fields and the vine-yards are even to-day as luxuriant in their brilliance as in the days of the poet. Only the Vitasta (Jhelum) seems to have gone farther way from it perhaps by a distance of two to three miles. Rivers do change their course and it is a geographical phenomenon which will take its toll on any part of the globe.

In these surroundings our poet was born of 'Jyeshta Kalasha' and 'Naga Devi'. His father Jyeshta Kalasha was a commentator of Mahabhashya of Patanjali. In a way his illustrious father bequeathed to him as an heirloom the love for Sanskrit Muse.

No exact date of his birth or death can be given for obvious reasons. Even though he has written profusely about himself, yet he has not given us the dates with mathematical precision. In order to arrive at some conclusions regarding the years in which he flourished we have to rely on stray references about him in the works of his successors or contemporaries, or on the indirect evidence to be culled out from his writings. Happily for us Kalhana has made a reference to the years in which he left Kashmir. He went for a sojourn to Central India in the reign of King Kalasa. King Kalasa was the son of King Ananta whose rule commenced from Saptarsi Samvat 4 i.e. 1029 A.D. to Saptarsi Samvat 39 i. e. 1064 A.D. Towards the end of his rule he performed the Abhisheka (Anointing ceremony) of his son and made over his kingdom to him in his life-time in Saptrsi Samvat 41, i.e 1066 A.D. This can safely be fixed as the date for the departure of Bilhana to Central India. The immediate predecessor of Bilhana, the Polymath Kshemendra gives this detail about the kings and indirectly helps us to form a rough view of the range of years in which Bilhana lived.

Kalhana makes another reference to him when he enjoyed the partonge of Parmadi of Karnata. The Vikram as given by Bilhana has been identified as King Chalukya Vikramaditya VI of Kalyan who reigned from 1076 A.D. to 1127 A.D. Thus it is clear that this illustrious poet reached "Kalyan" ten years in advance of Vikramaditya's enthronement. During this decade Bilhana must have made a name by his talent and erudition which consequently arrested the attention of the king who rewarded him munificently and bestowed on him the title of "Vidyapati" (the Master of learning).

So it seems probable that Bilhana lived between the last two quarters of the eleventh century. Probably the poet was cut short in his life by 1088 A.D. as he has ignored his patron's biggest military campaign to



the south in his Vikramankadevacaritam. This great expedition, had Bilhana been living at that time, could not have been ignored by him while smaller campaigns have been elaborately narrated by him in his Vikramankadevacaritam. Thus we can rightly assume that the span of life of our poet outside Kashmir ranges from 1066 A.D, when Kalasha ascended the throne of Kashmir, to 1088 A.D. when his patron started his military campaign towards the south. However, this assertion cannot be termed as final because :

(i) It can also be possible that he must have left Kashmir not in the first year of Kalasa's reign. Kahlana explicitly says that he left during the reign of King Kalasa. It might be any year.

(ii) Moreover, he might have fallen into dis-favour of his patron, as the kings have generally been whimsical by nature. Because of this dis-favour Bilhana no longer eulogized him in his memoirs.

One more point also deserves attention in this respect. What could have been the possible age of Bilhana when he chose to try his fortune outside Kashmir. Taking the state of communications and the time it took to travel from North to Central India he could not have been a minor. He would not have been allowed to risk his life on such a hazardous journey had he not been quite mature and seasoned. Let us assume the lowest limit of his age and fix it at 25, if not more. So broadly speaking, our poet lived from 1041 A.D. to 1088 A.D. i.e. forty eight years, not a span worth its name in view of the standards obtaining at that time. Hence it seems plausible that he lived even after 1088 A.D., might be a retired life; and when he actually breathed his last, remains hidden in the womb of time.

Bilhana, as the tradition goes, has three compositions to his credit: "Vikramankadeva Caritam"- a historical Kavya, 'Caur Panchasika- a lyric of fifty stanzas and a small drama of four acts "Karna Sundari". One more book "Bilhana Caritam", ostensibly an autobiography, has also been ascribed to him. But in it the name of the writer does not appear any where. It may have been written by one of his admirers who preferred to remain unknown. Moreover the details and dates given in it do not agree with those given in Vikramanka Deva Caritam.

Out of these three compositions only the Vikramankadeva Caritam reaches the highest water-mark. It is definitely a work of mature judgment and composed demeanour. It must have been written before 1088 A. D., for the great expedition of that king to the south, which occurred in that year is not mentioned by the poet. This kavya consists of 18 cantos while the last canto is devoted to the personal account of the poet. In these 18 chapters the number of verses roughly comes to 2500. In this composition history has been wedded to romance and war. King Vikramaditya, his patron, is portrayed in brightest possible colours. His valour, his charitable disposition, his love for fine-arts have been lavishly praised. The description of seasons, the landscape and other relevant topics occupy the largest space in the book. The historical content is definitely subservient to the poetic fancy :

<verses>

"Like the buzzing of bees engaged in collecting honey, like the new sprout of the vernal damsel, like the blowing of auspicious conches on a birth-day, the spring set in. "

About the erotic sense of love, he has to say :

<verses>

"O Lord of Night (the moon), I have a spotless beloved in my bosom. What will you do with your spotted one (beloved) ? Pour out to me wine in your goblet studded with gems. Are you not conversant with the 'spot' in your lap."

The two introductory verses of the Kashmirian manuscript of 'Caur Panchashika', the genuineness of which is corroborated by Bilhana himself, show that it was written in Kalyana before the poet had obtained the favour of the king Vikrama. The mention of Lord of Kuntala and indignant address to his envious rivals and enemies prove this. It is often ascribed to "Caur Kavi" which is not a name but a pseudonym for Bilhana. It is definitely the offspring of a corrupt reading in the colophon :-

<verses>

(Thus end the fifty verses of amor by Caura)

"Caurpancasika" (the fifty stanzas of a thief) or the "love-lament" aptly called by Sir Edwin Arnold is a lyric of a poet ready to mount the scaffold for enticing a princess. During this fateful suspense when the life of the poet hangs by a slender thread, the reminiscences of the days spent in the sweet company of the princess oppress the heart of the lover and he ventilates these in a powerful and pathetic versified form. The refrain of each stanza begins with even today. At places the imagination of the poet borders on sensuality :

<verses>

"Oh me ! I was the bee who sucked his fill  
From fragrant chalice of that gold-leaved flower,  
Breast deep.  
Know I not well how it did thrill  
Beneath mine eager clasping in that hour,  
When love waxed well-nigh  
cruel in quick kisses, And passion welcomed  
hurts that mixed with blisses."

The theme of this lyric according to tradition is a leaf from the personal experience of the poet. This can be also an imagined situation which the poets can visualize easily by virtue of their innate productive faculties. The freshness of the poem is eternal.

