

Project Zaan

váív zàñ karav



Know Your Roots

INFORMATION DIGEST CONSOLIDATED FOR KASHMIRI PANDIT CHILDREN



Late Shri J.N.Kachroo
Inspiration behind Project Zaan



M.K.Raina
Convener, Project Zaan

Preliminary information about our motherland - Kashmir, its History, Geography, People, Historical Places, Fairs & Festivals, Rites & Rituals, Eminent Personalities, Religions, Religious Places, Historical Places, Literature & Language, Saints & Sages, Arts & Crafts etc for the children who have not lived in or seen Kashmir.

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Information Digest for Children - Consolidated

Introduction

Project Zaan was founded by Lalla-Ded Educational & Welfare Trust, Mumbai in association with the Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai in the year 1998-99. Late Shri J.N.Kachroo, ex-Principal, National High School was the inspiration behind the Project and an active member. Late Shri Onkar Aima, Late Shri J.L.Manwati, Shri P.N.Wali, Smt. Neelam Trakru and the undersigned (who was also designated as Convener of the Project) were other members of the team. Objectives of the Project Zaan were:

- 1) To disseminate information on various facets of the Place of our Origin - Kashmir, like its History, Geography, Culture, Language, Literature, Places of Worship, Fairs & Festivals, Rites & Rituals, Historical Places, Arts & Artists, Eminent Personalities etc. through Information Digests.
- 2) To inculcate interest in our youngsters for their mothertongue and arouse their curiosity and interest in their entity, through various educative programmes.
- 3) To organise Quiz Programmes for the young and not so young based on the information provided through Information Digests.
- 4) To compile and publish literature for propagation of Kashmiri Language and Scripts.
- 5) To organise and conduct Spoken Kashmiri Language Classes.

Members of the Project Zaan worked tirelessly over the years to bring a bit of Kashmir to Mumbai and let our youngsters know a little about our motherland. They brought out small compendiums called Information Digests, from time to time which proved beneficial not only to youngsters but also to the seniors who had lost touch with Kashmir over the years. Three digests, Information Digest Nos. 1, 2 and 4 were jointly authored by those mentioned above (joined by Smt. Vijaya Bhan later) and released between 2000 & 2003. Digest No. 3, Basic Reader for Kashmiri Language, was, jointly authored by Smt. Neelam Trakru and the undersigned and released in March 2001.

All the data provided in various Information Digests of the past is now consolidated in this single Digest, updated and greatly expanded. The purpose of this Digest is to connect those KP children with their roots, who were not born in Kashmir or who have not stayed there for long and don't know much about that place and the life there. Our work however doesn't stop here. We will be incorporating more material in due course and issuing a revision, hopefully next year.

M.K.Raina
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Mumbai,
July 25, 2020
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Image : jammukashmirnow.com

Map of erstwhile Jammu & Kashmir State showing areas under illegal occupation of China and Pakistan

Note: All information given in this Digest in respect of land, population, administrative set-up etc pertains to the J&K State as a whole before August 5, 2019 Reorganisation.

The Land & the People

Birth of Kasmira (Kashmir) - Legend

According to the Nilamata Purana, the land of Kasmira was occupied for 6 Manvantaras since the beginning of the Kalpa, by a vast lake, six yojanas long and three yojanas wide, called Satisara. In the 7th Manvantara, the water of the lake was drained off through an outlet made with plough by Ananta at the order of Vishnu, who along with other gods and goddesses had come there to kill the demon Jalodbhava - invincible in waters. The geological observations made in recent times corroborate the assertion made in the Nilamata. M.B.Pithawala in his 'Kashmir, Its Geology & Geography' and G.E.L.Carter in his 'Stone Age in Kashmir' have supported this theory of the prehistoric great lake in Kasmira.

The name Kasmira (Kashmir)

The Nilamata Purana gives 'Kasmira' as the name of the valley, which is still known as Kashmir throughout the world and is called by the Kashmiris in their own language, as 'Kasheer'.

Location

Jammu & Kashmir, the Northern-most State of India is situated between 73⁰-26' E & 80⁰-30' E Longitudes and 32⁰-17' N & 36⁰-58' N Latitudes. From north to south, it extends over 640 Kms and from east to west, 480 Kms.

Area

Total area of Jammu & Kashmir State is 2,22,236 Sq. Kms. out of which 78114 Sq. Kms. are under illegal occupation of Pakistan, 5180 Sq. Kms. are illegally handed over by Pakistan to China and 37555 Sq. Kms. are under illegal occupation of China.

Population

As per 2011 census, population of Kashmir Division was 69,07,6,22, of Jammu Division was 53,50,8,11 and that of Ladakh Division was 2,90,4,92, totalling 1,25,48,929. The figures exclude the population of the areas under the occupation of Pakistan and China.

Geographic Divisions

Geographically, the Jammu & Kashmir state is divided into four zones. First, the mountainous and semi-mountainous plain commonly known as Kandi Belt; the Second, hills including Shiwalik Ranges; the Third mountains of Kashmir Valley and Pir Panjal Range; and the Fourth is Tibetan tract of Ladakh and Kargil. Jammu & Kashmir shares international boundaries with Pakistan in the west, China in the north and Tibet in the east.



Other Information

Divisions (Post 1947)	1. Jammu. 2. Kashmir. 3. Ladakh.
Capitals	Summer - Srinagar. Winter - Jammu
Districts	Anantnaag, Badgam, Bandipora, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Kupwara, Kulgam, Pulwama, Shopian, Srinagar, Doda, Jammu, Kathua, Poonch, Rajauri, Ramban, Reasi, Sambha, Udhampur. Kishtwar, Kargil, Leh
Prominent Ranges	Mountain Himalayan Range, Peer Panjal, Karakoram, Zanskar
Main Rivers	Sindh (Indus) - Ladakh, Kashmir valley. Jhelum (Vitasta) - Kashmir valley. Kishenganga - Kashmir valley. Chenab - Jammu.
Borders of undivided Kashmir (with foreign countries)	640 Kms. with Sinkiang, 720 Kms. with Tibet, 1120 Kms. with Pakistan and 256 Kms. with Afganistan.
Principal languages	Kashmiri, Dogri, Pahari, Balti, Ladakhi, Punjabi, Gujari, Dardi and Urdu as official language.

General description of the Valley

The Valley of Kashmir is surrounded by mountains varied in height and colour. To the East of Valley stands Harmukh at 5150 M height. To South is Mahadev and lofty ranges of Gwasha Brari (Ht. 5425 M). The peak of Amarnath (Ht. 5280 M) lies in this area. On South-West is Pir Panjal range with peaks 4500 M high. To the North are Korakoram and the Himalayas. Nanga Parbat (Ht.7980 M) lies here. It is the 5th highest peak in the world. K2, the second highest peak in the world, lies in the Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The valley of Kashmir is approximately 134 Kms in length and 32 to 40 Kms in width. Most of its length is traversed by a navigable river called Jhelum (Vitasta). Srinagar city is approximately 1585 M above mean sea level.

The entire valley mountain slopes, smaller valleys at varying heights, meadows, glaciers, lakes, brooks and springs make it a paradise, unique in the world. Some world famous spots of tourist interest are Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Kokar Naag, Veri Naag, Dal Lake, Wular Lake, Anchar Lake, Gangabal, Mughal Gardens, Pari Mahal, Dachhi Gaam Rakh etc. The Mughal Emperor Jehangeer is said to have once written about Kashmir: ***Agar firdaus bar rue zamin ast, hamin asto, hamin asto, hamin ast!*** (If there be paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here!).

Brief description of some prominent spots

Pahalgam:

This world famous tourist spot is situated at the confluence of river Liddar and Sheshnag stream, 96 kms away from Srinagar. Its altitude is 2130 M. There are cool, shaded meadows all around. A Shiva temple (Mamleshwar), believed to be the oldest (400 AD) is situated at village Mamal, about a Km from Pahalgam.

Mountain trails run northeast to Amarnath Cave Temple, a Hindu shrine and site of the annual Amarnath Yatra pilgrimage. Overa Aru Wildlife Sanctuary is home to animals including brown bears and musk deer. In northeast, the Lidder River runs through scenic Betaab Valley. In southeast, Tulian Lake is flanked by mountain peaks and is often frozen.



Pahalgam : Image ~ Greater Kashmir

Gulmarg:

A famous tourist spot and the venue of winter sports (skiing), Gulmarg is one of the highest green golf courses in the world. It is 56 kms away from Srinagar at an altitude of 2730 M. Gulmarg is like a cup shaped meadow of flowers with lush green turf and surrounded by pine trees with snow capped peaks overlooking it. Nangaparbat can be viewed from here on a clear day. Gulmarg also has the world's second-highest Gondola ride.

Gulmarg has also been developed as an adventure hub as Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering is located here. A lot of courses on trekking, mountaineering, skiing, and snowboarding are offered by IISM. There are a lot of other private tour operators in Gulmarg as well which provide similar courses and facilities for skiing, snowboarding and trekking. Known for its scenic beauty,

Gulmarg has also been a popular destination for shooting of various Bollywood films.



Gulmarg : Image ~ YouTube

Sonamarg:



Situated at an altitude of 2800 M, Sonamarg is 87 kms from Srinagar. It is the last halt on the valley side for a drive to Kargil/Leh through Zojila pass. Sonamarg is a vast meadow and the starting point for going to Vishnasar, Krishnasar, Gadsar, Satsar lakes and Amar Nath Cave via Baltal. River Sindh which abounds in Trout and

Mahaseer fish meanders along here. In its vicinity lie the great Himalayan glaciers namely Kolhoi Glacier and Machoi Glacier with some peaks above 5,000 M like Sirbal Peak, Kolhoi Peak, Amarnath Peak and Machoi Peak.

Other provinces of the State

Jammu Province

The province of Jammu lies between the 'outer hills' region bounding the Valley of Kashmir in the south, and the hilly tract extending to the plains of Punjab. The Ravi river flows in the east of this region and the river Jhelum in the west. The Chenab issues forth from the mountains into the plains near the town of Akhnoor and flows through the Jammu district before entering the plains of Punjab (now in Pakistan).

The original inhabitants of Jammu are called Dogras. They speak Dogri language, a mixture of Sanskrit, Punjabi and Persian. A sturdy people, the Dogras are divided into several castes and sects. Their staple food consists of rice, wheat and pulses. Their traditional dress is simple - a short coat or a flowing shirt, with pyjamas loose at the knees and tight-fitting at the ankles.

Jammu city, the winter capital of the state, stands on one of the spurs of a rugged hill overlooking the plains and river Tawi. It covers an area of 26.64 sq. kms. Its average altitude is 305 meters. The temperature varies from 23.4⁰C to 43⁰ C in summer and from 4.3⁰C to 26.2⁰C in winter.



Jammu province is rich in minerals. Coal, bauxite, copper, zinc and lead are abundant. Sapphire mines are located at higher elevations in the Papar valley. Kishtwar is famous for mines of sapphire and rubies. Kishtwar and Bhadarwah, with heavily forested mountains are rich in pine, fir and deodar.



Jammu city is famous for temples. Amongst the temples in the city, the Raghunath Mandir, dedicated to Lord Rama, takes pride of the place. It consists of a cluster of temples which makes it the largest temple complex in Northern India. It contains representatives of almost the entire Hindu Pantheon, which makes it a rare sight to see. Work on this temple was started by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1835 AD and was completed by his son, Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1860 AD. Inner walls of the main temple are covered with gold sheet on three sides. There are many galleries with lakhs of 'Saligrams'. Surrounding temples are dedicated to various Gods and Goddesses connected with the epic Ramayana.

The Ranbireshwar Temple, located on the Shalamar Road, has one central 'Lingam' measuring 7.5 feet in height, 12 Shiva 'Lingams' of crystal measuring 12" to 18" and galleries with thousands of 'Saligrams' fixed on stone slabs.



Places of tourist interest in the Jammu province are Mansar Lake, Surinsar Lake, Patnitop (altitude 2024 meters), Kud resort (altitude 1738 meters), Batote resort (altitude 1560 meters), Sudh Mahadev (a holy spot near Patnitop, where a Trishul and a Mace, said to belong to Lord Shiva is worshipped), Gauri Kund (legendry spring where Goddess Parvati used to bathe), Sanasar (cup shaped meadow surrounded by gigantic conifers, also a golf course), Chenani valley, Parmandal (40 kms. from Jammu city, often referred to as Chhota Kashi) etc.

The famous shrine of Mata Vaishnodeviji (H 1585 M) is located in the Trikuta hills near Katra, 50 Kms. from Jammu city. About 9 million pilgrims visit this Shrine every year.



Vaishnodevi Mandir : Image ~ amarujala.com

Other places of tourist interest, located in the city of Jammu are Baghe-E-Bahu, Bahu Fort, Amar Singh Palace, Mahamaya Temple & Mubarak Mandi Palace.

Ladakh Province



Ladakh, bounded by two of the world's mightiest mountain ranges, the Great Himalaya and the Karakoram, is the biggest district of the state with an area of 97782 sq. kms. One of the highest habitations in the world, Ladakh has an altitude ranging between 2400 M to 7042 M. Settled population lives upto 4500 M, nomadic encampments can be found even higher.

The barren mountain ranges stretch through the area from south-east to north-west. Its valleys, about 500 sq. kms. in area, lie along the headwaters of the Indus, the Sulej and the Chenab rivers. The mighty river Indus, having originated from near the Kailash mountain and the Mansarovar lake in Tibet, flows in an almost straight line from the north-west to the south-east of Ladakh. Glaciers and the snow-capped mountains encircling the crystal-clear lakes enhance the rugged beauty of Ladakh further.

Summer temperatures of Ladakh rarely exceed about 27⁰C in the shade, while in winter, they may plummet to minus 20⁰C even in Leh. It is said that only in Ladakh can a man sitting in the sun with his feet in the shade, suffer from sunstroke and frostbite at the same time.

Ladakh is connected to rest of the country by two motorable roads, one leading to Srinagar via Zoji-la (open from April/May to November/December) and the other to Manali in Himachal via Rohtang Pass (open from May/June to October/November).

An interesting spectacle in Ladakh is presented by hot springs and geysers roaring and throwing steaming hot water up to a height of 15 meters and projecting fantastic rainbow colours. These fountains of water present an interesting phenomenon in winter when the boiling water comes down in the shape of ice blocks with the impact of chilly winds, and form mounds next to the geysers.



Geysers : Image ~ alamy

Over the Ladakh range and in the north of Leh, is the road to Khardung-la (altitude 5600 meters), the highest road in the world. Further on, is the Pangong Lake, situated at an altitude of 4267 meters, six to seven kms. at its widest point and 130 kms. long. It is bisected by the international border between India and China.



Khardung La : Image ~ YouTube

The people of Ladakh region have Mongoloid, or more accurately, Turanian features. They call themselves Bo-pa, the ancient Bhauttas. They speak Ladakhi language, which is a dialect of Tibetan. It is written in the Tibetan script. Some scholars however aver that their script is a form of Devanagari, which was prevalent in Kashmir in the 7th century.



Ladakhis : Image ~ tripodo.com

The original population of Ladakh may have been Dards, an Indo-Aryan race, but immigration from Tibet, perhaps a millennium or so ago, largely overwhelmed the culture of Dards and obliterated their racial characteristics. In eastern and central Ladakh, today's population seems to be mostly of Tibetan origin. In and around Kargil, there is much in people's appearance that suggests a mixed origin. The exception to this generalisation is the Arghons, a community of Muslims in Leh, the descendants of marriages between local women and Kashmiri or Central Asian merchants. The staple food of the Ladakhis is grim - a kind of barley, which is eaten as bread or mixed with butter and tea as a paste. They are invariable meat-eaters. A local drink called chang is consumed in ample quantities.

Buddhism reached Tibet from India via Ladakh, and there are ancient Buddhist rock engravings all over the region, even in areas like Drass and the Lower Suru Valley. Until some years ago, Ladakh used to be the gateway to Tibet, connecting India with Tibet and east Turkistan. As such, it was an important trade centre, besides being the meeting point of the Tibetan, Indian, Chinese and Islamic cultures and traditions.