"Karna-Sundari" is the name of the heroine of the drama bearing the same name. Usually the dramatists in Sanskrit have named their compositions after their heroines. Kalidasa also did the same. In this small drama of four Acts is a love episode between Karna Sundari, a princess and Karna Raj, son of Bhimadeva, a scion of Chalukya dynasty. Like other Sanskrit dramas it is more of a dramatic poem than a drama. The story is common-place with a happy blending of history and imagination. Prose pieces are simple and short. Prakrits have also been laudably employed. Bilhana puts the following compliment in the mouth of the King for the beauty of his beloved: "On account of being put in fire the lustre of gold is darkened as if with the smoke; the moon is robbed of its resplendence like a leaf bereft of red hue; the creeper-like bow of cupid is ineffective, the beauty of the world having gone to sleep. Why only the plaintain groves shine before her in their pride? "

It can now safely be asserted that Vikramankadeva Caritam is the poet's last work, and these other two works precede it. Both these works, the lyric and the drama, do not portray perfect craftsmanship in respect of the technique of the language.

Bilhana essentially is a romantic poet. Romantic poetry baldly speaking is the acme of poet's individuality. At the roots of this poetry we perceive the all-pervading sentiment of this romantic instinct inherent in man. Our poet does not dabble in high sounding philosophical dicta like Somananda and others which are definitely beyond the comprehension of an ordinary man. He does not either indulge in hair-splitting argumentation on the ingredients of literature as Mammatta and others did. He does not also tag history with legend like Kalhana and his retinue. He also fights shy of indicting the society like Ksemendra. Like a truly romantic poet he translates his emotions as they ooze forth in his heart. He weaves a world of his own in which the inebriating influence of vines and the golden hue of saffron form the woof and the warp. To speak precisely he lives in his imagination.

Bilhana's 'forte' is love-milk of human kindness. "The love portrayed by Indian poets is not of the ideal type, of the sensuous type; but yet they reveal great delicacy of feelings and refinement of thought. "He holds a mirror to human feelings in a masterly way and at the same time keeps the nature an eyewitness to this all. He delineates human feelings in the background of Natural surroundings, so that the throbs of man and Nature beat in unison. "By the artistic use of pathetic fallacy the lyric-poets blend Nature and Man into one inseparable whole."

The natural beauty of Kashmir can definitely give fillip to the creative imagination of a poet. While in Central India he enshrined the sweet memory of this land of "learning, saffron, ice-water and grapes, making it a superparadise," in the innermost sanctuary of his heart. This very faculty impelled him to write exuberant poetry pulsating with his emotions inherent while in Kashmir and acquired while in Kalyan. His language is flowery and his diction flawless.

Unlike his predecessor Ksemendra, he does not seem to believe that the figures of speech (Alankaras) are external embellishments only. He makes use of these profusely and in a dexterous way. His similes are

apt and impressive. Even though he uses a variety of metres in his compositions, yet his favourite is "andakranta" in which Kalidasa has couched his immortal lyric "Cloud Messenger".

Consequently when he takes pride in narrating the two peerless products of his Motherland, it seems no exaggeration:

<verses>

"Verily saffron and the poetic prowess are born of the same womb, outside Sarda Desa (Kashmir) I have not seen these two sprout forth."

To crown all, in the portrayal of human feelings punctuated with the sobering influence of love and all the more accentuated with the extravagantly kind-hearted disposition of Nature none can excel him in his home-land. He drinks at the fountain of love - a synonym of life - to his fill; older critics perhaps were right when they classed him with Kalidasa and compared the talent of the former and the latter to the "lustrous hair" and the "coquetry" of the "charming Lady of poetry" respectively.

Bilhana has been fortunate enough to receive recognition in his life time, a phenomenon very rare with sanskrit writers. Usually their talents have been sung in panegyrics when they leave their mortal frame. This all goes to substantiate that Bilhana epitomizes in himself a dexterous mastery over sound and sense. His facile pen could clothe any imagination that would strike his fancy in proper words and in proper order. He might have at times spent much ink while eulogizing the virtues of his patron, even then he believed in the golden mean - a synthesis between fact and fiction. He paid back his gratitude to the King in words pulsating with sincerity, pregnant with scholarship and endowed with vibrant emotions. No other better repayment could be imagined. So when he says :

<verses>

"There is no hamlet or village or even Metropolis; That is no forest or garden or land devoted to learning where the wise, the dull, the old, the young, the women and men, one and all, do not recite his poems with utmost exhilaration."

It does not jar on our ears as hyperbole or pedantry. It is a statement of facts which may not be palatable to a few, only because it comes from the mouth of the poet himself.

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

## 19 Ksemendra - The Peoples' Poet

by Prof. K. N. Dhar

**Sanskrit** poets and literary luminaries have been often accused of oriental hyperbole. It may be conceded that by and large such devotees of Muse did indulge in some kind of exaggeration which became nauseating at times; such kind of poetic fancy becomes pronounced when they had to extol their patrons, heroes or even their beloveds. Kings whose munificence made such kind of poets as mercenaries, so to say, have been equated with the lord of the gods - Indra, while they had no intrinsic merit of their own. People at large have been by-passed and no direct reference has been made to them. Even the prince among poets Kalidasa has revelled in the description of Raghu or Dilipa but has forgotten altogether his subjects over whom they ruled. Aja sheds torrents of tears for his beloved wife Indumati, but not a single drop has been reserved for the underdog whom he exploited to live in luxury.

Happily for us, a Kashmiri Brahmin "Ksemendra" by name has striven to wash off this stigma attached in general to Sanskrit poets and has tried his versatile pen on the people in general. This is not a mean achievement in the context of the standards and norms of poetry-writing prevalent at that time. Even the Rhetoricians had laid it down that the hero of a Mahakavya should be a god, saint or a man of exceptional attainments. To rise in revolt against such time-honoured conventions needs self-confidence of highest order. Ksemendra did not err in his duty towards his brethren and though being a rebel did initiate a very healthy trend in the Sanskrit literary tradition. He made heroes and heroines of ordinary mortals in flesh and blood - the courtesan, the clerk, the miser and many others culled from ordinary life. He did not believe in portraying the ideal, at the same time not being averse to it. He in a most realistic manner could feel the ground underneath his feet. The throbs, sighs, sobs, joys and sorrow of the man in the street have been woven in dexterous verse pulsating with innate sincerity by him only to point out that the distance between the "ideal" and the "actual" needs to be bridged, and perfection being an adage only found in text books on morality, approximation to that ideal should guide us as to the inherent merit or otherwise of the people of whom he was one.

In an extant reference to Ksemendra found in Kalhana's Raja Tarangini, his talent as a poet has been praised but his acumen for historicity played down:

<verses>

"Because of somewhat carelessness, not a single fraction of the Ksemendra's Nrpavali is free from blemishes, even though it is the work of a poet."

Kalhana having seen the "list of kings" could glean mistakes in it from the point of view of a chronicler, but unfortunately this book was lost to the posterity, hence no judgement whatsoever can be passed on it except relying on Kalhana who acknowledges Ksemendra's right to be a poet. However, in the Colophon to the 'Samaya Matrika', Ksemendra has written that he finished that work during the reign of Ananta in the 25th year of the Laukika era. Again in "Suvratta - Tilakam" he reiterates that he wrote in the reign of king Ananta and finally in 'Dasavataracaritam' he says that he finished this assignment in the reign of Kalasha, son of Ananta, the year being 41 Saptarsi era. So it is abundantly clear that he did at least see the rule of two kings- Ananta and his son Kalasha. Again in his 'Bharatamanjari' he has alluded to his being the pupil of Abhinavagupta from whom he learnt Alamkara Shastras. The date of this Shaiva philosopher and commentator - Abhinavagupta cannot be later than 1014 A.D. because he wrote his bigger commentary on the Pratyabhijna Darshana in 1014 A. D. At that time Ksemendra studied at his feet. So we can safely assume that Ksemendra must have been born at least 20 or 25 years before this date so as to develop his comprehension in receiving the tuition from Abhinavagupta. Hence his date of birth can roughly be placed in the last quarter (towards its end) of the 10th century. His explicit mention of Ananta and his son Kalasha only might give some clue as to his death or retirement from creative literature. He does not mention any other king after Kalasha which proves that he was not destined to see the reign of the successor to Kalasha. The year in which he finished the "Dasavataracaritam" has been given as 41 Saptarsi era which corresponds to 1066 A. D. After this date he either sought respite from literary pursuits

or was cut short in life by death. He went to Tripuresha mountain for spending his old age there and probably breathed his last at the Ashrama he had built over there. King Kalasha reigned from A.D. 1073 - 1089 and it can fairly be assumed that Ksemendra cast off his corporal frame after A.D. 1066 and not in any case later than A.D. 1089. Between these two limits his date of death can be cogently placed. This Tripuresha or Tripureshvara was held in great reverence in olden days as Kalhana alludes repeatedly to it for its sanctity. King Avantivarman also passed his last days on this Tirtha. Nilamata purana also mentions it as a place of pilgrimage. This has been identified as 'Triphar' on route to Mahadeva shrine, some 4 miles from the headworks of the present 'Harvan' to the North-East A stream known as Tripuraganga is still visited by the pilgrims going to Mahadeva which flows close to modern Triphar. Even though it has lost its fame now, yet Shrivara has mentioned about a 'Annasattra' started by king Zain-ul-Ab-Din (Bud Shah) at this Tirtha. This may be the permanent 'Langar' of those days started for feeding the needy and might prove that during the Muslim rule also it had retained its renown as a holy place.

Ksemendra unlike other Sanskrit poets does not feel shy of publicity. In the colophons of his various works he acquaints us fully with his lineage; piecing together all these facts given by the author himself, we can conveniently build his family tree. His grandfather's name was 'Sindhu' being the son of 'Narendra' a minister of Jayapida, grandson of Lalitaditya.

He was a very strong and benevolent king of Kashmir and was named Vinayaditya also especially on his coins. His father's name was Prakashendra. He seems to have been born in affluence as the family surname of 'Indra' most eloquently testifies to. His father was of very liberal disposition and made handsome gifts to Brahmins. He subscribed to Shaiva cult hence installed many Shiva lingas at Svayam near Nichihama in present Handwara Tehsil, and spent some 25 lakh rupees for endowment purposes. Like his father Ksemendra also built an Ashram at Triphar and retired there in his old age. His son was 'Somendra' and being talented like his versatile parent wrote an introduction to the "Avadana-Kalpalata".

Fortunately for us, the family tree of Ksmendra unmistakably illustrates that this family had preference for Sanskritic names and not local names, whose meaning at present cannot be made out like those of Kalhana, Bilhana and Mamatta, etc. "Khema" in Sanskrit means "eternal happiness" and Indra means a "lord". So the name taken together means "Lord of eternal happiness, which he really was, as his compositions fully portray. He did not confine this happiness only to himself but dispensed it profusely among his fellow-countrymen by composing humorous skits and witty character sketches in "Deshopadesa" and "Narmamala". He lived perfectly up to his name.

His versatile genius has flowered in many directions. Dr. Keith called him a polymath while Dr. Stein' has appended the epithet polymister with his name. This tribute goes a long way in establishing that he did not confine himself to a single form of literary expression but tried his pen over many other forms with equal force and effect. However, in all humility he calls himself 'Vyasadasa' the servant of Vyasa of Mahabharata fame. Knowledge has given him humility in every sense of the word. Even though like Vyasa he was a prolific writer, yet he refrains from equating himself with him; he does scale the virgin heights of literary expression, yet does not boast about this but ascribes it to the blessings of Vyasa whose slave he becomes willingly. The ego in him remains subdued as should be the case with every literary giant.

However, it is to be conceived rightly that though Ksemendra's father was a devout Shaiva and he himself received tuition from Abhinavagupta - a Shavitie stalwart - yet he got converted to Vaishnavism by the efforts of Somapada. It also seems that he had more respect for this Somabhagvata than even for Abhinavagupta. Moreover, he kept his mind open and studied Bhuddism also. Perhaps his awake intuition first of all thought of including Buddha among the ten incarnations of Vishnu. Some faint echoes of ridiculing Shaivism can also be gleaned from his compositions especially in 'Deshopadesha' and 'Naramamla'. But despite all his flirtations with Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Bhuddism, he was a firm believer in the religion of Shrutis (Vedas) and Smritis.



Before we proceed to discuss his literary acumen as a polymath, it seems pertinent to refer to a controversy raised by Prof Peterson regarding the identity of Kesemendra and by mistake confusing him with Kshemraja - the renowned commentator of Shaiva lore. However, on second thoughts he revised his earlier opinion, and in this way the dust raised by this confusion got settled. Perhaps this wrong inference is due to the fact that both these Kshemaraja and Ksemendra acclaim Abhinavagupta as their teacher. Ksemendra has provided a veritable hint as to his real identity as much as he prefixes the epithet "Vyasadasa" invariably with his name while Kshemaraja does not have any such appellation. The latter is silent about his pedigree but the former has written profusely about his lineage. Hence it can be easily understood that the two have had separate identity.

Broadly speaking Ksemendra's immense literary activities can be divided into four distinct traits:

- a) As a condenser of very lengthy epic -literature and other religious Kavyas.
- b) As a Historian.
- c) As a satirist.
- d) As a writer on Rhetoric, poetics and metres.

Under the first head, his summaries of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Brhatkatha of Gunadya, 'Deshavatarcharita' and 'Baudha-vadanakalpalata' are note worthy.

By epitomizing the Brhatkatha written originally in paishachi, he did a great service to the literary tradition of Sanskrit literature. The original having been lost, but Ksemendra's translation into Sanskrit has served admirably to retrieve that irreparable damage, and so he is looked upon as the originator rather than the translator of this famous story-literature. Soma Deva Bhatta also prepared a second version of Brhat Katha in Sanskrit after him which proves that this kind of literature on the pattern of Arabian Nights had become very popular with the people.

Brhat Katha Manjari deals with amors and heroism of various kings especially the king Udyana. It has nineteen Lamabakas (cantos). The poetry employed is not of high order and in the words of Dr. Buhler may be called "verified prose". Ramayana Manjary and Mahabharata Manjari are obviously the shorter versions of Ramayana and Mahabharata - the epic literature of India respectively. In the latter a glaring omission is perceptible. He has altogether omitted the chapters 342-353 of the Shanti Parva. On a perusal of the Ramayana Manjari it is quite clear that he follows Valimiki in a most faithful way and has even alluded to minor incidents be it by a single phrase or a single sentence. So, how this striking omission can be explained? Perhaps in the eleventh century the Shantiparva did not form the part of Mahabharata and might have been interpolated subsequently.