Leh

Leh, the capital of Ladakh province is 3521 meters above sea level. Leh town is full of orchards, groves, gardens and monasteries and is crowded with people. Places of tourist interest in the Leh town are Sengge Namgyal's nine-storey Palace, Jo-khang, a modern ecumenical Buddhist temple, Shanti Stupa, Spituk Gompa etc.

The biggest and most famous of the monastic festivals is that of Hemis and is dedicated to Padmasambhava. Every 12 years, the Gompa's greatest treasure, a huge thangka - a religious icon painted or embroidered on cloth, is ritually exhibited.

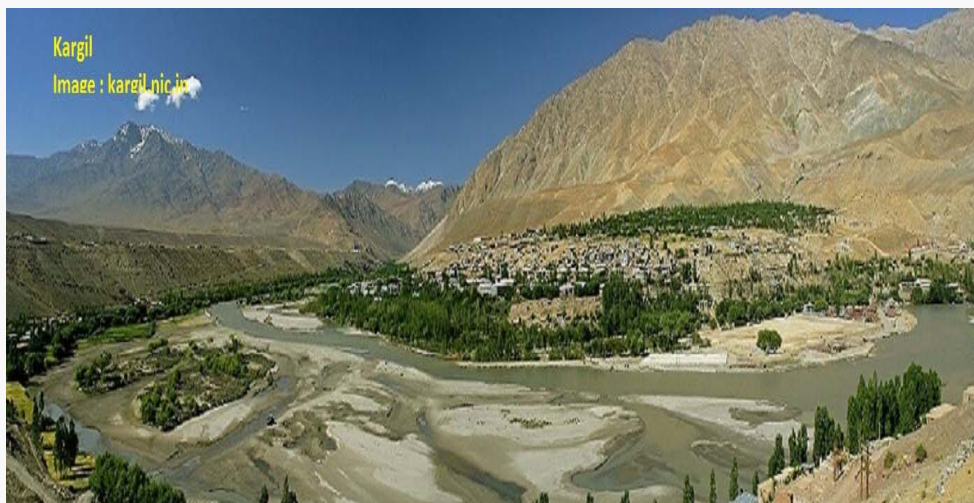


Image : lehladakhindia.com

Hemis : Image ~ lehladakhindia.com

Kargil

Kargil is the second largest town in Ladakh after Leh. It is located 204 Km to the east of Srinagar and 234 Km west of Leh. Kargil is the centre of the Suru River valley, historically known as Purig. Kargil, about 2700 M above the sea level, is also enclosed by a network of mountains. People of Kargil generally profess Islam and are engaged in farming and sheep raising.



Kargil
Image : kargil.nic.in

Kargil : Image ~ kargil.nic.in

Drass, another village (H 3300 M) inhabited by a population of mixed Kashmiri and Dard origins, is the second coldest permanently inhabited spot in the world. It is on the NH 1 between Zoji La pass and Kargil town. It is often called 'The Gateway to Ladakh'. Drass is 140 km from Srinagar and 63 km from Sonmarg.



Drass : Image ~ holidayiq.com



Rivers of Kashmir

Vitasta - Jhelum - Veth

Vitasta is known to the Kashmiris as Veth. When it leaves the Valley at Baramulla, it is called Kashur Darya. After it joins Kishenganga, it is called Jhelum, the name, derived from a Punjab town of the same name. Jhelum is now the most commonly known name.



River Jhelum : Image ~ alamy

Origin

Nilamata Purana regards Vitasta as an incarnation of Uma, who at the request of Kashyapa came bubbling forth as a river from a hole as big as Vitashi, made by Lord Shiva with his spear. Traditional source is the Nila Kund, also called Vitastatru. The auspicious Vitasta is verily the holy river, remover of all sins. According to a legend, Vitasta disappeared and re-appeared three times till it finally appeared at Vethavatur, about one mile to the West of Verinaag.

Tributaries

Vitasta (Jhelum) is the recipient of the drainage of the entire valley. Its major tributaries are as follows:

Between its source and Khanabal, Vitasta is joined by streams known as Sandrin, Brang and Arpal, bringing water from Kothar, Kokarnaag and Achhabal respectively.

On its right bank, the Vitasta is joined by Lidar near Khanabal, Sindh at Shadipur, Tsunthkol (from Dal Lake) at Mysuma, Srinagar and Pohru at Doabgah near Sopore.

On its left bank, the Vishau Rambiarra combine joins it at Sangam (Khanabal) and the Doodganga just below Srinagar.

Sindh is its biggest tributary. The source of Sindh lies in the Machoi Glacier at an elevation of 4800 M, east of the Amarnath temple and south of the Zoji La. It drains the entire mountain water from Drass to Harmukh. It forms the Priyag of Kashmir at its confluence with the Vitasta at Shadipur. It is 108 Kms long.



River Sindh : Image ~ alamy

The Vitasta has a zigzag course and wends its way through the Valley. Its length from Khanabal to Baramulla is 108 Kms and the total length is 725 Kms. Its breadth and depth may vary with seasons. According to Lawrence, its average width was 210 feet and depth 9 feet. Its fall from Khanabal to its basin i.e. Wular Lake is just 220 feet, with a little more up to Baramulla. Its normal speed was 1.5 miles per hour (before dredging at Baramulla). It is prone to floods in rainy season and gets alluvial soil with it.

Regulations

First Lalitaditya, and then Avantivarman's engineer Suyya attempted to increase the flow of the river, by removing rocks and de-silting its bed at Baramulla gorge. In modern times, it has been de-silted with the help of machines.

Importance

Being navigable from Khanabal to Baramulla, it provided the most important waterway of the Valley for transportation of passengers and goods, till roads were constructed. Three power houses, one at Sheeri (Baramulla), second at Mohara and the third at Uri use its water to generate electricity. Till 1947, Mohara power house was the only source of electricity in Kashmir.

Vitasta river is sacred to Hindus. It is worshipped on Veth Truvah, the bright thirteenth of Bhadrpetha (Bhadun), which is considered as its birthday. On this day, lot of singing and dancing was performed. Diyas filled with ghee were lit and set afloat on the river. Scents, garlands, eatables and flowers were offered to the river.

Kishenganga River

The Kishenganga River originates from Krishansar Lake in the vicinity of Sonamarg and runs northwards to Badoab village in Tulail Valley where it meets a tributary from the Drass side. Then it runs westwards, parallel to the Kashmir Line of Control. It is fed by many glacial tributary streams on its way. It enters Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in the Gurez sector of the Line of Control. Kishenganga River is called Neelam River in Pakistan. It is 245 kilometres long, covers 50 kilometers in Kashmir and the remaining 195 kilometres in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.



Kishenganga River : Image ~ zeenews.india.com



Lakes

Dal Lake



Dal Lake : Image ~ makemytrip.com

There are numerous big and small lakes in the valley of Kashmir. Dal Lake is one of the two lakes situated in the Srinagar city, the other being Anchar Lake. Half a kilometer away from the Tourists Reception Centre, this lovely lake lies to the east of the city at the foot of Zabarwan mountain. The Shankaracharya hill is to its south and Hari Parbat to its west.

'Dal' is a Tibetan word which means 'Still'. It is believed that in ancient times, there was no lake here and instead a large meadow known as Watalanmarg existed at the place. Later due to a massive earthquake, water gushed into the meadow and took the shape of a lake.

Dal Lake covers an area of 18 square kilometres and is part of a natural wetland which covers 21.1 square kilometres, including its floating gardens. The floating gardens, known as 'Raad' in Kashmiri, blossom with lotus flowers during July and August. The lake foliage is uprooted and allowed to float. On this, the soil is implanted, making it a land capable of vegetable cultivation. These gardens can move from one place to another and a peculiar thing about them is that they can even be stolen.



Floating Gardens : Image ~ indiawaterportal.org

The shore line of the lake is about 15.5 kilometres, encompassed by a boulevard lined with Mughal era gardens, parks, houseboats and hotels.

Dal Lake was divided by causeways into four parts known as Gagribal, Bod Dal, Lokut Dal and Nagin. Lokut Dal and Bod Dal each have an island in the centre called Rupa Lank and Sona Lank respectively.

The iconic 17th-century bridge, Woonta Kadal, shaped like the hump of a camel and located in the middle of the picturesque Dal Lake in Srinagar, will be restored through a conservation project with the help of Germany.



Oonta Kadal at Dal Lake
Image : Times of India

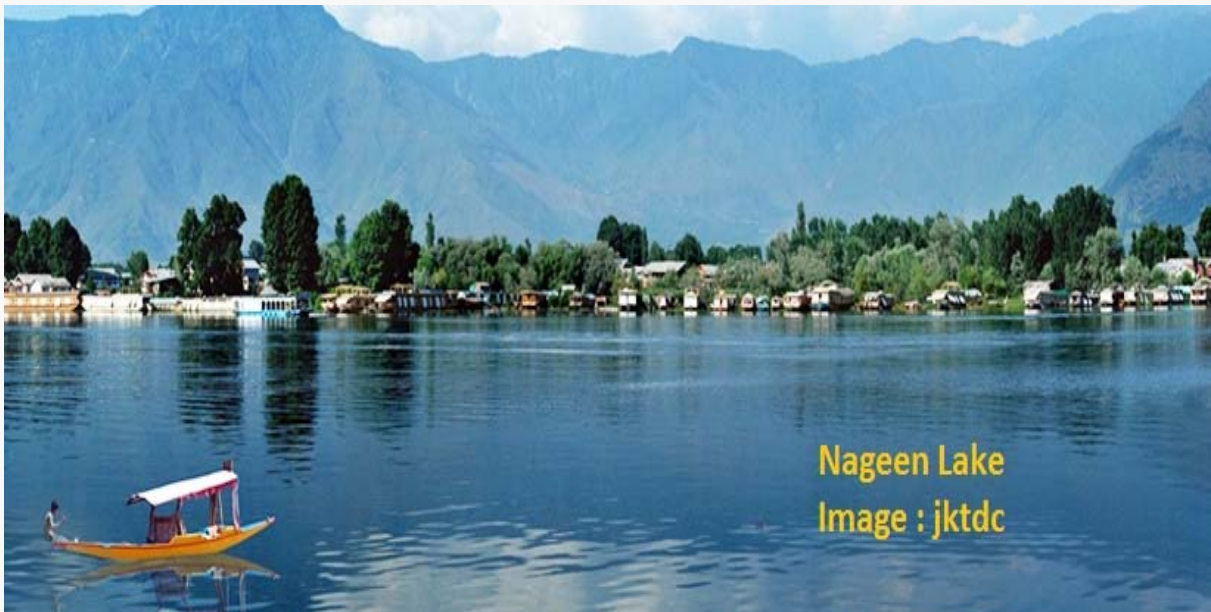
Wunta Kadal : Image ~ Times of India



Boulevard Road : Image ~ Greater Kashmir

Nagin

The jewel in the ring is the smallest but the loveliest part of the Dal Lake, called Nagin. Separated by a causeway and only a short distance from Hazratbal (Dargah), it has deep blue waters and is encircled by a ring of green trees. This part of the Dal is famous for water sports.



Nageen Lake : Image ~ JKTDC

The Dal is famous not only for its beauty, but also for its vibrance, because it sustains within its periphery, a life that is unique anywhere in the world. The Hanjis (House boat and Shikara community) have lived for centuries on the Dal and so complete is their infrastructure on the lake that they never have to step on land.



Living Boat Doonga : Image ~ facebook.com

All day to day facilities are available in tiny wooden shops on the lake near picturesque vegetable gardens and acres of lotus gardens. Because the Dal Lake is so central to the landscape of Srinagar, many places of tourist interest have over the ages, been built along its periphery. They include Famous gardens like Nishat, Shalimar, Cheshma Shahi, Naseem Bagh, Pari Mahal, Jawahar Lal Nehru Botanical Garden etc.

Wular Lake

The Wular Lake in Kashmir is the largest fresh water lake in India. It is about 16 Kms. long and 9 .6 Kms wide with ill-defined shores. This lake lies between Bandipore and Sopore at a distance of 75 Kms. from Srinagar.

The Jhelum enters this lake from the south-east and leaves it from the west. Storms rise in the lake everyday in the afternoon. The deepest part of the lake is at Watlab towards the hill called Baba Sukhuruddin in the north-west. Many small streams, Harbuji, Aarah, Erin and Pohru join this lake. This lake also has a small island in its centre called the 'Zaina Lank'. This island was constructed by King Zainul-Abi-Din. Wular Lake is also said to be a remnant of Satisar Lake that existed in ancient times. The premises of this lake also form a popular sunset point.



Wular Lake : Image ~ villagesquare.in

Other Lakes

Anchar Lake

Anchar Lake is a swampy area. The Sind Nallah enters this lake from one side and flows out from the other. It is about 8 Kms long and 3 Kms. wide. Ganderbal is a famous township on its north-west bank



Anchar Lake - Collecting Lotus Roots : Image ~ dailyexcelsior.com

This lake is close to becoming a dead lake due to illegal construction, encroachment and pollution in its surrounding area. The lake was once connected to the famous Dal Lake and was quite popular among tourists. The drastic pollution of the lake has now increased the alkalinity of the water and has made navigating through it difficult as it is swamped with wild plants and flowers.

Manasbal Lake

Manasbal Lake is at a distance of 29 Kms. from Srinagar and is situated at Safapore (Tehsil Ganderbal). It is 5 Kms long and 1 Km. wide. It is connected with the Jhelum by a canal near Sumbal. Mughal Emperors have built a summer palace on its bank.



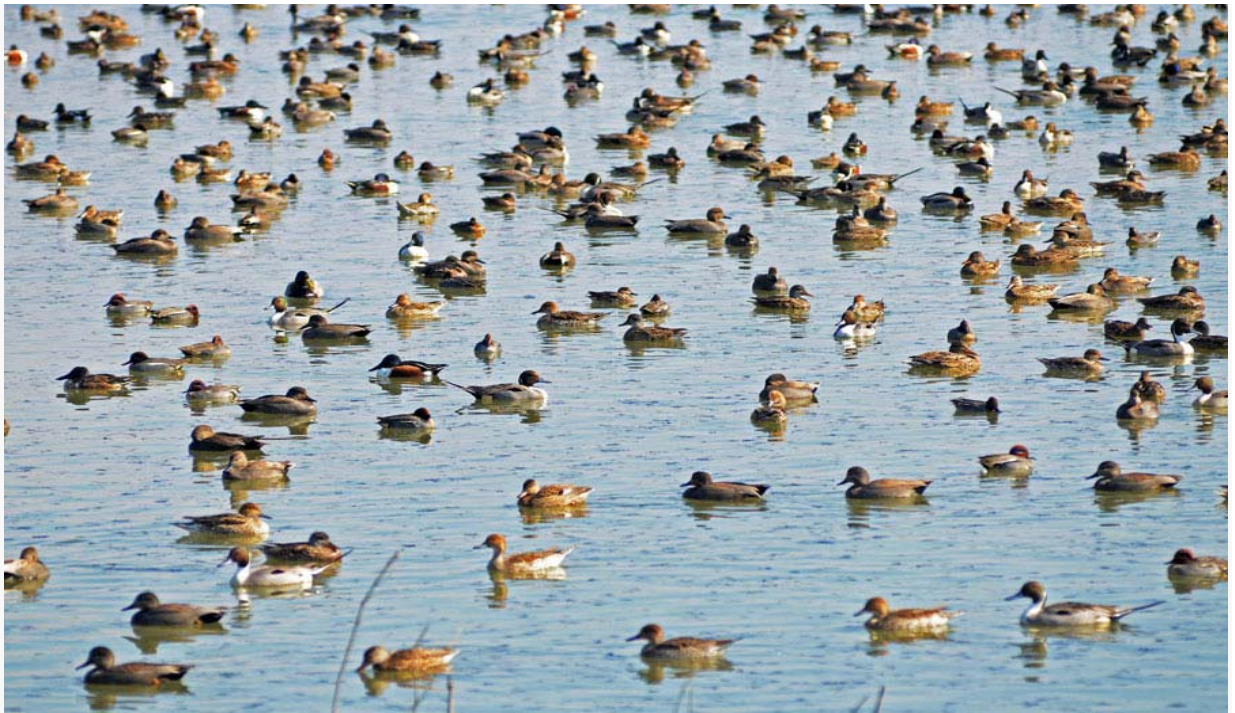
Manasbal Lake : Image ~ ganderbal.nic.in

Harvan Lake

The Harvan Lake is situated at a distance of 21 Kms from Srinagar. It is 278 meters long, 137 meters wide and 18 metres deep. This lake is a source of water supply to Srinagar city.