One fact comes to surface while discussing the Manjari literature of Ksemendra. He retains the original name of the text he has chosen for being summarized and appends the word 'Manjari' to it. "Manjari" might mean a sprout, cluster of blossoms, a flower-bud or a creeper. In this way he has very intelligently suggested that his smaller edition is like a creeper to the original and imposing tree of Ramayana, Mahabharata etc. He has like a deft gardener pruned the extraneous and redundant foliage around these trees and carved out of these a cluster of blossoms, even though smaller in volume, but all the more prettier in appearance. As a translator of Brhat Katha, his translation from Paisachi into Sanskrit was definitely subservient to the contents of the original. He could not take any liberty with it; with such shortcomings even, Ksemendra's mastery over Sanskrit is unblemished. So it is wrong to judge his poetic prowess from his "Manjari" literature. His independent works only can be the touch-stone to test his talents as a poet. We will come to this point later.

'Baudhavadana-kalpa-lata', is a collection of Jataka tales. On the authority of the poet's son "Somendra" Ksemendra composed only 107 Pallavas (chapters), to which his worthy son added one more, making it the auspicious number of 108. Unfortunately the first 40 Chapters of this compendium were lost but luckily were retrieved from its Tibetan translation, when Shakya - Shri a Kashmiri Pandit presented a copy of it to the Lama of Tibet in 1202 A.D. He got it translated into Tibetan some seventy years after i.e. 1272 A.D. Ksemendra also acknowledges the debt of one 'Virya Bhadra' an authority on Buddhistic texts who assisted him in composing this treatise.

"Dashavatarcharita" as the name suggests contains anecdotes regarding various incarnations of Vishnu; though Ksemendra does display a rare kind of ingenuity in dealing with this religious topic, yet it cannot be termed to be his original work; first 9 cantos are definitely derived from Puranas. Novelty of conception is discerned in the 7th canto wherein "whole of the Ramayana is narrated with Ravana as the central figure". The result is quite happy and vividness of description adds to its charm. This novelty of conception is further more witnessed in his extolling Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu. The inherent attitude of an Indian thinker believing in synthesis is seen at the work here. Herein the Hindu view of life assimilating all that is good from any source whatever, has come in handy to the poet. So, the rebel against Hinduism as such - the Buddha has been admitted to the fold of Hindu pantheon which proves not only the catholicity of Hindus but also their wakefulness.

When the symbol of revolt-Buddha was equated with Rama, Krishna etc. the edge of proselytisation started by his followers got blunted. The wind was taken out to their sails, not by force, not by persecution either, but by owning him. In this way Hindus got one more incarnation and propitiated him in the form he detested the most. His followers definitely stood to lose in the bargain while Hindus gained everything - their culture, their way of thinking remaining in tact. Imperceptible erosion took place in the other camp and consequently this very religion had to either get amalgamated in the Hindu fraternity, or live in self-exile.

As a historian no estimate of his can be built as his "Nrpavali" (the list of Kings) has been lost even though Kalhana did consult it for writing, his Tarangini. However, Kalhana has not been fair to him. He admires his acumen as a poet, but derides it as a historian. However, it is to be conceded that Kalhana while enumerating the sources of the historical data on which he built his chronicle, does mention his "list of kings" which must have commanded some respect in his time, and to justify the writing of his "Tarangini" pointed to the defects in the former "Nrpavali". In this connection it is to be remembered that even though Ksemendra undertook to write the "list of kings" but his heart definitely lay with the underdog. So he treated it in a slip- shod manner. In course of time, Nature respecting his conviction, consigned the book to some forgotten corner, hence was lost. His innate progressive outlook would have compiled a "Janavali". The "List of people" instead of "The list of kings". Perhaps to atone for this omission he wrote a number of books which do definitely come under the caption "Janavali". Royal patronage he did not want as he was sufficiently affluent himself, so could not bring himself to cater to the moonish caprices of kings.

Kalavilasa may be considered the best work from the fertile pen of Ksemendra. This book consists of ten cantos and in the very first canto "Muladeva" the arch cheat is introduced and the rest of the book is devoted to the tips given by him to his pupil Chandragupta the caravan leader's son. Each canto deals with vanity, greed description of courtesans, the character of the clerk, arrogance the description of Music, description of various cheats, and lastly exposition of all the arts. As is clear from the titles of cantos, the poet does not refrain from exposing the weakness inherent in the society at that time. The cheats, courtesans, Kayasthas and goldsmiths epitomizing the deceit in themselves corrupt the society with the aid of vanity, greed and arrogance. His play on the word ('mud') arrogance which was spelt as ('dum') restraint in the Krta - age deserves mention. In Kali - age the sequence of syllables has changed places 'dum' becoming 'mud'.

Moreover, useful information about the currency in vogue at that time is also given in this book. While describing the character of miserly trader he calls him a thief in broad day light. Having plundered the customers by guile or flattery during the day, he very reluctantly parts with three cowries for house-hold expenses. It seems clear that the cowries were in use as a medium of currency in his time - and that also of the lowest denomination. He calls cowries as a (Shvetika) being of white colour also. Narrating the novel deceptive ways of gold smiths who have faulty balances for weighing gold and possess sixty four arts of cheating the people, he alludes to their birth, and says that they were previously nibbling at the Meru mountain as mice and cursed by gods for this insolence were born as goldsmiths on this globe.

The title of this composition means the charm or pastime of arts- the art of deception, cheating, enticing, seduction, and robbery etc.

About the depraved woman, he has this castigation:

<verses>

"Eluding her own husband like a fawn, tasting the hospitality of another tree (not her own husband's), by nature a low-born vamp, displays false coquetry, crooked she-serpent, can be faithful to none".

In the same vein the prostitute is condemned as

<verses>

"In this way, having many hearts, many tongues, many hands, and many tricks of seduction, in reality without truthfulness; no body can know the prostitute in essence."

About the innocence of men he has this satirical compliment:

<verses>

"The astrologer calculating in the sky as to when the moon will enter its sixteenth mansion, does not know anything about his wife who is attached to the amors of various serpents (bad charactered men)."

The Kayastha (the scribes clerk) who held very important post in old Kashmir and like a leech drank the blood of people has not escaped his chastisement.

<verses>

"The handwriting (of Kayastha) is crooked, (fraudulent, so that the actual entries made into his books are not deciphered) looking like the snares of the death-god. The Kayasthas sit on the file of the birch bark (files) like serpents in a charmed circle (drawn by a conjurer)."

Samayamatrika may be also called the finest composition from the versatile pen of Ksemendra. Herein the poet lays bare the seductive amors of prostitutes and their enticing acumen. In the colophon to this book the poet calls it ('subhashitam') by which its didactic import is suggested. The caption of the book a compound consisting of ('Samaya') time and ('Matrika') mother, when taken together, may mean the "mother of the time" in that age. It was not the chaste or the virtuous lady but the ensnaring vamp - the prostitute who ruled over the hearts of men. The times were not in any way flatteringly punctuated with piety but besmeared with sinful conquetries of the prostitutes; by bringing them to the fore and also alluding to their ghastly end, the poet does reform the society. Some critics have found Ksemendra guilty of low-taste, vulgarity and only narrating the bad points in the society. However it is to be remembered in this context that Ksemendra in the first instance does not claim to be a religious preacher. He writes what he actually sees and feels. If the society was rampant with vulgarity, low taste and other evils, how could the poet be blind to these? The degradation in the society could not have remained hidden even if Ksemendra had tried to make the use of "idealistic" rather than the "realistic" approach to life. The filth and the mud in the society would after all raise its head had Kesmendra covered it with the sweet smelling roses of his imagination even. By screening these from public view would have all the more multiplied their intensity, hence by portraying these, the society at large hanging its head in shame, could have thought of reform in right earnest. Hence the poet's intention is to reform and in no way to present the deformation of society. Hence the use of the ('subhashitam') at the end of book is quite justified. Negatively if the darkness is explained in full detail, the positive reaction to it would be light, more light. As the little of the book suggests, it is a compound of 'Times' and 'Matrika' (mother) object of respect. In a sarcastic manner the author wants to convey that the harlot is the "mother of the times" or more respected and sought after individuals in the society, while actually the Matrikas should have been propitiated. The moral and mental fibre of the people at that time was so base that instead of engaging themselves in "Matrika Pujananam" they wasted time and money in enjoying prostitutes. Hence in the very beginning of this treatise, Ksemendra very rightly says:

<verses>

Moreover, towards the end of this composition Ksemendra himself justifies the title by saying:

<verses>

"In course of time (by the curse of the time) that (Kankali) - the mother was transformed into an artificial beauty by Kalavati, associating this treatise with her name, I, Ksemendra has arranged it (into cantos)". This book also furnishes geographical data about the old salt route (salt has been always imported into the Valley) and a hospice named 'Panchala-Dhara-Matha' on it. Later on this very route and hospice were renovated by the Mughals connecting the Valley with the plains via Pira-Panchal range. This book of verses is divided into eight cantos (Samayas). Herein the initiation of one 'Kankali' into the hierarchy of prostitutes and her various sojourns have been described. The agent for introducing her to a senior-in-trade grown up lady- hence unmarkatable is naturally the hair-dresser- among men the barber (hair-dresser) is the most wicked.

Charucharya is actually a century of verses in Aaushtubha metre. According to the author the main purpose of writing it is to teach law and polity by way of a moral couched in the first line of the verse and followed by an illustration in the second. The illustrations are mainly drawn from epics and Puranas.

'Deshopdesha' contains updeshas (advice) in eight cantos regarding his innate feelings about the customs and notorious characters in the society. In the opening verses of this book the author craves for the indulgence of the readers in not construing any other meaning into his use of biting sarcasm, but only to bear with him, because he would like to reform the society through this medium:

<verses>

"Being ashamed very much and not goaded by the defects (in the society), it is my attempt to reform the people through mirthful laughter."

The characters he has chosen for his chastisement are the villain, the miser, harlot, the bawd, the sexy rogue; the Gouda students having come to Kashmir for receiving tuition and the old man's marriage etc.

The harlot epitomizes in his words: -

<verses>

"In her speech honeyed-sweetness, in her heart the blade of a razor, the prostitute is like a sharp edge of an axe ready to cut at the roots of her paramours."

Even though being at the right side of sixties, she polishes her face with beauty - aids like a girl in teens, verily at the commencement of the iron age, she must have taken nectar along with crows.

About the foreign students especially from Gauda Pradesha (Bengal), he has this left-handed compliment:

<verses>

"He demands more vendibles, but gives very little as the price, so the vendor in the morning stands before him like a local Kali (to recover the balance). "

Presumably the student given to vile practices could not be coaxed into paying the actual price being under the influence of liquor on the preceding night. He would have cooked up a brawl and even wounded the vendor with his knife.

Moreover, the psychology of a miser has been graphically woven by him in these words:

<verses>

"The miser seeing a relation of his having come to his house of his own will, under the excuse of an altercation with his wife vows not to take anything."

When the host is observing a fast, more so under protest, how could the guest expect hospitality there. So, he takes up to his heels and in this way, the miser gets rid of him. Furthermore, Ksemendra tries to philosophise on his over-all behaviour :

<verses>

"The dry-as-dust miser's words can never be sweet. How can be loveliness on his face when there is no salt even in his house-hold." Herein, the poet has played on the word 'salt' which in its abstract form may mean beauty also.

In this way, he has not spared any such despised character in society.

The Kashmiri Bhatta (Pandit as known now) having fallen from his high pedestal and addicted to vice has been painted by him as

<verses>

"The initiated Bhatta (Kashmiri Brahmin) bent upon taking liquor, being addicted to Vamachara by which the pride of his own clan has been set at naught, with a plate of fish in his hand, approaches the house of his teacher (for reading scriptures)."

This description of a Bhatta very lucidly brings home to our mind the levity obtaining in the highest caste at that time. Having forsaken the right path of worship and taking to Vamachara, he has to observe the 'panchamkaar' (five MS) rule, and is so bashless that he does not care two hoots for the prestige of the community to which he belongs.

The old man's infatuation for a young girl has been very aptly summed up by the author as follows :

"The old man begs for a virgin (in marriage) like a miser for wealth." The undertone in this simile is purposely condensed by the author by comparing the lust for a virgin of a dotard with the lust for money by the miser - who will never use it but simply keep it imprisoned in his coffers, only to feed his eyes upon.

'Narma-Mala' or a garland of humour and wit is actually a complement to the 'Deshopdesha.' It is divided into three Parihasas (Jokes). The main target in these is the Kayastha- clerk- who is painted most black. He revels in dismantling temples, teasing Brahmins, and encouraging bribery. His life full of vice lands him into the prison ultimately, and all his ill-gotten riches and property are confiscated. His end is most tragic.

The "Then" and "Now" of the Kasyastha has been very wittily condensed in the following verse:

<verses>

"(In former days) his wife used to drink the begged scum in a broken and second-hand stone bowl. She now takes the musk-scented wine in silver goblets.

Under the fourth head, Ksemendra as a rhetorician and writer on poetics and metrics composed Kavi Kanthabharana (The necklace of a poet) and Auchitya Vicharaeharcha (an account of propriety ) and Suvratta tilakam ( the crest of good metres ) deserves special mention. As the titles of these compositions reveal, the first is a short treatise on the making of a poet for which divine as well as human effort is necessary. The second declares the "propriety" as the soul of poetry. The age-long predominance of Rasa (sentiments) has been subordinated by him to Auchitya (propriety). The third obviously is a work on metres. Twenty four metres are described, discussed and illustrated by him in all.

Besides these, a host of books on other subjects has been ascribed to Ksemendra. Late Pt. Madhusudan Kaul Shastri enumerates as many as thirty one compositions from his versatile pen.

However, to build his towering image as a peoples' poet, only such uncontroversial treatises as have been classified under different heads earlier, are sufficient.