Hokarsar Lake

The Hokarsar Lake lies on Baramulla road about 13 Kms. from Srinagar. It is about 5 Kms. long and 1.5 Kms. wide. Willow trees are grown in abundance around its banks. The Lake which attracts birds from various parts of the world including as far as Siberia, is facing a threat from massive encroachments and the state government is now drawing up plans to preserve the wetland. The Hokarsar wetland comprising the lake and marshy area, is spread over an area of more than 7.6 square kms. It has been subjected to tremendous encroachment over the last 25 years.



Hokarsar Lake : Image ~ kashmirlife.net

The Konsarnag or Vishno Pad Lake

This lake is situated in the Pir Panjal range at a height of 4000 meters above sea level to the south of Shopian. It is about 5 Kms. long and 3 Kms. wide and is the source of the river Vishav. It is at a distance of 34 Kms. from Shopian.



**Kaunsarnag Lake
Image : [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)**

Gangabal Lake

The Gangabal Lake is situated at a height of 3570 meters at the foothills of Mount Harmukh. Hindus consider it a sacred lake. The lake has a maximum length of two and a half kilometers and maximum width of one kilometre. It is fed by precipitation, glaciers and springs. It is an alpine high altitude oligotrophic lake, home to many species of fish, including the brown trout. The lake water outflows to a nearby Nundkol Lake and then via Wangath Nallah to Sind River.



Sheshnag Lake

Sheshnag Lake is situated near Vavjan, enroute to Shri Amarnath cave. It is at a distance of 28 Kms. from Pahalgam.



Nilnag Lake

The Nilnag Lake is situated in Tehsil Badgam at a distance of 10 Kms from Nagam. It is a beautiful lake with dense forests around it.



Nilnag Lake : Image ~ cne.tours

Tarsar & Marsar Lakes

There are two more lakes, Tarsar and Marsar that lie on the northern slope of the Harmukh mountain. The Tarsar Lake is an almond-shaped, oligotrophic alpine lake situated in the Aru, Anantnag district.

Marsar Lake is the origin of the Canal Sharab Kohl that provides water to the fountains that play in the Mughal Gardens. Marsar Lake flows into the Lidar which is one of the largest tributaries of the Jhelum.



Marsar Lake : Image ~ tourmyindia

Tarsar Lake is dominated by the peaks of the Kolahoi mountain some 20 km to the east. The lake is separated by a mountain with a minimum peak elevation of 4,000 metres from Marsar Lake, which is in the vicinity of Dachigam National Park. Together these two lakes are referred to as the twin sisters. The 16th-century Kashmiri ruler Yusuf Shah Chak mentioned the twin lakes in his poetry.



Tarsar Lake : Image ~ tourmyindia

Sokhsar and Dokhsar are two frozen lakes situated at Harmukh Mountain. These are said to be two tear drops of Parvati; one a warm tear drop indicating happiness and other a cold one showing grief.

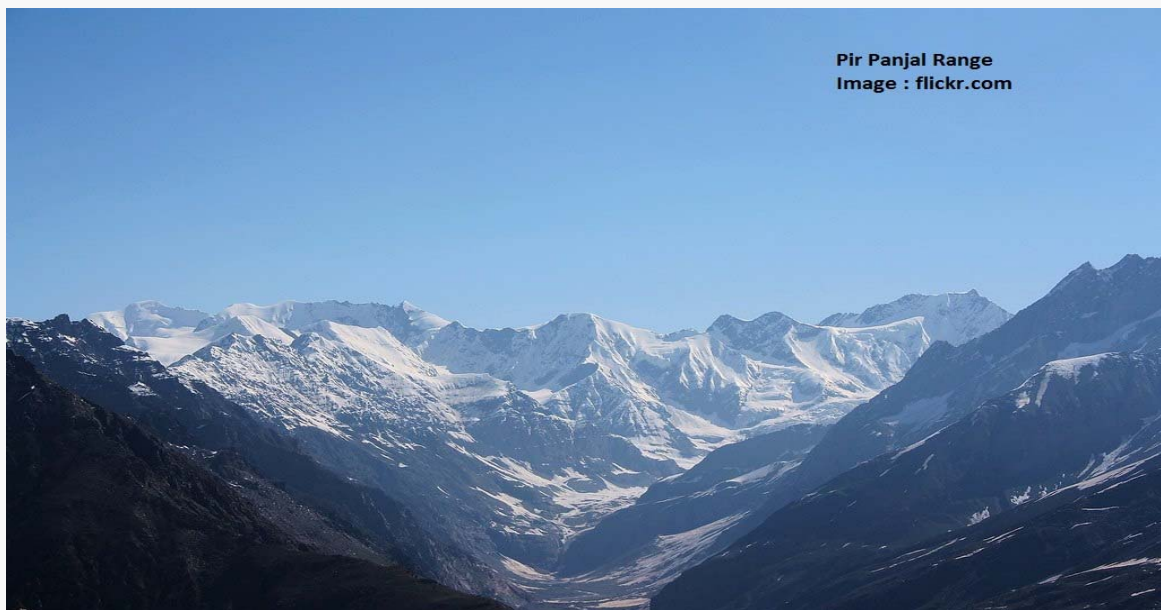


Mountain Ranges

Pir Panchal

Pir Panchal range of mountain was known as 'Pir Pant Saal' in ancient times. This mountain range separates Kashmir from rest of the country. It extends from Kishtwar to Muzzafarabad, along the bank of river Chenab. It is 180 miles long and 30 miles wide. The mountains in this range go as high as eleven thousand feet above the mean sea level. The passes in the range become un-passable in winter and sometimes even in summer. The range encompasses within itself some beautiful forests. Some very important springs like Verinag, Achhabal etc. flow from its foothills.

Pir Panjal is the largest range of the Lesser Himalayas. Near the bank of the Sutlej River, it dissociates itself from the Himalayas and forms a divide between the Beas and Ravi rivers on one side and the Chenab on the other. The renowned Galyat mountains are also located in this range.



Pir Panjal Range
Image : flickr.com

Pir Panjal Range : Image ~ flickr.com

Karakoram Range

The Karakoram is a mountain range spanning the borders of India, Pakistan and China with the northwest extremity of the range extending to Afghanistan and Tajikistan. It begins in the Wakhan Corridor (Afghanistan) in the west and encompasses the majority of Gilgit-Baltistan (Pakistan) and extends into Ladakh (India) and the Aksai Chin region under illegal occupation of China. It is the second highest mountain range in the world and part of the complex of ranges including the Pamir Mountains, the Hindu Kush and the Himalayan Mountains. The Karakoram has eight

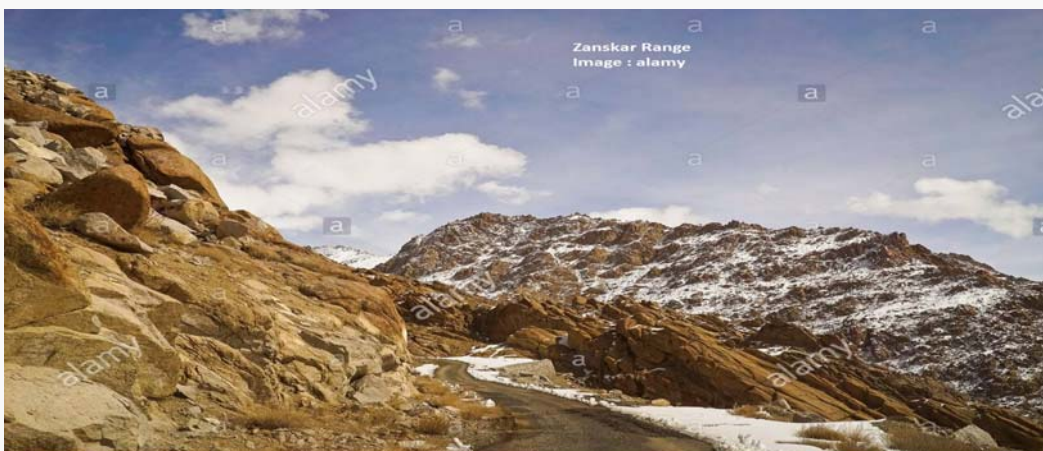
summits over 7,500 M height, with four of them exceeding 8,000 M, K2, the second highest peak in the world at 8,611 M, Gasherbrum I, Broad Peak and Gasherbrum II.



The range is about 500 Kms in length and is the most heavily glaciated part of the world outside the polar regions. The Siachen Glacier at 76 kilometres and the Biafo Glacier at 63 kilometres rank as the world's second and third longest glaciers outside the polar regions.

Zanskar range

The Zanskar Range is a mountain range in Ladakh that separates Zaskar from Ladakh. Geologically, the Zanskar Range is part of the Tethys Himalaya, an approximately 100-km-wide synclinalorium formed by strongly folded and imbricated, weakly metamorphosed sedimentary series. The average height of the Zanskar Range is about 6,000 M. Its eastern part is known as Rupshu.



Zanskar Range : Image ~ alamy

Harmukh Mountain

Harmukh (also known as Mount Haramukh or Harmukh mountain) is a mountain with a peak elevation of 5,142 metres in Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir. Harmukh is part of the Himalaya Range and is located between Nallah Sindh in the south and Kishanganga River in the north, rising above Gangabal Lake in the vicinity of Kashmir valley. It is mostly climbed from the northwestern side of Arin, Kudara Bandipore.

Harmukh, with Gangbal Lake at its foot, is considered a sacred mountain by Hindus. According to Kashmiri Hindus theology, Harmukh is the abode of Lord Shiva.

Harmukh lies in the northwestern Himalayan Range. The Karakoram Range borders it on the north and the Kashmir Valley on the south. Melt waters from glaciers form Gangabal Lake which lies at its foot to the north east side and contribute significantly to the regional fresh-water supply, supporting irrigation through Nallah Sindh.



Mount Harmukh : Image ~ travelfreaks.info

Garden Tradition and the Mughal contribution

The conspicuous contribution by the Mughals to the architectural wealth of Kashmir lies in the large number of gardens with their schemes of fountains and cascades which they built at several beauty spots in the Valley. Today they are major attraction to the tourists, both Indian and foreign. Their importance can not be underestimated.

The history of the garden designs in Kashmir is closely associated with Buddhist landscape gardening in China. From ancient times, flowers and plants have been admired and cultivated in India. Flower cultivation was almost a religious compulsion with Hindus - one had to make early morning offering of flowers to the deity. The ancient Indian, like the Chinese preferred still-water, lotus bearing waters pent up within paved embankments.

With the propagation of the Buddhist doctrine, the lotus assumed a special significance. Kashmir, endowed with springs, lakes, glens and beautiful flowers is truly Nature's own garden, requiring hardly any human effort to improve upon. However, slopes touching water reservoirs or areas around springs were well utilised by the early Hindus in laying out landscape gardens.

Sir Aurel Stein found evidence of the existence of gardens and ponds with lotuses along the route from Kashmir to Khotan. It, according to him and other travellers, is both reasonable and safe to believe that the Hindu and the Buddhist missionaries, especially the Kashmirians, carried the garden tradition with them into China and beyond to Japan. The Kashmirian Buddhist monk, Dharmamitra founded a Vihara at Tunghuang in China and planted more than 1000 trees round it.

In Central Asia and Persia, the garden tradition took a different shape under the Muslim rule. The first condition was always the availability of life giving water. Water was directed through paved channels to a central reservoir. Artificial cascades and fountains were introduced. This formed a distinct feature in their garden designs.

The Mughals from Babar to Shahjehan were great lovers of gardens. Babar had developed a taste to garden designs in Samarkand and Farghana, where Indian garden design had undergone considerable changes. The Mughals re-introduced the old Indian art from their homeland. The Mughal gardens in India are copied from the gardens in Turkistan and Persia.

Kashmir was brought under the Mughal sway by Akbar who found the place resembling his original homeland in Turkistan. His successor Jehangir and his queen Nur Jehan excelled all others in laying out gardens in Kashmir. Shah Jehan improved upon them and laid some new ones. Also did some nobles, governors, princes and princesses responsible for laying some gardens.

Costume

Literary and archeological evidence shows that in ancient and medieval times, the costume of the Kashmiri male consisted essentially of a lower garment, an upper garment and a turban. If Kashmiri sculpture is any guide, men as well as women wore long tunic and trousers, probably due to Kushan influence. According to Hieun Tsang, they dressed themselves in leather doublets and clothes of white linen. In winter however, they covered their bodies with warm cloak which the Nilamata Purana calls Pravarana. The rich wore woollen shawls while the poor were contented with cheaper woolens.

Use of turban (Ushneek or Shirshata) was widely prevalent. Strangely women dress consisted of mainly saree and tailored jacket / blouse. She is also shown wearing a long flowing tunic. It was fashion of both men and women to braid their hair in different styles, wearing sometimes tassels of various colours.

The later dress of Kashmiri has been a long tunic called Pheran. The name can be related to Nilamata Purana's Pravarana or Persian Perahan.

Its style differed from men to women. Men's Pheran had narrow sleeves and women's wider ones. Women's Pheran was adored with borders and sleeves had borders of golden thread - Narivar. Women also tied a long decorated cloth girdle round their waist, called Loongi. It was after a social movement spear headed by Pt. Kashap Bhandu in early thirties that the change to wearing sarees was initiated.



Traditional Gents' Pheran : Image ~ tradeindia.com



Modern Ladies' Pheran : Courtesy ~ Namrata Wakhloo

The turban worn by men also has undergone change in style, with the influence of tribes and rulers that Kashmiris came into contact with. The last of the styles in vogue, has been influenced by the Dogra style. The turban is still worn traditionally on the marriage or yegneopavit day. The traditional dress, which had endured till late, of course now being abandoned by Pandit women folk, has been :-

Pheran

Pheran, a long flowing dress, is always worn with an under layer called Potsh, being of white light cotton. As indicated above, women sleeves are wider, are over turned and fringed with brocades and embroidered strips. Similar strips are used as border at the neck and fringes. The one common now is a big embroidered portion around the cutting at the neck. This version has become popular in other parts of the country also.

Taranga - the head gear

This is the head gear reminiscent of racial fusion of Aryans and Nagas. It is like the decorated head gear of celestial serpent (Nag) with serpentine body tapering into double tail almost reaching the heels of the wearer.

Taranga has the following components:

Kalposh - the cap. It is cone shaped of decorative brocade, attached with wide band of pashmina in crimson, varmoline or scarlet. The conical shape would cover the crown and the band would be shortened three fold round the forehead.



Kashmiri Pandit Ladies' Traditional Pheran & Taranga
Image ~ Miltsar Booni Image ~ neterraina.blogspot.com

Zoojy. A delicate network cloth tapped by embroidered motifs, worn over the crown and tapering flowing down the nape of the neck.

Taranga. This comprises of three narrow and continuous wraps over and round the head, the final round - moharlaath - starched and glazed.

Puts. Two lengths of white fine muslin hemmed together longitudinally in fish spine pattern. Lengthwise, whole piece is rolled and wrapped inwards both sides so as to form the long bodies of pair of snakes, with tapering tails and a hood on the other side.

Fancy cloth

Kashmir is known for its woollen embroidered shawls, which not only go to different parts of the country but even outside India. At one time, they were giving tough competition to the French shawls even. Pashmina is a fancy material for shawls. It is hand-woven from a special soft woollen material found on the mountain goats of Ladakh. The finest material for this category is called Shahtoosh. It has been seen as the softest material which takes very little space when kept folded and packed. The

Shahtoosh shawl is now a banned item with possession and sale being illegal in most countries, for the Chiru is an endangered species under CITES.



Shahtoosh : Image ~ novaroyalecollection.com

Kashmir has also been the home for fine silk. Silk weaving has been introduced during the last century. Kashmir silk has given quite a competition to other Indian and Chinese very best of silk.



**Kashmir Silk Saree
Image : indiamart.com**

Some special features of Kashmiri Life

Kangri

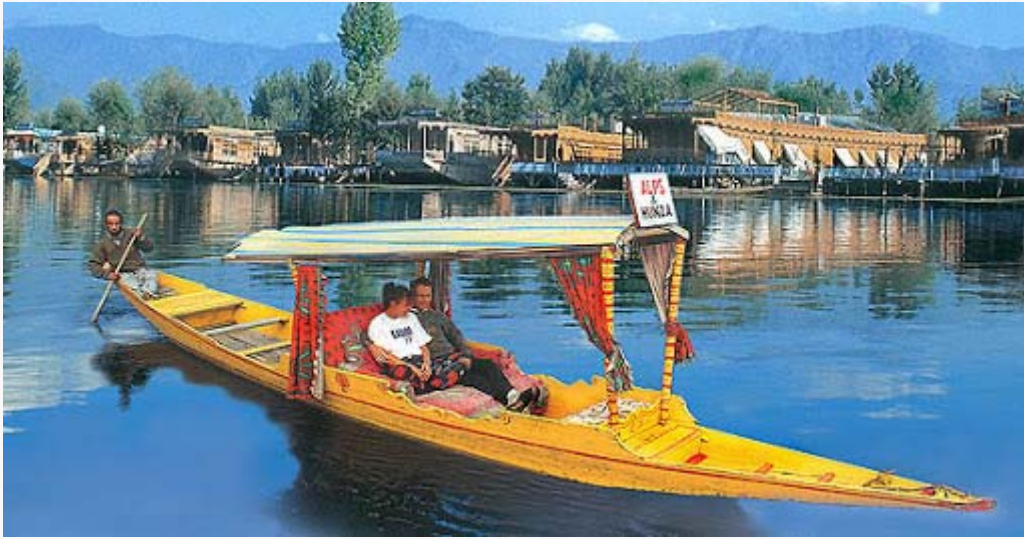


Kangri is a portable stove which Kashmiris use in winter to keep themselves warm. It is an individualised heating system, which one can use while moving around, sitting home and even in bed. It consists of two parts. Inner part is the earthen-ware pot, called the *Kondul*. The external encasement is of the wicker work. It is filled with charcoal dust, ignited at the top with a little fire. The burning takes place slowly, going gradually from top to bottom. To increase the heat emission, a little stirring is done with a silver, iron or wooden spook called *Tsalan* attached to the Kangri. The Kangris are just rough and ready, or made ornamental. Village Tsrar was famous for good Kangris.

House boat



Houseboat : Image ~ agoda.com



Shikara on Dal Lake : Image ~ holidayuncle.com

Kashmir has many lakes, rivers and rivulets. Many of them are negotiable by boats. In earlier days, water ways served as the main means of transportation of men and merchandise from one place to other. The load carrier boat was called Bahats. The one used for living or carrying parties around, was called Doonga and small boats as Shikara. But of interest are the ornate boats, build for luxurious living for visitors and nobels. These are called House boats. They have well furnished drawing room, bed room with attached toilets, with cold and warm water. An attached doonga serves as the kitchen and service boat. The inhabitants get personal attention from the owners and their servants. The credit for introducing them in Kashmir goes to an enterprising Kashmiri Pandit, Pt. Narain Das, father of Swami Laxman ji. He became locally famous as 'Naav Narain' and his first houseboat was named *Kashmir Princess*. However, the famous British explorer, Sir Francis Younghusband, is known to have credited one MT Kennard with the idea of a 'floating house' between the years 1883 and 1888.

Flora

Some of the trees/plants specially found in Kashmir are:

1. Chinar. Chinar may be called 'king' of the plant kingdom of Kashmir for its majestic size and grandeur. It is locally called 'Boonyi'. It gives nice and cool shade during the summer. It has a big leaf which serves as a symbol on the arts and crafts of Kashmir. It is found scattered throughout the Valley with notable clusters here and there. Some trees are as old as three to four hundred years. Some believe that Moghals brought it to Kashmir. Its green leaves turn amber and finally red in autumn before they fall. At that time, a chinar looks from a distance like a huge fire. Some believe that its name comes from this phenomenon - for 'nar' in Arabic means fire.



Chinar trees at Char Chinari : Image ~ wikipedia.org

2. Poplar. Poplar is locally known as 'Phras'. It has a unique shape, going straight up with branches also pointing upwards and standing like a sentinel. It has soft wood and can be used for making match sticks. Those visiting Kashmir, are enchanted by it when they see rows of poplar standing on both sides of the national highway.



Poplar trees : Image ~ newatlas.com

3. Walnut. It is a huge shady tree with comparatively small stem. It bears the famous walnut fruit. Each mature tree can bear up to twenty thousand walnuts, hence of great economical value to the village folk. Its bark serves as dental cleansing agent, making lips red to good effect. Its wood is hard and can be used for intricate carving. It does not get spoilt for centuries. It is used for furniture and other ornamental items. Its cutting is prohibited by law because of its great value. Kashmir supplies walnuts to the whole country and also exports them to other countries.



4. Willow. It is locally called 'Vir'. It grows throughout the Valley but more commonly on the banks of the river and lakes. Its branches hang downwards, kissing the river water. This is the reason, it is called 'weeping willows'. Its twigs are used to clean teeth. Its leaves are used for feeding domestic animals like goats. Willow is commonly used as a fuel in Kashmir. Its wood is best suited for making cricket bats.



Willow tree : Image ~ deccanheraldcom

5. Pine.



Pine trees : Deodar ~ Kail



Pine trees : Budloo (Fir)

All types of pine trees of high altitudes are found in the forests of Kashmir. Deodar is considered the best. Its wood is water resistant, hence used in making boats and costly wooden furnishings. Kail is the variety mostly used in building construction. The other type of pine known as Budloo, presents a charming look. It grows straight up with a gradual thinning of the girth towards its top. Its branches are small and unlike Deodar and Kail. It has soft needle type leaves as against Deodar which has hard needle type leaves. Kail has long bushy leaves. Budloo wood is soft and is mostly used for building work and as domestic fuel. In olden times, it was used for shingle in roofing. Green standing Budloo tree looks gorgeous.

6. Saffron. Kashmir has the honour of producing the much prized saffron for ages. It finds mention in our old scriptures also. It is used for worship by Hindus, Greeks and Romans etc. It has a special scent and also imparts colour to the material to which it is added. It is grown in Pampore, ancient Padmapur, the birth place of Lalla-Ded. Rajatarangini records a legend which says that the flower was given as a gift by Takshaka Naga to the physician Waghrhaita, who lived in Pampore. The plant flowers in late November. People enjoy its sight and fragrance in the moonlit night.



Saffron Farming : Image ~ qaenat.com



Saffron : Flower & Spice

Food

A Kashmiri has his own food habits and preferences, though influenced by neighbours and invaders, yet more conditioned by the geographical factors.



Kashmiri is essentially a rice eater. Rice is the main cereal crop in the Valley. Wheat is harvested only in some dry plateaus. Sugarcane does not grow in the Valley hence a Kashmiri has not developed any preference for things sweet. This habit continues even when they are away from the Valley. The tea that most people take is salty. Salt, in the days bygone had to be imported from long distances outside the Valley (when today's transportation facilities were not available), hence treated as precious thing. Spilling salt was considered very bad. Daughters were given salt in gifts when they went to their respective husbands' homes. The custom continues till date. Milk and milk products were not in abundance. A hill variety of cow was reared but they did not yield much milk. No greens were available for good part of the year (winter), hence they had to be fed on dry fodder.

Cooking medium is essentially mustard oil. Mustard is locally produced as second crop to rice. It is sown in early winter, remains under the snow for winter and flowers in early spring (a pleasant sight).



Kashmiri bakery

Wheat products are mostly consumed for breakfast as a type of loaf (Tsot or Lavasa) or evening snack as Kulcha, Telwor, Katlam etc., baked in a local tandoor. It appears that Tandoor is an introduction from central Asia, and so are the names of its various products such as Girdeh (same in Persian) Lavasah and Rogni Tsot.

Kashmiris are essentially non-vegetarian, both Hindus and Muslims. Although some historians believe that they might have been vegetarians in the beginning. Hindus enjoy mutton and fish. Chicken and egg used to be a taboo for them (Hindus) but not other class of fowls. Cow slaughter is banned in Jammu & Kashmir.

Kashmiris like green vegetables. That is why Hak (brussels sprout), Monji (knol khol), Palak (spinach), Vopalhak, Swatsal (mallow), Obhuj (Rumex), Hand (Dandelion Greens), Meethi (fenugreek) and a number of smaller leafy types, are popular. Hak is a kind of long leafy vegetable and is most liked. It forms part of every meal in all seasons. It is not found in other parts of the country although Chinese like it and call it Gailon. Hak is one thing which a Kashmiri misses badly when outside Kashmir. Its leaves are cooked alone or along with its stems.

Cabbage, cauliflower and potato are grown in Kashmir and they look to be late arrivals in Kashmir as in the rest of the country. Radish & Turnip are enjoyed as are their leafy parts. Onion and garlic used to be a taboo for Pandits but no more now. The gourds - yellow, long or the bitter have been admired. Mushrooms, which used to appear naturally, were very much enjoyed. Artificial cultivation of mushroom is of recent origin. Guchhi (a type of fungus) is very much prized and considered to be a delicacy.

Some typical Kashmiri vegetables :



Hàkh - I



Sòtsal



Nadûrⁱ



Hàkh - II



Mònjí



Kanû gûchhí



Hand



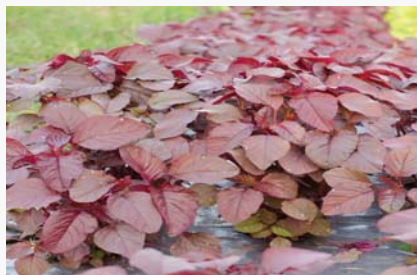
Lisû



Núnar



Obûj



Vòstû Hàkh



Thùlû Ràzmah

Sun-dried vegetables for winter :



Rúwàngan Hachí



Alû Hachí



Wàngan Hachí

Fish :



Hògàdû



Farí Gàdû

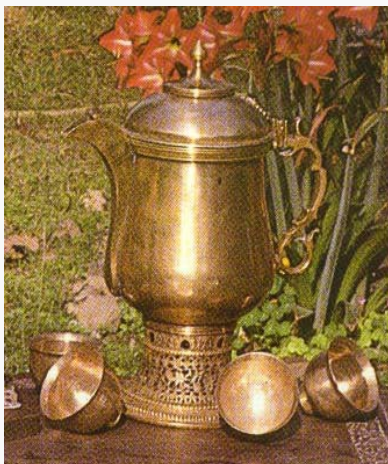
Lentils are taken rather infrequently. The ones locally available Mong (kidney bean), Razmah (red beans), Wari Muth and Matar (dried green peas) are used more during winter months, when fresh vegetables would be scarce. Kashmiris enjoy Nadroo (lotus stem). It is mostly available during winter. Brinjal is another preferred vegetable. It can combine with any other vegetable for cooking.

Tea. Kashmiris must have been one of the earliest addicts to this brew in the subcontinent. Tea, as we know today was introduced by the British tea companies in India. But Kashmiris used to get their stuff long before that from China through Tibet. Later, it used to be imported from Shungla via Bombay (now Mumbai). That is why, in Kashmir it is still called Bombay Chai. But this tea is the green untreated variety of tea. Its brew is called Kahwa. No milk is added to it. It is sweetened with sugar. Often, Dalchini (cinnamon), Elaichi (cardamom), Badam (almonds) and sometimes a little Kesar (saffron) are added to it to give taste and flavour.



Kahwa or Mōgûl' chày ~ Nùnû chày or Shìr' chày

The tea taken with salt and milk is called Nùnû Chày or Shìr' Chày (perhaps adaptation from Ladakh and Tibet). It is very popular among Muslims and to an extent among Hindus. Hindus however prefer Kahwa to Shìr' Chày



Samawar ~ Brass & Copper

Tea is prepared in a special vessel called Samawar. It is a pot in which tea is made by burning charcoal in the small chimney at its centre, having a seive at the bottom. The ash is collected in the space below the seive. There is a nozzled outlet for pouring the tea, hot into the cup. Russians also have a Samawar, but it slightly differs in looks. Hindus used to take tea in a bronze cup called Khos, while Muslims prefer Chinpyala, the cup made of china clay. The Samawar used by Muslims is made of copper while that used by Hindus is made of brass.

Hindus used to eat their food in a Thal, which earlier used to be of bronze. Muslims prefer copper bowl (with tin lining). At feasts, Muslims are served four persons in one big copper plate called Traami.

Fruits

Kashmir produces some of the best fruits. Its various names Tsunth, Ambur, Trel are of Persian origin, while Daen (pomegranate) Dachh (grapes) Tang (pear) and others are of local origin. Tsanun and Alubukhara may contain in their names, their respective origin of Chima and Bukhara.

Some Kashmiri mouth-watering fruits

Apples (Tsùnthⁱ)





Gôrdäi



Sháh Túli



Tsûnúni



Älíchí



Bamû tsûnthi



Dùn



Pambûchh



Kênú báb



Nyùl bàdàm



Gílàsû

Cuisine

Cooking for a Kashmiri is both an art and a pastime. Hindu and Muslim cuisines differ interestingly in non-vegetarian domain. The special features of Kashmiri cooking are: i) a slow and long cooking process which allows the stew to flow from the material cooked; ii) use of differential proportions of each condiment for different dishes; and iii) pre-frying of all vegetables, Hak being an exception.

Non-vegetarian Dishes

Kashmir is famous for its non-vegetarian food. The varieties prepared by Muslims and Hindus differ largely. Hindus make **Roganjosh** - big pieces of mutton after prolonged frying, cooked with condiments, curd and fair amount of red chillies; **Kalia** - a variety of handi meat - a yellow preparation of stewed mutton, considered as a good company for white rice; **Yakhni** - mutton with higher fat content, cooked with curd and without red chillies and tarmeric; **Matsh** - balls of minced mutton, cooked in condiments and red chillies; **Kabargah** - breast pieces of lamb, cooked in condiments and milk and fried deep in ghee to be served hot; **Tsok Tsarwan** - sour liver pieces; **Mutton Pulao** - fried pieces of mutton, cooked with rice and condiments, put on slow fire duly sealed.

Hindus also prepare sweet pulao with dry fruits. Interestingly, many of the names like Roganjosh, Yakhni, Kabargah are of Persian origin. Hindus are considered specialists in cooking fish. Fish is also cooked in combination with a number of vegetables like knol-khol, lotus stem, turnip, radish etc.

Muslims prepare a large number of dishes from mutton alone. A full course of their food with rice, curd and sweet Phiruny, cooked by professional cooks is called a Wazawan. Dish of choice is **Goshtaba** - a ball of beaten mutton, cooked in milk and other ingredients; Rista is a red variant of smaller size and different taste; **Yekhni**, **Methimaaz**, **Aabgosh**, **Kabab**, **Daeni** etc. are other varieties. **Paneer** (cottage cheese) cooked in tomato is a delicacy. A Wazawan is a course dinner. The guests are expected to finish eating one dish before another is served. It therefore takes a long time and enables the guest to ingest a large quantity of mutton and other foods.

Vegetarian Dishes

Vegetarian delicacies of Kashmir are also influenced by their non-veg cuisine. We have Yakhni - whether made of lotus stem (nadroo) or long gourd (Al), made in almost the same manner with curd and condiments. We have Kalia made of Monje (knol khol). We have the Roganjosh of Knol khol (Dam monje) or yellow gourd.

The top billing in vegetarian food is for Dum Aloo. Potato whole, boiled, pierced thoroughly, fried deep and long to metal hardness and then cooked in a concoction of condiments and fair amount of red chillies (could be compared to Roganjosh). Hak is cooked in a mixture of clear water, fried oil, salt and green chillies. Each leaf should retain its fullness and green colour when served.

Kashmiris like combinations e.g. rajmash with turnip, lotus stem with potatoes, knol khol or daal, brinjal with almost every other vegetable and so on. Vegetable and mutton combinations are common.



History

Recent excavations at Burzahom near Srinagar show that there was habitation in the Valley around 2000 BC. The earliest inhabitants lived in pits and buried their dead along with the pet animals in their compounds. Their identity has not so far been established.

The Nagas were the earliest known inhabitants. The Khasas, Dars, Bhuttas, Damars, Nishadas, Tantrings etc. appeared later. The Indo-Aryans came after the water flowed out of the Satisar.