Without mincing words, it would be expedient to judge him as a poet first and afterwards the subject he chose as a vehicle for his poetic talent will merit discussion. The most accepted definition of poetry from Eastern point of view is by Kavi Raja Vishwanatha when he says that even a single sentence containing Rasa (flavour or sentiment of relish) may be called poetry. Further to pin-point the importance of Rasa he defines it as <sanskrit text> which tinkles or which is relished is called Rasa. With other constituents such as 'embellishments', 'qualities', etc, Rasa is acknowledged by one and all as the soul of poetry. Herein obviously the emphasis is on the content of poetry.

Ksemendra himself defines poetry as containing "Auchitya" propriety. According to him propriety has been defined as :

"An embellishment is a real embellishment when applied at the proper place, and Gunas (merits) are actually merits when they up-bold the norms of propriety. So it is clear that Ksemendra does not subscribe to Rasa theory of poetry and makes bold to give his own definition. He actually makes the poetry



purposeful. Furthermore in a poetic composition when different Rasas (sentiments) are intermixed propriety alone can preserve their flavour, if this kind of discretion is not employed, then the composition would only be a counterfeit mixture of sentiments. The author lays emphasis on the existence of propriety in each word, sentence, figures of speech, verbs, syntax, gender, number, adjective, tense and even on other outer limbs of poetry (Kavyangas) i.e. environment, time, intuition, thought and nomenclature.

Therefore the difference between the Rasa school and the definition of poetry given by Ksemendra is that the former is subjective in essence and the latter is objective in comprehension. The Advocates of Rasa did definitely include propriety in merits and impropriety with blemishes.

But Ksemendra like a realist does mark the frontiers between the two, because his judgment is objective. Before testing his merit as a poet by his own standards or by Eastern norms of criticism, it will be feasible to define poetry and also the making of a poet from western point of view also.

Wordsworth defines poetry "nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth." Herein this celebrated poet under-lines the truth which should deserve to be the subject of poetry. Another famous poet Shelley while defining poetry in a general way takes it to be the expression of imagination. Coleridge makes it as anti-thesis of science having for its immediate object pleasure not truth. Herein the emphasis is laid on the pleasure which should flow from a poetic composition. Thomas Carlyle declares poetry to be "musical thought". This definition is perhaps in consonance with that given by Dr. Johnson when he says that "poetry is metrical composition." Both these definitions pertain to the form of poetry-other than prose. Edgar Allan Poe also echoes the same feeling when according to him poetry is "the rhythmic creation of beauty."

W. H. Hudson sees poetry "as an interpretation of life through imagination and feeling."

However, from the perusal of all these definitions it is clear that poetry as such is a metrical composition pulsating with imagination and feeling its goal being to interpret the truth or to provide pleasure. In this way the form of poetry being musical and metrical and its content either the truth or the pleasure, have been properly and proportionately located. By comparing this definition with that of the Indian critics it is patent that these are in line with the protagonists of 'Rasa' theory which definitely tinkles the emotions. With regard to Ksemendra we have to note the didactic import in his poetry which he proclaims from the house-top. Therefore, the question arises whether a poet can be a moral teacher. He has to translate his feelings and emotions faithfully as they ooze forth in his heart and to preach morality through this medium is justified or not. To this knotty problem Sir Philip Sidney provides a cogent answer. In his "Defence of poetry" he says that a poet is a 'maker'; the Indian counter-part being 'Srishta' having the same meaning. So, it can be safely inferred that the poet does not express what already exists, but he invents - precisely the 'ideal' for the imitation of the reader in general. He (Sidney) further contends that the world created by the poet is surely better than what exists reality. In the same way fiction sounds truer than the fact. The contention of Sir Sydney to put squarely is, that poet is actually a moral teacher, but Ksemendra while admitting this in toto, does not believe in his painting the ideal and thereby reform the 'actual'. He would like to proceed from the 'actual' like a revolutionary and would like the reader to assess for himself 'what should have been' from 'what it is.' What he preaches on Morality is simply suggestive and not direct. Perhaps his approach is more realistic than Sir Sidney who would like us to go to the 'Real' via 'ideal'. Ksemendra believes in treating the 'Real' with its imperfections, and all the time beckoning us in undertones, and not directly, to have an eye on the 'perfect ideal'. "What should not be" can be very efficiently emphasized by "what actually is."

His conviction about the function of propriety in poetry comes to his succor in this dilemma. Propriety according to him is nothing but a real representation of life as it obtains. Had he painted it otherwise, it would have amounted to impropriety. Hence his candid portrayal of society is an illustration of propriety in its all shades of meaning. He would not like to pass on a counterfeit society for a genuine one. He believes in calling spade a spade and not confusing dross with gold. While discussing the attributes of a poet, Ksemendra in his 'Kavi Kanthabharna' has unambiguously laid down that a poet-in-the making should not seek the guidance of a logician or a grammarian because they hinder the flowering of good

poetry. He is alive to the fact that good poetry should in no case get fettered in grammatical technicalities or the mental drill of logicians. It should flow like an uninterrupted stream. Moreover, he even goes to the extent of saying that a poet - in-the-making "should neither go a - begging nor stoop to vulgarity in his narratives". His imaginative faculty should not be wanting in anything and should not fall below the established norms of good-taste. So, it is clear that Ksemendra as a teacher on poetry and also as a poet does strike a happy mean between the precept and the practice; for this he has chosen the vehicle of satire.

A satire has been defined as a piece of writing which ridicules the follies and wickedness of mankind, of a class of people or of an individual. As has been made clear in the preceding pages his emphasis is on the individual - different units of society who are a veritable cancer for its healthy growth. Hence his chastiment pulsating with sarcasm and irony does not border on vulgarity. It is a faithful representation of life. It can safely be asserted that his poetry is not a revolt against life in any sense of the word. The moral standards as should have been existent in the society - which actually are not there - form the dirge of his poetical compositions. Like Mathew Arnold he believes that 'poetry is at bottom a criticism of life.' Morality and ethical values do form an inextricable woof and warp of the texture of society, hence the poetry of revolt would be revolt against life itself. So, he does not revolt against it, but lays it bare with pungent sarcasm and seemingly 'Mirthful laughter', only to relieve its grim effect on his readers.

In the same way Ksemendra's poetry cannot be accused of being- the poetry of paradox. In a paradox the self-contradictory or absurd element is somewhat more pronounced than the truth it contains; our poet does not believe in the 'paradoxical' approach to poetry, but in its stead, prefers the direct approach which is easier to comprehend. He does not want us to solve riddles or puzzles.

Hence it is clear that his 'satire' does not subscribe either to 'revolt' or to 'paradox', in their stead, he transfers his innate feelings to the reader without any pretensions whatsoever.