Past Rulers

Gonanda 1 is the first ruler from whose reign some semblance of a chronological history of Kashmir begins. He ascended the throne in Laukika S. 628, 2526 years before Saka. His reign is dated 20 years before the Mahabharata war. (Many Scholars compute the time of Mahabharata war somewhere between 3102 AC and 5561 AC)

Gonanda 1 went to war with Krishna on behalf of his relative Jarasandha, king of Magadha and laid siege to the town of Mathura but was killed in the battle. He was succeeded by his son Damodara 1, who, impelled by the desire to avenge his father's death, attacked Krishna at a Swayamvara which was held by the king of Gandhara. Damodara was killed whereupon Krishna installed the late king's pregnant widow Yasovati on the throne. The queen bore a son who was placed on the throne as Gonanda II, while yet an infant. The Mahabharata war occurred soon after but as the king of Kashmir was yet an infant, his alliance was sought for neither by the Kauravas nor by Pandavas.

Then came thirty-five kings one after the other, whose names and deeds, according to Kalhana, have been lost through the destructions of records. Pir Hasan Shah, a noted local historian, however, fills up the gap by allotting a rule of one thousand years to twenty-two kings of the Pandu Dynasty. A mention of Pir Hasasn Shah is recorded by Dr. G.M.D.Sufi thus:

Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470 AD) is said to have instituted a search for ancient manuscripts and copies of certain chronicles were found. Of these, Kalhana's chronicles were by far the most important, but the history of 35 of the early Hindu kings was still missing. Subsequently an old manuscript was discovered written on birch-bark. This was called the Ratnakar Purana. It contained a record of those kings whose reigns were omitted from Kalhana's history. Zain-ul-Abidin had a Persian translation made but both this and the original have disappeared. A historian Pir Hassan Shah is said to have obtained a copy of the translation.

Dr. Sufi does not vouch for the story but adds, "If we give credence to the traditions prevailing among the present-day Kashmiris, who ascribe every old monument to the Pandus, calling it Pandavlarah or Pandu-edifice, Pir Hassan Shah's statement may be given a value comparable to that which attaches to the account of Kalhana up to the

middle of the 8th century of the Christian era. Himal and Lolare, two noted heroines, in two love stories so popular in Kashmiri folk-lore, belonged to this period. Himal's lover was Nagrai, Lolare's lover was Bombur."

Between Gonanda I and Gonanda III, 54 kings (including 35 lost kings) ruled through 1266 years. From Gonanda III, the chronology of rulers is as under:

1184 AC - 169 AC	Gonanda Dynasty - First king Gonanda III
169 AC - 24 AC	Vikramaditya Dynasty
24 AC - 596 AD	Gonanda restored
596 AD - 695 AD	Karkota or Naga Dynasty, Durlabhavardhana, Durlabhaka
695 AD - 857 AD	Durlabhaka, Muktapida alias Lalitaditya to Utpalapida
857 AD - 907 AD	Avantivarman to Queen Sughanda
907 AD - 940 AD	Nirjitvarman to Achadha
940 AD - 1004 AD	Yachaskara to Queen Dida
1004 AD - 1102 AD	Sangramraja to Harsha
1102 AD - 1154 AD	Uchchala to Jayasimha
1154 AD - 1164 AD	Pramanuka
1164 AD - 1171 AD	Vrittideva
1171 AD - 1180 AD	Bopyadeva
1180 AD - 1198 AD	Jassaka
1198 AD - 1212 AD	Jagadeva
1212 AD - 1235 AD	Rajadeva
1235 AD - 1252 AD	Sangramdeva
1252 AD - 1273 AD	Ramadeva
1273 AD - 1286 AD	Bhisiyakapura/Lakshmandeva
1286 AD - 1301 AD	Simhadeva
1301 AD - 1320 AD	Sahadeva alias Ramachandra
1320 AD - 1323 AD	Rinchana
1323 AD - 1338 AD	Udayandeva
1338 AD	Kota Rani
1339 AD - 1342 AD	Shah Mir
1342 AD	Sultan Jamshid
1342 AD - 1354 AD	Sultan Ala-ud-Din
1354 AD - 1373 AD	Shihab-ud-Din
1373 AD - 1389 AD	Qutub-ud-Din
1389 AD - 1413 AD	Sultan Sikandar (But Shikan)
1413 AD - 1420 AD	Sultan Ali Shah
1420 AD - 1470 AD	Sultan Zain-ul-Abdin (Budshah)
1470 AD - 1472 AD	Sultan Haider Shah
1472 AD - 1484 AD	Sultan Hassan Shah
1484 AD - 1486 AD	Sultan Muhammad Shah as child
1486 AD - 1493 AD	Sultan Fateh Shah
1493 AD - 1505 AD	Sultan Muhammad Shah again
1505 AD - 1514 AD	Sultan Fateh Shah again
1514 AD - 1515 AD	Sultan Muhammad Shah 3rd time
1515 AD - 1516 AD	Sultan Fateh Shah 3rd time

1516 AD - 1528 AD	Sultan Muhammad Shah 4th time
1528 AD - 1529 AD	Sultan Ibrahim Shah
1529 AD - 1530 AD	Sultan Nazuk Shah
1530 AD - 1537 AD	Sultan Muhammad Shah 5th time
1537 AD - 1538 AD	Sultan Shams-ud-Din
1538 AD - 1539 AD	Sultan Ismail Shah
1539 AD - 1540 AD	Sultan Ibrahim Shah
1540 AD - 1551 AD	Mirza Haider Dughlat through Sultan Nazuk Shah
1551 AD - 1554 AD	Sultan Ismail Shah II
1554 AD - 1555 AD	Sultan Habib Shah
1555 AD - 1586 AD	Chak Dynasty (Qazi Chak, Yousuf Chak etc)
1586 AD - 1752 AD	Mughal rule through governors
1752 AD - 1819 AD	Afghan rule through governors
1819 AD - 1846 AD	Sikh rule through governors
1846 AD - 1857 AD	Maharaja Gulab Singh (Dogra rule)
1857 AD - 1885 AD	Maharaja Ranbir Singh
1885 AD - 1925 AD	Maharaja Partap Singh
1925 AD - 1947 AD	Maharaja Hari Singh
1947 AD	Accession with India

There is a consensus of opinions among historians that Ashoka of Kashmir mentioned by Kalhana before 1184 AC is in fact the emperor of Magadha who reigned from 272 AC to 231 AC. His empire included Baluchistan, Herat, Kabul, Afghanistan up to the Hindu Kush and the valleys of Swat, Kashmir and Nepal. His reign also extended up to Mysore in the south and Saurashtra in the extreme west.

Kashmir was from the earliest period, a seat of learning as we find from the writings of famous Chinese travellers 'Hieun-Tsang' and 'Ou-Kong'. No scholar could be considered well accomplished unless and until he had associated himself with the illustrious learned men in Kashmir for several years and taken lessons from them. Kashmir was a grand arena of science and arts. Innumerable names of illustrious persons, who have attained the loftiest pitch of glory in the literary world, can be cited. Kashmir produced scientists like Charaka, whose books on medicine are a marvel to the modern medical and surgical world. Men of culture and letters from distant countries came here and sat reverentially at the feet of the great masters of learning and drank deep at the fountains of abstruse knowledge and arts. From here, went forth teachers to distant countries with the torch of learning and dispelled the darkness of ignorance from there. Throughout India, Kashi and Kashmir were, from ancient times, famous as the seats of learning but Kashmir (which was also known as Sharda Peeth) excelled even Kashi. The learned men of Kashi had to come to Kashmir to complete their education. Even to this day, the people of Kashi make their boys walk seven paces towards Kashmir during the performance of the ceremony of their investiture with the sacred thread as a token of their having gone to and returned from Kashmir after completing their education.

Sharda was a famous seat of ancient learning and pilgrimage. This was considered a university where scholars would come from far and near. The famous Kashmiri script SHARDA was developed here. It is presently in Pakistan-held part of Kashmir.

Sources of Kashmir history

Kashmir has the uniqueness of having almost unbroken historical record from the hoary past to the present day. It is chiefly because of:

1. Nilamata Purana, the earliest known extant history of Kashmir giving legends about the origin of the Valley. It also gives details of rites, worship of Nagas, details of Tirthas etc.

2. Kalhana's Rajatarangini is the most important extant history of Kashmir written in Sanskrit verse in the years AD 1148-50. Based on extensive research, referring to Puranas (Kashmir is not mentioned in the Vedic literature); Nilamata Purana, ancient account of 51 Tirthas, foreign travellers' accounts, legends and anecdotes, Kalhana has built dynastic lists of 54 reigns, covering an aggregate period of 3050 years. He has given a connected account with dates from AD 813 onwards. His work gives a picture of the social, political, economical and religious condition of the period. The book has been translated into many languages.

M.A.Stein's translation and commentary is a valuable source. It (Rajatarangini) comprises eight cantos of Sanskrit verse, the history of various daynasties which ruled Kashmir from the earliest period down to the time of the author, who began to write this book in AD 1148, in the reign of Jai Simha. The Rajatarangini has become the most direct source of Information on the history of ancient Kashmir. Allowing for the legendary character of much that is related in the first three cantos, it can be accepted as a reliable record from the seventh century.

Kalhana has indicated, atleast generally, the material which he had used for his narration. The more prominent of them are:

- a) Nilamata Purana.
- b) Suvrata's Hand Book containing condensed contents of previous historians, whose works were not available to Kalhana.
- c) Eleven works of scholars containing chronicles of kings.
- d) Kshemendra's list of kings.
- e) Padmamihira, giving eight royal names starting from Lava.
- f) Pillar inscriptions and copper plates connected with consecration, grant etc of temples giving dates, enabling him to build connected record and coins.
- g) Information from popular traditions, legends and anecdotes.
- h) First hand Information furnished by his father for the period before Kalhana's birth.
- i) Kalhana's personal observation and recorded facts.

3. Updated Rajatarangini : Rajatarangini has been updated from time to time, even under Muslim rule. Jonaraja (in Sanskrit) brought it ending 1459, Shrivara - ending 1487, Prajya Bhatta (under Akbar's orders) ending 1513-14. Shuka updated it upto 1586. Various historians under Mughals brought the narration ending 1746. Abul Fazal's Ain-a-Akbari is notable amongst them.

4. Accounts of foreign travellers are a reliable source. They include Chinese Heiun Tsang (AD 613), Ou Kong (AD 750), Alberuni (AD 996-1031) and some European notably Forester (AD 1783), Bernier (Aurangzeb's time), Lawrence & Cunningham (during Dogras' time)

5. Cultural and Political History by P.N.K. Bamzai. P.N.Bazaz and host of others have also recorded stories of their times.

6. Tareekh-e-Aqwam-e-Kashmir by Munshi Mohd. Din Foq, **Khwarik Al-Salikeen** by Mulla Ahmad (Persian) during Zain-Ul-Abidin's period, **Kashir** by Dr. G.M.D.Sufi are also available.

7. Baharistan-e-Shahi - Author anonymous but supposed to be Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi.

Some interesting facts

1. Ashoka made his capital at Pandrethan and built 96000 dwellings stretching from Harwan / Nishat upto Pandrethan (near Badami Bagh). Parvarena II (AD 580) founded the present Srinagar.

2. Lalitaditya Muktapida (AD 724-761), the grandson of Durlabavardhana (AD 625-661) and the founder of Karkota dynasty was the most illustrious of Hindu rulers. He conquered large parts of the mainland namely Punjab, Kannauj (even upto present Bengal), Tibet, Badakhshan and nearby territories. Alberuni says "Second Chaitra was celebrated every year as a victory day over Turks".

Features of his rule:

- a) Hinduism and Budhism received equal patronage.
- b) Patronised scholars of Sanskrit.
- c) Built Martand Temple and Parihaspura (near Shaadipur) as his capital. Founder of Hindu school of architecture.
- d) Got silt and boulders removed from the Jhelum at Baramulla to quicken the flow of water of Jhelum - an anti-flood measure.

3. Awantivarman (AD 857-883) founder of Utpala dynasty, known for: a) Patronising great scholars and philosophers; b) Got silt and boulders removed from Jhelum by his engineer Suya, because of whom Sopore (Suyapur) got its name. He also changed the course of Jhelum through Wular, the biggest fresh water lake of Asia. He founded the city of Awantipora near Srinagar - ruins still existing.

4. Didda, daughter of the chief of Lohara and wife of Kshemagupta (AD 950-958) was the first known woman ruler of Kashmir. First as regent of her son (AD 958-972) and later as a ruler (AD 981-1003). She was an able and courageous administrator.

5. Islam entered Kashmir through the preachings of some Muslim saints. By AD 1301, a few had embraced Islam. 700 Sayyids under the leadership of Shah Hamdan fled from the persecution of Taimur Lung and came to Kashmir.

6. The End of Hindu Rule: A stirring drama of intrigue, rebellion and war for 20 years (AD 1318-1338) was enacted and finally Muslim rule was established in Kashmir. The dominating personality during all these years was Queen Kota – a woman with an unbounded lust for power.

Sahadeva (Damra) ascended the throne in 1301 (By then, some people had embraced Islam). He had an able and kind hearted prime minister and commander-in-chief by the name of Rama Chandra. His intelligent and beautiful daughter Kota, who had married Suhadeva, helped her father in managing the affairs of the state.

Two foreigners, who were destined to play momentous roles in the history of Kashmir, were taken by the king in service to strengthen his hands against unruly war-lords. First, a fugitive prince supposedly from Tibet, Rinchana, a Buddhist came to Kashmir. There was a civil war in Tibet and the Kalmanya Bhuteas had killed the ruler of the Western Tibet (Ladakh ?).

Rinchana, who was a prince of royal line, entered the valley through Zojila pass with several hundred men. Ramchandra took him in his service. Second, a Muslim adventurer from Swat, Shah Mir also joined Rama Chandra. In 1319, Kashmir was attacked by Dulacha, a Tartar chief from Central Asia. Suhadeva fled to Kishtwar, his brother Udyanadeva also fled Kashmir. Rama Chandra, with the help of his daughter Kota Rani, Rinchana and Shah Mir managed the affairs of the state for the period Dulacha stayed in valley, impoverishing and ravaging it. After eight months, Dulacha, on his way back home, perished in a snow storm alongwith thousands accompanying him. That very time, Gaddis of Kishtwar raided Kashmir but they were beaten back by the forces sent by Rama Chandra, who declared himself the king. Rinchana, who had gained considerable popularity, rose in revolt, driving Rama Chandra and his daughter Kota Rani to the fort of Lahra (Lar), where the former was killed by the men of Rinchana, who entered the fort in disguise. Kota Rani married Rinchana, who was declared the king. He tried in vain to be a Hindu, as none of the castes would admit him to their brotherhood. He embraced Islam with the help of Bulbul Shah and took the name of Sadrudin. Thus he became the first Muslim king of the valley, though for a short time of three years. With the help of his wife, Rinchana ruled wisely and justly. He was faithfully served by his minister Shah Mir.

In 1323, Rinchana succumbed to a head injury which he had received during a strong rebellion organised by Udyanandeva under the guidance of a powerful baron Tukka. Rinchana entrusted his son and queen to the care of Shah Mir. Udyanandeva suddenly appeared and advanced towards Kashmir with a strong face. The shrewd

Kota Rani offered the throne as well as her person to him. Udyanandeva ascended the throne and married Kota Rani with much pomp. Soon Kota Rani got hold of the administration. She ruled wisely, justly but formally. Shah Mir continued to be faithful to the throne.

A Turki, Achala (Lawrence - Urwan) invaded Kashmir. The King fled Kashmir like his brother. His wife Kota Rani sent a well organised army under Shah Mir against the foe. Achala was defeated and Udyanandeva returned. He was received by his victorious queen and resumed his rule. He ruled for 15 years till his death in 1338. Kota Rani assumed power but within 5 months, Shah Mir revolted, seized power and proposed marriage to Kota Rani, who ultimately stabbed herself to death. Thus ended the Hindu royalty in 1339.

Shah Mir assumed the name of Shamas-Ud-Din (1339-1342) and laid the foundation of Sultan dynasty which ruled for 222 years ushering in about 500 years of Muslim rule.

Shamas-Ud-Din was a just and an enlightened king. He established peace and endeared himself to his subjects. His grandson Shihab-Ud-Din (1354-1373), an accomplished general, has been called Lalitaditya of medieval India. He sent his army on expedition to Tibet and Afghanistan. He was succeeded by his brother Qutub-Ud-Din (1373-1389). He too was a just and tolerant king.

8. Qutub-Ud-Din's younger son Sultan Sikandar, called Sikandar But-Shikan (idol breaker), the iconoclast ruled from 1389 to 1413. He was a cruel, fanatic zealot. He persecuted Kashmiri Hindus, killed them by thousands and converted them. Most of the Kashmiri Hindus migrated to the plains. This was the first mass migration. He destroyed hundreds of temples and built mosques in their place and with their material. During his time, the great Martand temple was destroyed.

Lieutenant Newall, author of the 'Muhammadan History of Kashmir', says that partly by the influence of Timur and partly no doubt, urged by the fanatic Muslims who had lately entered his country, Sikandar was, about this period, instigated to religious persecution. He began to force his subjects to abjure idolatry and thereby acquired the surname of Butshikan or the iconoclast. Sir Wohseley Haig calls him 'a ferocious bigot'.

Curiously Sultan Sikandar's minister, Saif-Ud-Din was a recent convert (Brahmin, named Suha Bhatt). Some historians say that he and other converts outdistanced the Sultan in persecution of the adherents of their old faith. In the words of Chas J Rodgers, author and educationist, the minister's zeal in the persecution of his former co-religionists has seldom been equalled in the history of religious proselytes.

Sultan Sikandar however was the first Indian ruler to abolish the practice of Sati. Sultan Sikandar named Sultan Ali Shah as his successor and he ruled till 1420.

9. Sikandar's son Zain-Ul-Abdin succeeded to the throne in 1420 AD. He is popularly called Budshah (great king). Shri Bhat, a physician, who cured the king of an

otherwise fatal disease, is stated to have influenced the king in turning a kinder face to the Hindus. He remitted Jazia imposed on Hindus by earlier kings. He repaired some temples. He threw open government services to Hindus. He taught them Persian. He gave them land grants. He established his reputation as a kind, just, benevolent and progressive king. He succeeded in getting back the Hindus who had migrated earlier. Zain-Ul-Abidin was virtuous in his private life, self controlled and frugal, paying all the expenses of his establishment from the income from the copper mines which he had discovered. He built a 12 storeys high magnificent building, each storey having 50 rooms and in each room, 500 men could sit. This was called Zaena Dab. He helped agriculturists and promoted horticulture. He invited art manufacturers from foreign lands and taught the locals, useful arts and crafts. He was truly a progressive king wedded to the welfare and happiness of his subjects.

10. a) After Zain-ul-Abdin, Kashmir, under Sultans witnessed unrest, disorder, misrule, intrigues and Shia-Sunni conflicts, fuelled and ignited by Shia-Chaks, a Dard warrior tribe, till Kazi Chak captured the throne in 1561. He ruled for 3 years. His successors resisted the attempts of Babar and Humayun to annexe Kashmir. The last of the Chaks, Yusuf Shah Chak, who had married poetess Habba Khatoon, and who succumbed to the strategy more than the superior forces of Akbar's generals, was lured to visit the Mughal darbar only to die in a Bihar prison in 1586. After meeting a meek resistance from Yusuf Shah's son, the victorious Mughals entered the Valley on 14th October, 1586 AD.

b) Mughals, except Aurangzeb gave a peaceful time. They were builders known for:

Akbar - Hari Parbat Fort.
Jehangir - Shalimar, Nishat (1619 AD), Verinaag (1620)
Noor Jehan - Achhabal
Shahjehan - Cheshma Shahi
Dara Shikoh - Pari Mahal

They initiated useful administrative reforms and implemented many welfare schemes to ameliorate the economic condition of the people, though in feudal set up.

11. Afghan rule (1752-1819 AD) was the darkest period. They persecuted Kashmiris in general and Hindus in particular. Hindus again migrated, but were mostly killed or forcibly converted. Only eleven families of them are stated to have survived death, conversion and migration.

Walter R. Lawrence records in 'The Valley of Kashmir': "When we pass from the Mughal period to the period of the Shahani Durani, we pass to a time of brutal tyranny, unrelieved by good works, chivalry and honour. Men with interest were appointed as governors, who wrung as much money as they could out of the wretched people of the valley. Wealth had to be accumulated rapidly as no one knew how many days would elapse before he was recalled to Kabul, to make room for some new needy favourite of the hour. Amir Khan Jawan Sher was perhaps the best Other Pathan rulers are

now only remembered for their brutality and cruelty, and it is said of them that they thought no more of cutting off head than of plucking a flower."

Baharistan-e-Shahi (Author anonymous but supposed to be Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi) is full of such horror stories.

12. During the last phase of his reign, Afghan Governor Azam Khan appointed Birbal Dhar as one of his Collectors to collect revenue. Due to unfortunate climatic conditions for six years, a sum of one lac of rupees remained in arrears against Birbal Dhar. Birbal Dhar's pleas that he could not be held responsible for the natural calamities, which destroyed the crops, fell on deaf ears. Governor abused him, punished him and ransacked his home. Governor now suspected him of plotting with the Sikhs. Azam Khan's high-handedness compelled Birbal Dhar to escape.

Here let us not forget the story of Qudus Gojri. When Birbal Dhar escaped from his home at the dead of night, he left his wife and daughter-in-law to the care of a milkman named Qudus Gojri. Qudus Gojri concealed the two ladies in his cowshed. Munshi Trilok Chand, Birbal Dhar's treacherous son-in-law, beguiled and disillusioned by some momentary gain, divulged the whereabouts of Birbal Dhar's family to the Governor. They were traced and arrested. Birbal Dhar's wife committed suicide. Her daughter-in-law was converted to Islam and handed over to some Afghan notable who carried her to Kabul. Qudus Gojri, who had looked after the wife and daughter-in-law of Birbal Dhar like his mother and sister, and his family were brutally murdered and so was Pandit Vinayak Dhar who was a party to the concealment. Qudus Gojri's belongings were also destroyed. Maliks of Kulgam, who helped Birbal Dhar and escorted him to Jammu, were also brutally tortured.

13) Tired of persecution by Afghans and Azam Khan's decision to give short shrift to the Pandits of repute (first victim being Pandit Hara Dass Tiku who was lynched), Birbal Dhar and some other notable Pandits secretly persuaded Maharaja Ranjit Singh to annexe Kashmir. In 1819, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's forces under Misser Diwan Chand, Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu and Hari Singh Nalwa, defeated the last Afghan governor Jabar Khan at Shopian. Misser Diwan Chand was the first Sikh Governor. He remained for a short time. Moti Ram was the second. (Lawrence says he was the first). He held the office twice. He was gentle and sympathetic. He is known for having banned killing of cows. The third Governor Kirpa Ram was very popular. He carried out many improvement works. He loved dance, music and nature and was in harmony with the Kashmiri ethos. He spent much time in a pleasure-boat in Dal Lake and earned the nickname of 'Kirpa Shronya'.

14. Under the Treaty of Amritsar (16 March 1846) the British made over the hilly mountainous country (East of Indus to West of Ravi) to Gulab Singh against a payment of 75 lakhs of rupees, the amount which Sikhs owed to British as war indemnity. Gulab Singh annexed Chilas, Ladakh & Skardu and Ranbir Singh annexed Gilgit.

15. Hari Singh ascended the throne in 1926. He declared very progressive welfare measures. Important events happening in his rule are:

i) On 13 July 1931, Muslims protested against the prosecution of one Abdul Qadeer Ghazi, sympathizer of Kashmir struggle, outside the Srinagar Central Jail where he was being tried for sedition. A riot resulted and 21 people were killed in the police firing, 10 of them at the Jamia Masjid during the burial of those killed at the Central Jail. It is said that Muslim crowds carried dead bodies on charpoys and paraded the main markets of the city. There was wide-spread resentment at the killings. Their wrath was turned against the Hindus who they associated with the Maharaja's government. Shops belonging to the Hindus were looted and in the communal outburst in the suburbs of Srinagar, three Hindus lost their lives.

ii) Muslim Conference was founded. Sheikh Abdullah became its leader. In 1935, Gilgit was leased out to British government as a colony for 60 years.

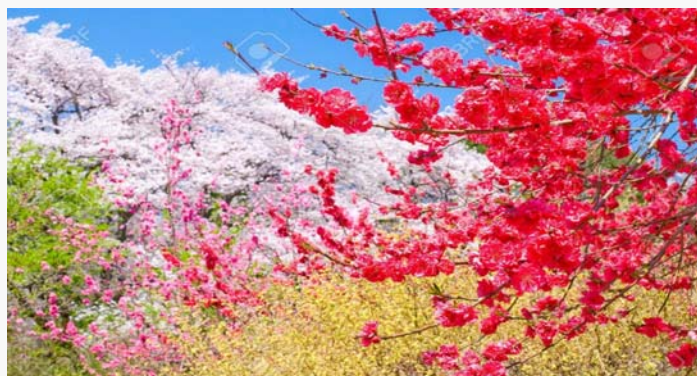
iii) In 1938, Muslim Conference was changed to National Conference. While some Pandits, P.N.Bazaz, Kashyap Bhandu and others joined it, some Muslims Moulvi Yusuf Shah, Chowdhary Abbas (Mirpur), Mian Ahmed Yar (Muzafarabad) and others continued with Muslim Conference.

iv) National Conference launched Quit Kashmir Movement in 1946. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah and many others were arrested.

v) Jawahar Lal Nehru was arrested at Kohala (now in Pak occupied Kashmir) while on his way to Srinagar to meet Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah in jail. R.C.Kak was the Prime Minister.

vi) Mahatma Gandhi visited Kashmir in July 1947. R.C.Kak was removed and made to hand over his charge temporarily to Thakur Janak Singh. After two months, Mehar Chand Mahajan was appointed as Prime Minister.

vii) Kashmir was raided by tribesmen backed by Pakistan. Kashmir acceded to India.



Brief information about some other famous rulers

Ashoka (273-232 AC)

Kalhana mentions the name of Ashoka as a King of Kashmir. In spite of some discrepancy in his chronology, all historians including Stein, are unanimous that the Ashoka of Kashmir History is the emperor of Maghda. This has been explained earlier.

When Buddhism became the state religion under Ashoka, Kashmir was one of the first regions to receive his attention for introduction of Buddhism. It could be because Gautama Buddha is reported to have said that Kashmir is the best place for meditation and leading a religious life. So soon after the Buddhist council at Patliputra, Ashoka introduced Buddhism in Kashmir.

Both Heun-Tsang and Ou-Kong confirm that Ashoka took with him 5000 monks to Kashmir. He built numerous Viharas for them and when he finally returned to his capital, he made a gift of the whole Valley to the Sangha, considering it the fittest place for the study and propagation of the Doctrine.

The learned Pandits of Kashmir imbued with a spirit of tolerance, received the canon with due respects and after studying it, gave it a new interpretation suiting the times and aspirations of the people.

Kalhana says: a) Ashoka founded his capital Shri Nagri, stretching from Harwan to Pandrethan, about 5 kms. to the South of the present city. He is said to have built 96000 dwelling houses. b) Ashoka built Viharas and Stupas particularly in the vicinity of Suskletra (Hukh Litr) and Vitastra (Vethavatru). The Stupa at the latter place was so high that the eye could not see the extent of its height. c) Ashoka was the benefactor of the ancient shrine of Vijayeshwara at Bijbehara. He built a stone wall around the temple after dismantling the stucco enclosure. He also built two Shiva temples known as Ashkeshwara within this enclosure. He is said to have worshipped Shiva Bhutasea at the shrine of Harmukhganga. These facts amply show that he also respected religions other than Buddhism.

Ashoka died in about 232 AC. after 40 years of rule. His son, Jalauka appears to have become independent in Kashmir after his father's death. He was an ardent devotee of Shiva, but friendly to the Buddhists.

Ashoka is said to have improved the administrative structure of Kashmir. He increased the number of officers and entrusted them with specific responsibilities.

Kanishka

(Time of rule of Huska, Juska, Kanishka given by Kalhan is also disputed. They are believed to have ruled around AD100)

Kalhana mentions names of three Turuska rulers, Huska, Juska and Kanishka. He says that they ruled Kashmir simultaneously. Kaniskapur (Kanispur, Baramulla), Huskapur (Ushkur, Baramulla) and Juskapur were founded by Kanishka, Hushka and Juska respectively. The identity of Kanishka with the great Kushan or Indo-Scythian ruler of North Western India is well established.

Huska built a Vihara and a Stupa at Huskapur. Heun-Tsang is said to have spent his first night after arrival in the Valley, in this Vihara.

Kanishka was the most famous of the Kushans. He ruled over the north-west of India and central Asia. His authority had its nucleus in Kashmir, but it extended to both sides of the Himalayas from Yarkand and Khotan to Agra and Sindh. At the beginning of his reign, he was not a Buddhist. He adopted the creed 'perhaps due to the influence of Kashmirian monks.'

Kanishka held the third Buddhist Conference in Kashmir. For this purpose, he built residential monasteries for the brethren to reside. The Council met in Srinagar, believed to have been held at Kundalvan. (Bamzai suggests it could be at Kuntilum on the spur of Zabarwan hill.)

Heun-Tsang found and studied the records of its proceedings maintained in different libraries. He states that the Council was attended by nearly 500 selected 'deserving monk scholars' from outside Kashmir, besides a large number of Kashmiri scholars. Prominent scholars included Vasmitra, the President of the Council, Asvagasha and Nagarjuna.

Kanishka's Council sat for six months and composed voluminous and elaborate commentaries in 1,00,000 Sanskrit stanzas. The proceedings were engraved on copper plates. They were enclosed in stone boxes and buried for the posterity. They are still to be found.

Kanishka's Council marks the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Buddhism. Mahayana Doctrine (of Buddhism) was born as a result of the deliberations at this Council. Mahayanist doctrine was given a superior status. This doctrine may rightly be said to be a gift from the Kashmiri Brahmins to Buddhism.

As a result of this Council, there burst forth enthusiastic missionary spirit among Kashmiris who carried the religion to China and the intervening tracts of central Asia. Kashmiri scholars of Buddhism are credited to have carried the Doctrine to the north and east (Tibet, Korea, Japan, Java etc.) at different points of time.

Kanishka's successors : It is possible that Kanishka's sons Vaiska and Huviska acted as viceroys in succession, but it appears that Vaiska pre-deceased his father who was succeeded by Huviska, who died in 140 A.D. His son Vasudeva, also known as Jasuka succeeded him. With his death in 178 A.D., Kushan rule in Kashmir came to an end. The dynasty continued to rule Kabul and the Punjab till Huns defeated them in the 15th century.

Lalitaditya (AD 724-761)

Lalitaditya, the third son of the Karakota king Partapaditya II, succeeded his brother Tarapida in AD 724. His mother was the mistress of a rich merchant. Attracted by her beauty, Partapaditya married her. (Kalhana says the marriage was a result of their mutual consent and the agreement of the merchant.) Being the third son of an able ruler, he is expected to have undergone a thorough schooling in the art of statecraft. Known as a tireless warrior, he desired to conquer the whole world. Undoubtedly, he asserted his power far beyond Kashmir and the adjoining territories.

Lalitaditya's conquests:

Lalitaditya had an efficient, brave, dedicated and faithful army, mostly recruited from the north. His Commander-in-Chief Cankunya was born and trained in the north. According to Kalhana, he was from Tukhara.

Lalitaditya's campaigns were:

With Punjab and Kangra already under his control, he marched against Kanauj, which was ruled by Yesovarman. He marched across the plains without any resistance and brought Kanauj under his direct control after dethroning Yesovarman. From Kanauj, he marched eastwards and reduced Jivatagupta, the ruler of Bihar and Bengal, to his vassalage. Continuing his march, he reached the coast of Orrisa. With the assistance of a local princess, he crossed into the Deccan, befriended Chalukas and overran Rashtrakuta territory. On his way back, he passed through Gujrat, Kathiawar, Malwa and Mewar, without the slightest resistance. After subduing the kings of India, he led his army through Dard Desha (Dardistan) to Tukara (Tukharistan) country. He led an expedition against Tibet and atleast subdued Ladakh and the western provinces of Tibet. Lalitaditya returned home after 12 years campaign by way of Tibet.