It has been contended that satire is best suited to prose. In it the appeal is made to reason, judgment, "it cannot be heightened by being garnished with an appeal to emotion". However, our poet has employed the more difficult medium of poetry, hence his task to produce the desired effect is more arduous than those of the prose-writers in this field. Perhaps for this very reason some critics have called his poetry as versified prose. As has been shown earlier, this is sheer injustice to our poet. Like a true satirist he has to subjugate his emotions to the compelling reality around him. The wings of his imagination do get clipped consequently, so his poetry may not touch the high water-mark of Kalidasa - who has no such shortcomings and his emotions are free to take any direction whatsoever. Even then Ksemendra has yoked his poetic prowess admirably well to the exposition of the real by contrasting it with the ideal. For a satirist the method of contrast is indispensable. He may feel piqued at times with the gulf between the real and his dreams, yet his anger has to be screened under a mask of 'Mirthful-laughter' as Ksemendra would say himself. The satirist has to don the mantle of a moralist though he may not like it. His insistent beckoning to ideal - appealing to the sense of right and wrong - unconsciously bestows on him the status of a moral teacher. He cannot escape from it. Hence, in his poetry the aesthetic content is naturally subservient to the moral one. Even having such discomfitures for the full flight of his imagination, Ksemendra has tried his hardest to introduce aesthetic pleasure into it according to his own norms of propriety, as discussed earlier. His satire does show the poet in him. His compositions are even now relished with the gusto of a lyric vibrating with emotions and have never been treated as codes on Morality. Perhaps this popular reaction to his satire is a sufficient compliment to his genius as a poet of no mean order.

The very first verse of samaya Matrika introduces him as a poet by his own right :

<verses>

"He who has conquered three worlds by his exciting, stormy, yet formless weapons; I salute him the flower-bowed cupid, for his surpassingly wonderful prowess'.

Whenever his imaginative faculty is not under the curbing thumb of content, or is free to take strides at his own will, he definitely touches the high water mark of poetic fancy. The poet in him remains subdued not that he lacks proper imagination, by the compelling nature of the subject he has chosen, and the

vehicle of shloka metre which cannot admit of any elaborate treatment because of its comparative shorter span. His vocabulary is so rich that he looks like a living Dictionary; hence he could readily and easily weave a particular situation or feeling out of the inexhaustible fund of words at his command. Words flow from his pen spontaneously and at times he does not feel diffident to use the local Kashmiri words also, perhaps to give his compositions a native colouring and flavour: "The flute-player has the Veena and the "tumbak" on his shoulders".

To make its Kashmiri usage more emphatic, he also uses the word 'Nara' with it. In this context many such Kashmiri words even the idioms can be gleaned from his works e.g. 'Tala' in the sense of Sanskrit 'palater', Gharaghara, representing the roaring sound of clouds in Kashmiri. Not only this but even the Kashmiri colloquial taunts and abuses have also been reproduced by him faithfully in Sanskrit.

To crown all his similes and other, figures of speech are not only apt but also homely. He does not believe in ethereal poetic fancy but has amply drawn from daily life. His personal experience and observation make his diction all the more realistic. His delineation of nature:

<verses>

"The starry night keeping vigil having become disgusted with the fatigue caused by its sporting with the white rays (off the moon), gradually gets emaciated, being anointed with the morning dew, as if with perspiration."

Describing Moonlight the poet portrays a bewitching scene with its enthralling effect with the help of very simple words:

<verses>

"The lord of the night (the moon) a white parasol of cupid, the unblurred mirror made of crystal for the lady of "space", the white Tilaka of the damsel of Night, shone resplendently.

While describing the beauty of the city (presumably Srinagar) he has to say :

(In that city) where the musical notes of the pretty swans is all the more made sweeter by their devouring flesh lotus-stalks, which (musical notes) getting diffused in the lotus-groves sound like the jingling of anklets of goddess Lakshmi.

About the content of Ksemendra's writings, we have made it amply clear that he chose the ordinary man or woman with his or her all weaknesses as his subject. The choice of such a subject was in itself revolutionary at that time when fixed norms were laid in this behalf by the Rhetoricians. Ksemendra not only rebelled against such hackneyed, standards but provided his own thesis for rhetorics and criticism in 'Auchityavicharacharcha' and ' Kavikanthabharna'. He showed the path to progressive trends in literature in those hoary times when dogmatic approach was the order of the day. Some ten centuries after him the humanly woke to the necessity of ushering in progressive outlook in literature, more especially after the Russian revolution of 1919. In a way Ksemendra combined in himself the characteristics of a prophet and a poet. He brought down the poetry from the ethereal heights to the matter of fact and real dimensions.

The style which he employs deserves some mention before we close this paper. Style is defined as a mode of expression and we shall have to examine as to how Ksemendra acquits himself in this field. We know already that he uses very simple words, avoids lengthy compounds and ambiguous epithets. His appeal is direct. He does not believe in traversing zigzag when shorter routes are available; with the use of simple straight and chiselled words he produces the maximum effect. This is his immortal contribution to Sanskrit literature. He lives to the maxim propounded by Coleridge "best words in best order" by any standards whatsoever. Moreover, the mode of expression he employs has his own indelible imprint on it. Regarding this trait in style J. Middleton Murray has observed "A style must be individual because it is the expression of an individual mode of feeling." Some sixty years after him another Kashmiri Soma Deva Bhatta also tried his pen on epitomizing Brhatkatha; it can easily be understood from the comparison of the two that Ksemendra has his own style which could not be imitated by Soma Deva. His own Kashmiri Retotician Vamana, a protagonist of Riti School has said:

<verses>

"Riti is a special arrangement of words; Riti is the soul of literature."

Ksemendra's writings do possess the "special arrangements of words", he does not waste a single word, but knows fully well "that these are two edged tools, if not used well, these can bite" as very aptly said by Anthony Trollope. Ksemendra's mastery over the language is perfect. He very prudentially uses a particular word to project a certain context and meaning. His selection of words is superb. T.S. Elliot has said "The poet has not a "personality" to express but a particular medium", which obviously connotes style. Ksemendra's style is neither artificial nor wanting in anything. It is to quote Wordsworth - "Man speaking to man?" and to make this definition more representative, Ksemendra added the words "about the man" to it.

These words represent Ksemendra in all his shades. In his prolific writings he performs the mental surgery of the Man, locates the disease and points towards its eradication. He with child-like innocence and simplicity employs the most direct language only to talk to man like a man, because his aim is to beckon to him :

<verses>

"Alas, seeing always the deer in the trap in the jungle, even then the deerlings get into the crooked snares."

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

## ***20 A Brief Life Sketch of Pandit Dinanath Yaksh***

**by Mrinal Kaul**

**The** Sanskritic Shastras have survived in India as a part of the Vedic ritualistic culture. The Vedic ritualism has been a text-based culture. In the development of this ritual-culture a variety of sciences emerged as a part of it thus making it richer. These sciences were a part of a living tradition survived by the respective experts called Pandits. After learning and disseminating this traditional knowledge it was taught to the consecutive generations. Till the later half of the nineteenth century the same living tradition was practiced in the Kashmir valley. The twentieth century saw a sudden halt of this tradition. In the present Sanskrit legacy of Kashmir I name only two such traditional luminaries, one being Pandit Baljinath Pandit and another, his taught Pandit Nilkanth Gurtoo. Had I written these lines just a week back I was to mention Pandit Dinanath Yaksh as well. But with the sad demise of Pandit Dinanath Yaksha on 4 October 2004 a whole gamut of the Kashmirian legacy of Sanskrit Shastric systems came to an end.