Lalitaditya as Builder

Lalitaditya must be regarded as the founder of not only a short lived empire but also of six centuries of Kashmir art. He along with his queens, ministers including his commander-in chief, Cankunya and high state officials built numerous villages and towns to commemorate his many victories. Most of them are not traceable now. He is credited to have built Parantosa (modern Poonch), Phalapora, a village near

Shadipora, Lalitapora (Latapora), Lokpuna (Lokbhawan on Anantnaag-Verinaag road) and Parihaaspora near Shadipur. Parihaspora was his capital.

Lalituditya built Martand temple (Sun temple), the most important and the finest work of ancient Kashmir architecture, and Parihaaspora temples. He built four Vishnu temples and a Buddha Stupa / Vihara. Kalhana gives their names as Parihaskeshava, Muktakeshava, Mahavaraha, Govardhanadara and Rajavihara. He installed silver images in the first and fourth, a golden image in the second and an image clad in golden armour, in the third. He installed a copper statue of Buddha in the fifth.

In Parihaspora, Lalituditya erected a stone pillar 54 hands tall and put a representation of Garuda on its top. He built Vishnu temples at Lalitapur (Latapur) and Hushkapur (Ushkur). At Hushkapur, he also built a Buddhist Vihara and a Stupa. The Chinese traveller Ou-Kong stayed in this Vihara.

Lalituditya was a benevolent king and did not neglect works of public good. The following are worth mention:-

As a fore-runner of Avantivarman, Lalituditya got rocks and silt removed from the river bed at Baramulla, to increase the flow of river as an anti-flood measure. He reclaimed vast swamps, raised bunds round the low lying land, to bring more land under cultivation. He made five irrigation canals. He erected water wheels for lifting water to Chakardara and other plateaus. He established charitable institutions.

Lalituditya's greatness is depicted by the following:-

He showed extreme sense of tolerance to the religious beliefs of his subjects. He had profound respect for both Hinduism and Buddhism. He patronised both. He patronised scholars and men of learning. He brought two famous poets Bhavabhuti and Vitapatiraja from Kanauj after Yesovarman's defeat and gave them seats of respect in his court. He accorded human treatment to the vanquished people.

Lalituditya yearned for some more conquests and left for central Asia. Kashmirians besought him to return. He refused to come back, but sent them maxims of policy for the guidance of his successors.

Kalhana mentions two legends about Lalituditya's death. One, he died in excessive snow in Aryanaka (modern Afganistan) and second that he committed suicide to escape being caught.



Avantivarman (AD 857-883)

Avantivarman was the first king of the Utpala dynasty. He was crowned in AD 857. The kingdom at that time was in chaos and economic distress as a result of misrule and internal troubles during the preceding reigns. He therefore did not indulge in vain glorious expeditions outside the Valley. He adopted and followed a policy of peace and development. It ushered in a period of consolidation and prosperity, which in turn ensured rise of Kashmir in the realms of philosophy, art and letters. He was guided by his able and wise Prime Minister Sura. Some of his contributions / achievements are :-

He founded and built Avantipur on the right bank of Vitasta, 27 kms from Srinagar where ruins of his two temples (a Shiva temple and a Vishnu temple) still exist. His minister Sura built a temple at Surasvariksetra at Ishber, on the eastern bank of the Dal Lake. Sura built a town near Shopian and his wife and sons also followed his example. It shows economic prosperity of the times. Avantivarman liberally patronised scholars and poets. Bhatta Kallata, Ravi Ratnakara and Anandavardhana are some of the famous names. Their work in Sanskrit, on philosophy, religion, poetic aesthetics etc are still existing. His reign was the glorious period of Kashmirian art and culture. He willingly encouraged and generously financed Suyya to:

- a) Regulate course of the Vitasta
- b) Accelrate flow of the river
- c) Drain the Valley
- d) Reclaim submerged land after draining the marshes
- e) Raise embankments wherever needed
- f) Construct a network of irrigation canals

As a result of this, cultivation was increased and recurring floods were controlled. The price of rice is said to have drastically fallen.

Kalhana praises Avantivarman for his constant concern for his subjects, whom he helped learn various arts and crafts. He is reputed to be caring for human rights. During his reign, Kashmir enjoyed respite from natural and man-made calamities. Listening to the end the recitation of the Bhagvadgita, Avantivarman passed away in June 883 A.D.

An anecdote:

Avantivarman was highly sensitive and endowed with sharp common sense. He was a cultured human being and a just ruler. Here is a story about his way of working. Avantivarman had good relations with his minister Sura, who knew his mind and was very faithful to him. Sura had a friend, a Damra, Dhanava by name. The latter, exploiting his friendship with Sura, had forcibly taken over the control of villages attached to the temple at Bhutesa, reducing the priests to utter poverty. Once Avantivarman went to worship at Bhutesa. Here, he noticed some wild utpalashaka (Upalhak) at the base of the god's image. He was shocked at the humble offering. When he learnt about the reasons of the poverty and helplessness of the priests, he left the worship, feigning indisposition, but without telling anything to Sura. However, Sura smelt it, enquired into the matter, summoned Dhanava, beheaded him and

restored the villages to the Shrine. He went to enquire about the health of the king. Avantivarman said that he was well and resumed his worship. He did not make any complaint to his minister. A magnanimous act!

End of Hindu Rule

Hindu rule came to an end in 1339, when Shah Mir, under the title of Sultan Shamasud-Din founded Sultan dynasty, which ruled for 222 years (1339-1561). During the first 50 years of their rule, there is no evidence of religious persecution of Hindus. There is no record of forcible conversion. In fact the first three Sultans were quite liberal and had allowed complete religious freedom. But things changed during the rule of Sikandar (1389-1413).

Sikandar followed the policy of religious tolerance for some time. His thinking changed with the arrival of 700 Sayyids under the leadership of Sayyid Mohamad Hamdani. They came from Persia as they had been persecuted there on political reasons by Timur. Sikandar received them with open arms.

Sayyids were orthodox Sunni theologians. Sikandar came into direct contact with them. As a result he was fired with religious zeal. He resolved to run the State on Islamic laws. He tried to propagate the faith by force. In this task, he was actively assisted by his Prime Minister Suha Bhat (Saif-ud-Din), a recent convert to Islam. Thousands of Hindus were converted and killed. A large number of Brahmins migrated to plains, carrying their sacred books with them. Hundreds of temples were destroyed.

Sultan Sikandar, Butshikan was succeeded by his eldest son Noor Khan, who assumed the title of Sultan Ali Shah (1413-1420). He retained the services of his father's prime minister, the renegade Brahmin Suha Bhat. Ali Shah continued the policy of persecution of Hindus till Suha Bhat's death. After the latter's death, Ali Shah appointed his younger brother Shahi Khan his prime minister.



Return of Tolerance - An Interlude Shahi Khan (later known as Zain-ul-Abidin)

Early life:

The younger son of Sikandar, Shahi Khan had fortunately received good education. He had had an opportunity of remaining in the court of Timurlaine (Timurlang) at Samarqand for seven crucial years. He observed the secrets of the prosperity of the people in that land. He had also developed interest in arts and crafts of the region. He realised their importance in the economy of Kashmir valley. By disposition, he was free from religious fanaticism.

As prime minister in the court of his elder brother, he followed a liberal religious policy. Luckily his elder brother, the Sultan had by then mellowed down. Shahi Khan tried to assuage the hurt feelings of the Hindus. He tried to treat all irrespective of their religion, but on their merit. In a very short time, he succeeded in winning the confidence of Hindus.

Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470)

Shahi Khan, Ali Shah's prime minister and younger brother ascended the throne of Kashmir in 1420. He assumed the title of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin.

Zain-ul-Abidin's accession to the Kashmir throne ushered in an era of peace, religious tolerance, justice, material progress, prosperity and glory of the valley. He has truly been called Budshah for his benevolence. He is chiefly being remembered for the following:

1. Recall of the Hindus: For bringing order in the country, he wanted the old class of officials, the Pundits, back with guarantee of full civil and religious liberties. Providence also helped. He fell seriously ill. He was cured by the famous physician Shri Bhat. The king wanted to give him a valuable gift. Shri Bhat refused to take anything for himself. Instead he wanted the king to remove all restrictions on Pundits imposed by Sikandar including poll tax (Jazia). The king at once granted him the request. He took the following steps:

- a) Pundits could perform their religious functions freely.
- b) Made Shri Bhat his prime minister.
- c) All persecutionary laws made by Sikandar were withdrawn.
- d) Those who had migrated, were invited back and most of them did come.
- e) People were permitted to build new temples, some old ones were repaired.
- f) The king built two temples near Ishbur with land grants.
- g) Poll tax (Jazia) was abolished.
- h) Killing of cows was banned.
- i) During Hindu festivals, the king himself abstained from eating meat.
- j) Killing of fish in springs sacred to Hindus was forbidden.

k) He would take part in Hindu festivals and go on pilgrimage to Hindu Tirthas including once to the holy Sharada Temple.

2. a) He built numerous houses for widows of Brahmins killed in the reigns of Sikandar and Ali Shah.

b) He got Hindu Shastras including Mahabharata translated into Persian.

c) He entrusted administration to Pundits, encouraged them to learn Persian before it became the official language. Shri Bhat, Tilakacharya, Shiva Bhatt, Simha Bhatt, Bodhi Bhatt and Shri Ramanand were some of the learned men and prominent administrators.

3. Development of Arts & Crafts: Zain-ul-Abidin recognised the ability and zeal of Kashmiris to learn certain arts and crafts, which he had learnt while at Samarqand. He introduced:

a) Carpet Making b) Papier Machie. c) Wood Carving. d) Silk Weaving. e) Paper Making. f) Stone Cutting & Polishing etc. g) Gold Beating. He invited competent teachers and craftsmen to train his subjects endowed with talent and natural aptitude. Soon these products acquired great fame in Asia and Europe. Pt. Anand Kaul says, "Zain-ul-Abidin turned Kashmir into a garden of industry." Most of these are the bedrock of Kashmir economy even today.

4. Public Works: Zain-ul-Abidin built many towns and villages. He built several canals, many of them have been repaired or reconstructed and are under use. Bijbehara, Mansbal, Zainagir, Shahkul at Bawan are some of them revived for use. His engineer Damra Kach paved a road with stones. He also made Zaina Kadal, the first wooden bridge in Kashmir. The Sultan introduced wooden architecture. His 12 storeyed Zoon Dab is well known.

In short Zain-ul-Abidin reversed the policy of his father Sikandar Butshikan, re-established a regime of religious tolerance, introduced measures to generate employment, improved irrigation and the economy of his State. He was therefore called Budshah.



Having briefly recorded the highlights of the reign of some famous rulers above, let us come back to the period under Dogra rule.

Kashmir under Dogras The Birth of Jammu & Kashmir State

Sir Owen Dixon said in 1950, "The State of Jammu & Kashmir is not really a unit geographically, demographically or economically. It is an agglomeration of territories brought under the political power of one Maharaja. That is the unity it possesses". How that unity was achieved is the story of the birth of J&K State.

Jammu passed into the hands of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1803. It was given to Raja Gulab Singh in farm by Ranjit Singh in 1820. Gulab Singh was the son of Mian Kishore Singh, Jagirdar of an area near Sambha. He was a brave adventurous young man. Born in 1792, he joined the services of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809. He rendered meritorious services to Ranjit Singh, conducted many successful military campaigns and brought under control the unruly Jammu province. [Kashmir valley was ruled by the Sikhs through governors from 1819.]

To enable him to collect the revenues, Gulab Singh was allowed to raise an army and was given the title of Raja. In 1821, the Raja annexed Kishtwar. Gulab Singh reduced Rajouri under the instructions of Ranjit Singh. Thereupon Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted to Gulab Singh and his successors the principality of Jammu with the hereditary title of Raja. His able general, Wazir Zorawar Singh subjugated Ladakh and then Baltistan. Later, after the defeat of the Dogras and the death of Zorawar Singh in a battle at Lhasa, Ladakh was temporarily lost to Tibetans. Raja Gulab Singh sent 6000 troops under the command of Diwan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratnu to Ladakh. The Raja directed the campaign himself in the name of the Lahore (Sikh) government while camping at Nasim Bagh in Srinagar. The Dogras won a decisive victory. According to a treaty with the Tibetans, the boundary between Tibet and Ladakh was defined, the latter coming under permanent Dogra rule.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death in 1839 was followed by disorder in the Lahore government. Gulab Singh played a significant role in the struggle for the Sikh throne. In 1841, the British wanted cooperation of the Sikhs in Afghanistan. Raja Gulab Singh was deputed by the Lahore government. He rendered valuable services to the British government and won their favour. He aimed at securing an independent status for his newly formed State of Jammu.

Another opportunity came. In the war between the Sikhs and the British, Raja Gulab Singh played an important role. He entered into negotiation with the British, who had won a decisive victory. Conscious of the strength of Gulab Singh, the British welcomed a negotiated peace. The treaty among other things stated:

- a) The Sikh Maharaja recognises independent sovereignty of Raja Gulab Singh.
- b) The British government agreed to recognise Gulab Singh's independence and right to enter into a separate treaty with it.

The British government and Maharaja Gulab Singh signed a treaty on 16 March 1846 at Amritsar, known as the 'Treaty of Amritsar'. The British transferred to Maharaja Gulab Singh and his heirs all the hilly country to the eastward of the River Indus and westwards of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahul (area ceded to the British by the Sikhs) in lieu of rupees seventy five lakhs, which the Sikh government had to pay to the British as ransom. The Maharaja accepted the supremacy of the British and agreed to pay a tribute. Gulab Singh overcame all local resistance of Sikh governors in Kashmir valley and added it to his possessions, to give birth to the **State of Jammu and Kashmir**, comprising hilly districts of Jammu including Kishtwar and Rajouri, Ladakh, Baltistan and Kashmir valley. The British recognised it as an independent state with complete internal independence.

Addition of Gilgit: Gilgit and adjoining areas on the right side of the River Indus were not transferred to Gulab Singh, though had been under the Sikhs. Gulab Singh succeeded in exercising control over it though temporarily. He lost the area in 1851 due to a series of rebellions. However, Ranbir Singh finally annexed it in 1859. In 1870, Chiefs of Nagar and Hunza were subjugated. Chitral followed suite and received Rs. 12000/- annually as subsidy from Maharaja Ranbir Singh. In 1889, the Kashmir Council ruling the State (Partap Singh was deprived of power) allowed the British government to establish the British Agency in Gilgit with Civil, Political, Military administrative powers.

On 29th march 1935, Maharaja Hari Singh gave Gilgit Wazarat to the British government on lease for 60 years with authority to establish civil and military government there.

The State of Jammu & Kashmir was ruled by Dogra dynasty from 1846 to 1947 AD.

1846 - 1856 Maharaja Gulab Singh
1856 - 1885 Ranbir Singh
1885 - 1925 Partap Singh
1925 - 1947 Hari Singh

Dawn of Modernism 1846-1925 AD :

Dogra rule saw the end of certain pernicious practices, such as Begar (forced labour) and emergence of trends leading to the beginning of Modernism.

1. Suppression of Crime :

Gulab Singh suppressed crime ruthlessly. Some leaders of Galwans (Horse thieves) were captured and executed publicly. He introduced a Criminal Penal Code (CrPC), still essentially in vogue. He established 30 Subordinate Courts and Appeal Courts at Srinagar and Jammu. Any one could approach the Maharaja - Cost half a rupee Stamp Paper.

2. Education :

Education, the central pillar for progress received due attention.

a) Ranbir Singh was a patron of education and learning. He donated liberally to Sanskrit institutions at Banaras, donated a lakh of rupees for founding the Punjab University and became its first fellow; established Maktabas and Pathshallas.

b) Ranbir Singh established a Sanskrit college, a research centre, a library with 5000 manuscripts, a translation bureau where Sanskrit and Persian books were translated into Hindi, Urdu and Dogri, and Sanskrit texts written in Sharda script transcribed in Devanagari script at Raghunath Mandir, Jammu, which he had built earlier.

c) Ranbir Singh started a State School at Srinagar in 1874, where education was imparted in Persian and Sanskrit. In 1886, Dr. A. Mitra introduced English teaching according to University curriculum.

d) In 1905 (Partap Singh rule) a college was set up at Srinagar with the efforts of Annie Besant. It was later taken over by the State government and named Sri Partap College. Later in 1908, another college was started at Jammu.

e) Earlier Ranbir Singh had allowed the Church Missionary Society of England to open a private school (CMS School). Rev. J.S.Doxey opened the school in 1881. He was succeeded by Rev. Hinton Knowles who handed over the charge of the school (with 500 students) to Rev. C.Tyndale Biscoe in 1892. It was the first school in the State to follow the university syllabus and imparted education in English.