**Dinanath Yaksh**

### ***20.1 Early Life and Education***

Pandit Dinanath Yaksha was born in Srinagar (Kashmir) on 12 June 1921. He completed his Shastri degree from the University of Panjab, Lahore. Born in an orthodox Kashmiri Pandit family he was in active contacts with the major Sanskrit pandits of his time. During his childhood he attended the Government Pathshalas for learning different systems. He learnt some Karmakanda (practice of ritualistic rites) and Grammar from Pandit Ramjoo Kokiloo. He also read some texts of Grammar with Pandit Raghunath Kokiloo. The legendry figure in the Karmakanda and Jyotish of Kashmir Pandit Keshav Bhatt Jyotshi taught him astrology. Afterwards he polished his knowledge of Sanskrit language and Grammar as he studied some very advanced texts of Sanskrit grammatical tradition with Pandit Parshuram Shastri and Pandit Kakaram Shastri of Jammu. While pursuing his shastri course he learnt Nyaya (Logic) and Kavya Shastra (Poetics) from Pandit Ananda Kak and Pandit Nathram Shastri.

The assimilation of this great knowledge gained from his teachers would have been futile had he not pondered over whatever he learnt. His docile efforts for learning together with his self-study served as a



befitting testimony to his scholarship. While being in his teens Panditji had an amazing hold over the Sanskrit language as a result of which he was able to tackle even the most difficult text himself.

## *20.2 His Career and Scholarship*

In 1945 Panditji joined the Jammu and Kashmir Research and Publication Department, Srinagar as a copyist and retired from the same Department as the Head-Pandit in 1976. Here he was paid very less but he was surely happy with the job of his interest. When he joined the Research Department, it had a collection of some 213 manuscripts and Panditji raised this collection to 2500 manuscripts. These manuscripts are preserved in the Sanskrit Manuscript Section, Iqbal Library, University of Kashmir in some 5000 volumes. In addition to this he established a section on Kashmir School of Art and Paintings, which contains some 500 rare Kashmiri paintings and miniatures. During his stay in the Department he edited a number of texts, monographs and research journals. Among the texts he edited the major ones include Prabhavatipradyumna (A Sanskrit play by Ramakrishna Suri), Sivasutravivarana of Sukhananda Zadoo, Cittapradipa of Vasudeva (A Vedantic work), Tarkakutuhalam (Mandaramanjari – of Visvesvara Suri), Pancastavi Vol- I and II with the commentary of Pandit Harbhata Sastri, Svatantryadipika of Mansaram Monga, Sivasutravimarsini of Kshemaraja, Bhavachudamani of Vidyakantha (A Tantric cum literary work), Durbhiksitadarudaya of Isvara Kaula (The famine history of Kashmir which broke out in 1932). Besides this he co-edited many research studies and translated works. He also wrote a number of research articles in Sanskrit, Hindi and English. He compiled and edited the Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts present in the Jammu and Kashmir Research Library for the first time.

Later Panditji was associated with the Center for Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir as a Research Associate for five years. Thereafter he served as a Research Associate in the Jammu and Kashmir Archaeological Department, Government of India, Srinagar for a year. The Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Government of India for which he worked profusely for next four years, awarded him a fellowship of Sastrachudamani.

In 1990, like all other Kashmiri Pandits who left the Kashmir valley out of terror prevailed by the Muslim fundamentalists, Panditji also had to flee for his life leaving behind his richest and remarkable private library in Kashmir consisting of 9000 printed volumes and 500 rare Sanskrit Manuscripts. In his collection of 500 manuscripts 300 were the only available original Sanskrit texts and commentaries.

## *20.3 His Specialization and Style*

Panditji was very through in the Paninian Grammar and the grammatical traditions of Kashmir. He was as good in Katantra, Chandra and Kalapa systems of grammar (those were prevalent in Kashmir) as he was in Paninian system. His through knowledge of Kashmir's history, geography, culture, philosophy et al was his special characteristic. I remember him quoting effortlessly from the Rajatarangini and the Nilamat Purana. He had studied the Mahabhasya of Patanjali very assiduously. While teaching me the Sanskrit Grammar I recall him quoting profusely from the Siddhantakaumudi and the Mahabhasya.

Panditji's style in his Sanskrit writings matches greatly with that of the classical Sanskrit writers like Banabhatta, Sriharsa and Bhavabhuti. I remember the first time I studied his Sanskrit writing. I was unable to make out what he had written. His in-depth understanding of Sanskrit grammar made his writings more profound. He used to catch even the veteran grammarians in his verbal jugglery. He used to say that this style he had learnt from a Kashmirian poet Sahib Kaula.

## *20.4 His Genius*

Panditji had no formal education in English language and literature. He once read a Sanskrit translation of Macbeth in a library and was deeply impressed with Shakespeare. He got so tempted towards English Literature that he bought a set of Complete works of Shakespeare in Sanskrit. Thereafter he got

Shakespeare's works in English and tried to understand them in original. He also got a complete set of the works in Sanskrit literature translated into English by Moreswar Ramchandra Kale and tried to understand English language through Sanskrit. Thus he was able to learn English through Sanskrit. Later he used to write his research papers in very lucid and chaste English. This reveals his laborious pursuits for learning.

Although being an orthodox traditional Pandit he had amazingly realistic and exquisitely scientific approach towards traditional systems in Sanskrit. He used to analyze and appreciate all the branches of knowledge quite methodically. His sense of logic and literary criticism and the matchless historical approach were his tools to penetrate deep into any subject of his choice. He never studied any text of Kashmir Saivism traditionally but his understanding of Saivite and Tantric texts that he gained solely through self-study was amazingly remarkable.

### *20.5 His Association with Research Students*

Panditji was always a major center of attraction for Researchers. No research thesis on Kashmir was considered to have gained authenticity unless it had passed through the hands of Panditji. He guided at least some hundreds of Research Scholars from Indian and abroad. Prof. Raffaele Torella (Chair of Sanskrit, University of Rome) who worked with Panditji for many years in Kashmir once mentioned to me, "Panditji is very thorough in the grammatical traditions of Kashmir. Learn from him as much as possible." Prof. Torella's teacher Prof. Ranerio Gnoli who translated The Tantraloka of Abhinavagupta into Italian had a long association with Panditji. Prof Bettina Baumer of Vienna University regarded him as Modern Panini in Kashmir. Prof Navjivan Rastogi (Retd. Professor of Sanskrit, University of Lucknow) has duly acknowledged Panditji's help and guidance in his doctoral dissertation on Krama System of Kashmir Saivism. Prof A.K.Warder, the famous author of Indian Kavya Literature worked with Panditji for many years and acknowledged his genius.

Panditji was undoubtedly a towering figure of traditional Sanskrit learning in Kashmir. But one would never miss to mention his humble and loving nature. His sincerity at heart, self-conceited humility, gentle nature and worthy caliber were the landmarks of his personality. In him Kashmir has lost the biggest diamond carved in the necklace of Mother Goddess Sarada. In him I have lost my dear teacher.