3. State Subject Question :

a) Government service was the only source of employment of the educated. With better facilities for education, pressure on employment increased.

b) In 1889, the Kashmir Council changed official language from Persian to Urdu. People were not prepared for the change. Old State officials, not knowing Urdu, were retrenched and replaced by Punjabis. This policy continued for a long time.

c) In early 1920s, the resentment took the form of an agitation. The educated class (chiefly Kashmiri Pandits) agitated against the introduction of non state subjects. Shankar Lal Koul, Jia Lal Kilam and others carried a relentless campaign in the Indian Press. Ultimately, the State government accepted that only the State Subjects were eligible to government service. 'State Subject Law' was enacted.

4. Revenue System :

From ancient times, agriculture was the principal occupation and land revenue, the main source of State revenue. During the Hindu period, the State claimed one-sixth of the produce. During the rule of Sultans and upto Mughals, it was generally half, but the Mughals raised it to 75% of the produce.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh experimented with cash assessment, but it degenerated into a system of auctioning the land. It ruined the tiller without any gain to the State.

In 1889, land settlement was entrusted to Sir Walter Lawrence. He completed the Survey in 1893. As a result:

- a) Occupancy rights were given to the cultivator.
- b) State demand was fixed for 14 years.
- c) Payment in cash was substituted for payment in kind.
- d) All land was carefully evaluated on the basis of its quality and irrigational facilities.
- e) Hereditary rights were granted to those who accepted the first assessment.
- f) Begar (forced labour) was abolished.

5) Road Communication :

a) From ancient times, the Valley surrounded by tall mountains remained isolated. There were no roads connecting the Valley to the rest of the country. "There was an absence of roads fit for wheeled traffic in the Valley in 1890", writes Lawrence. Construction of the first cart-road linking the Valley to the nearest rail head at Rawalpindi, 200 miles away, was started in 1880 and completed in 1890. Maharaja Partap Singh inaugurated the road and named it the Jhelum Valley Road.

b) In 1912, under the advice of his far sighted minister Dr. A Mitra, Maharaja Partap Singh ordered the construction of a cart-road over the Banihal. The work was started in 1913 and the first vehicle, a horse-drawn carriage crossed over in 1915, linking Kashmir to Jammu, 200 miles away. Jammu was already connected by rail to Sialkot in 1890.

c) Gilgit was connected to the Valley by a road fit for mule and pack-poney traffic. Gilgit Agency was connected to the army Headquarter in India and Residency in Srinagar by telephone. The State also took limited benefit.

6. Anti-flood Measures :

The Jhelum river bed beyond Wular was desilted using mechanical dredges driven by electricity. For this purpose, a hydro-electric power house was constructed at Mohara in 1907. It was second hydro-electric project in India, first being in Mysore. Dredging started in 1908. 6100 acres of land were reclaimed round Wular and used for paddy cultivation. Dredgers were sold in junk in 1917, considered a mistake.



Kashmir - June 1947 to October 1947

Pains of procrastination

Introduction: The State as on 15th August 1947:

Jammu and Kashmir was the largest of the princely states in territorial extent and the most diverse in cultural terms. It was also very strategically located. It shared its borders with Tibet (720 Kms.), Sinkiang (640 Kms.), Afghanistan (256 Kms.) and the newly born Pakistan in August 1947 (1120 Kms.) besides India. The state was ruled by a Hindu Maharaja Hari Singh, and had an overall Muslim majority. However, demographic distribution was as varied as its cultural diversity. Kashmir valley had predominantly Muslim population, Hindus (Kashmiri Pandits) and Sikhs forming significant minorities. All spoke Kashmiri.

Hindus were in majority in eastern Jammu and Muslims in western Jammu. All spoke Dogri. Ladakh was predominantly Buddhist populated area, linguistically close to Tibet. West of Ladakh was dominated by Shia Muslims speaking Balti. To further north lay Gilgit, mostly Muslim populated, speaking varied dialects. A strip running close to Pakistan border, comprised Muzaffarabad district, Poonch, Rajouri and Mirpur. The population here was mostly Muslims, with sizeable Hindus and Sikhs speaking a variant of Hindustani, close in identity to people on the other side of the border.

National Conference (NC) under the leadership of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah was the most popular political party in the State. Ideologically, it was close to Indian National Congress. Ghulam Abbas, a non-Kashmiri speaking Mirpurian was the President of Muslim Conference. It had some presence in Mirpur and Poonch. National Conference had launched Quit Kashmir Movement in 1946. R.C.Kak was the Prime Minister. The government came down on the people with a heavy hand. The Indian National Congress (INC), particularly Jawahar Lal Nehru extended support to the people when they were under suppression. The State, though overwhelmingly Muslim populated was not affected by the Two Nation theory of the Muslim League and, therefore, was free from communal tensions when rest of the country was in the grip of communal violence.

Events - June 1947 onwards

Momentous political changes were initiated in the country on 3rd June 1947. The British government announced its scheme of the partition of British India into two dominions, India and Pakistan. It was made clear that the partition was applicable to the British India only. The Indian states would be dealt with under the terms of the Cabinet Mission Memorandum to the Chancellor of Indian Princes on 12 May 1946, which in effect stated that once self-governing governments came into being in British India, His Majesty's government would cease to exercise the power of paramountcy over the princes, bringing to an end the political arrangements (and hence Defence also) between the States and the British government. The princes could enter into agreements with the new government or governments.

On 17th June, the British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act, under which two dominions, India and Pakistan would come into existence on 15th August 1947. It was reiterated that paramountcy of the British Crown would lapse to the Princes, who were free to accede to one or the other dominion, keeping in view the principle of contiguity.

The 562 princes had to decide the fate of their people and of themselves also, as quickly as possible before 14th August. Till then, there was only one Governor General. So like his colleagues, Maharaja Hari Singh had to take a decision, keeping in view the socio-cultural and political conditions in view.

On 19th June 1947, the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten came to Kashmir on a four day visit. He advised the Maharaja not to declare independence, but to ascertain the will of the people in any manner and accede to either of the Dominions. He had the authority from future rulers (i.e. Congress leadership) of India to assure His Highness that if he chose to join Pakistan, they would not object. Mountbatten was also of the opinion that if Hari Singh would accede to India, Pakistan could not interfere, as it did not exist. The Viceroy therefore, insisted that the decision was to be taken before 14th August 1947. In his speech in London on his return from India, Lord Mountbatten lamented that in spite of his repeated advice to the above effect, His Highness did nothing, giving rise to complications. About the visit, Campbell-Johnson in his book 'My Mission with Mountbatten' says, "When he (Viceroy) got there, he found the Maharaja very elusive and the only conversations that took place were when they were driving. The formal meeting fixed for the ultimate day could not take place as the Maharaja suffered a colic attack. Uncertainty and indecision continued.

Towards the end of July 1947, Mahatma Gandhi visited Srinagar. He was not allowed to address the people. He advised the Maharaja to constitute a democratic government implying releasing National Conference leaders and associating Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah with the administration. All that happened was that Thakur Janak Singh, a former revenue minister replaced R.C.Kak as Prime Minister.

On 12 August, Kashmir telegraphically entered into a standstill agreement with Pakistan regarding continuance of Civil Supplies, Transport, Communications, Postal Services etc. A similar telegram was sent to the Government of India. They wanted a personal discussion which never matured.



Sequence of events leading to Kashmir's accession to India :

- a) 3rd. June 1947. India's partition announced.
- b) 17 June 1947. Govt. of India Act passed by British Parliament. India would be free on 15th August 1947.
- c) Indian states could accede to either India or Pakistan, keeping contiguity in view, upto 15th August 1947.
- d) Indian states could enter into stand still agreement with either or both after 15th August 1947 when British suzerainty would lapse and the rulers would be sovereign.
- e) Maharaja Hari Singh entered into stand still agreement with India and Pakistan. But Pakistan broke it, slammed economic strangulation, stopping supplies and suspending transport via Kohala.
- f) Pakistan organised a massive tribal raid with active participation of its armed forces and entered the State on 22nd. Oct. 1947.
- g) Maharaja Hari Singh signed Instrument of Accession on 26th October, 1947. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah signed it on behalf of the people of Jammu & Kashmir and Mehr Chand Mahajan signed it on behalf of Maharaja Hari Singh. It was accepted by Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General of India, who also wished that the question of State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people, as soon as the law and order is restored.
- h) Indian forces landed in Kashmir on 27th October 1947.
- i) The UN Commission on India & Pakistan's resolution of August 13, 1948, has three parts. Part I relates to cease fire. Part II made it incumbent upon Pakistan to withdraw all its forces regular and irregular. The Part III says, "The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan reaffirm their wish that the future status of Jammu & Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of the people and to that end, upon acceptance of the Truce Agreement, both Governments agree to enter into consultation with the Commission to determine fair and equitable conditions whereby such free expression of the will be assured."
- j) The subsequent stand of the Government of India was that the question of taking up of Part III would arise only after provisions of Part I and Part II were carried out.
- k) India agreed to cease-fire with effect from 1st January 1949 after some assurances were given to it during the course of discussions and correspondence with the UN Commission for India and Pakistan. One of the assurances given was that 'the plebiscite proposal shall not be binding upon India if Pakistan does not implement Part I and Part II of the resolution of August 13, 1948.'

l) On July 27, 1949, the Karachi Agreement was drawn up on the basis of which the cease-fire line was delineated and ancillary points settled.

m) Jammu & Kashmir elected a Constituent Assembly in 1951, which abolished the institution of the hereditary monarchy by a resolution passed on August 21, 1952 and ratified the accession on February 6, 1954. The new Constitution drawn up by the Constituent Assembly came into force on January 28, 1957.

n) Consequent upon the Government of India and Pakistan entering into an agreement at Shimla in 1972, the Cease fire Line with some modifications emerged as the Line of Control.

Events Post-Independence :

Soon after the creation of Pakistan, trouble started first in Poonch and then on the Poonch-Mirpur border. On 4th September 1947, the Kashmir government lodged a strong protest with the government of West Punjab against large scale border raids by armed Muslims. Ignoring the protest, the Pak administration clamped an economic blockade, cutting essential supplies. Instead of seeking relief from India and reading the writing on the wall, Maharaja Hari Singh thought it fit to send a cable to the British Prime Minister. By the end of September, the border raids increased and the situation became explosive. The British Prime Minister ignored the cable and the Maharaja was alarmed.

Thakur Janak Singh, after staying in office for about two months was replaced by Meharchand Mahajan, an eminent jurist. On 29th September 1947, full 1-1/2 months after Pakistan had been born, Hari Singh released Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah and other NC leaders and workers. Sensing danger, the NC leaders activated the organisation. A delegation under G.M.Sadiq was sent to Pakistan. Sadiq met Liaquat Ali Khan, the Pak PM twice and presented to him, a four point proposal; 1) to support Kashmiri People's struggle for self-rule; 2) to recognise the right of the people to decide the question of accession; 3) to allow people some time for it and 4) not to precipitate the matter meanwhile. G.M.Sadiq had to come back empty-handed and hurriedly in the face of a strict blockade.

Maharaja Hari Singh was under pressure. He was advised even by Sardar Patel to associate Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah with the administration and take a decision. This, both Nehru and Patel felt was necessary to face any trouble from Pakistan which they feared. Unfortunately, time was allowed to slip. Armed incursions became more frequent, necessitating the deployment of state forces in small strength all along the border, leaving no reserves in the barracks. Brig. Gansara Singh, who had been sent to Gilgit as Governor to receive charge from the British, was facing a revolt.

On 22nd October 1947, 5000 armed tribesmen guided by Maj. Gen. Akbar Khan (under the name of General Tariq) entered the State and occupied Muzaffarabad and Domel. Their onward march was halted for two days by the valiant Brig. Rajinder Singh.

The NC organised National Militia under the guidance of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. Thousands of men and women volunteered to join it. Some of them were given short training in rifle-shooting. They were to maintain law and order, to keep vigil against enemy infiltration in the city and suburbs, and to assist the civil administration. Civil transport, whatever available was requisitioned along with the drivers for use in the emergency.

The Maharaja sent an SOS to the government of India for military help on 24th Oct. 1947. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah also flew to Delhi to appeal to the Indian Cabinet. Meanwhile, raiders were marching towards Baramulla.

On 25th October 1947, the Defence Committee met under the Chairmanship of the Governor General, Mountbatten to decide on the Maharaja's request for supply of arms and ammunition. At this meeting, General Lockhart, the Commander-in-Chief in India, read a telegram from Pakistan army Chief stating that 5000 armed raiders had entered and occupied Muzaffarabad, and many more were on their way. Would the supply of arms and ammunition to the local population meet the requirement in the face of a massive armed raid? The problem of troop reinforcement was talked, but according to Campbell Johnson, Lord Mountbatten ruled it out till the State had acceded. V.P.Menon, the Secretary M.O. Indian States was sent to Kashmir immediately. Menon flew to Kashmir, assessed the situation, advised the Maharaja to leave for Jammu along with him and went back to Delhi. On 26 October, the Instrument of Accession was signed by the Maharaja. Meharchand Mahajan and Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah signed as witnesses.

The accession of Jammu & Kashmir was accepted by the Governor General in the same way as in the case of other 560 odd Indian States. However in a separate letter to the Maharaja, Lord Mountbatten said, "In consistence with the policy of government of India that in the case of any state where the issue of accession has been a matter of dispute, the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of State. It is my government's wish that as soon as the State has been cleared of the raiders and as soon as law and order has been restored, the question of State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people."

On 6th February 1954, the duly elected Constituent Assembly ratified the State having acceded to India on 26th October, 1947.

The first batch of Indian army under Col. Rai landed at Srinagar airport on 27th October when Baramulla had fallen. Raiders then moved towards outskirts of Srinagar city, but were defeated and driven out of the Valley on 8th November, 1947.



Eminent Personalities

Kashmir has thrown personalities of eminence in all fields. They have been acknowledged in whole of the country. Some names are given below:

Patanjali:	Grammarians, author of Yogadarshan. Authority on Ayurveda. From Gogard (Guddar) Kulgam.
Mamtacharya:	Poet and Reviewer.
Kait:	Sanskrit Grammar. From Kachhajok, near Awantipora.
Uvat:	Vedic scholar.
Rudrat:	Poet.
Vaman:	Grammarians.
Vagbhat:	Poet and Physician.
Charak:	Famous Ayurveda authority.
Baman:	Poet.
Acharya Vasugupta:	Founder of Shivmat. Around last part of eighth century.
Narayan Bhat:	Shaiva philosopher.
Kallat:	Disciple of Vasugupta. Ninth century
Somananda:	Shaiva philosopher. Ninth century.
Acharya Abhinavgupta:	Son of Lakshmangupta. One of the best authorities on Shaiva philosophy and various branches of Sanskrit literature e.g. rhetoric and poetics
Kshemraj:	Disciple of Abhinavgupta. Scholar of late eleventh century.
Jagddhar Bhat:	Poet, Grammarian and author of Kusumanjli.
Ratnakar:	Poet.
Anand Vardhan:	Poet and critic. Author of Dhanyalok.
Kshemendra:	Poet and Satirist. Historian.
Kalhana:	Historian. Author of Rajatarangini.
Jonraja:	Historian. Fifteenth century.
Shrivara:	Historian.
Prajya Bhatta:	Historian.
Jairath:	Shaiva philosopher. 12th century.
Shivopadhyaya:	Shaiva philosopher. From Habba Kadal.
Mankh:	Dictionary compiler.
Somdeva:	Writer. Author of Katha Sarit Sagar. Ninth century scholar.
Abhinand:	A great poet.
Narhari:	Reviewer.

Dayaram Ganjoo:	Persian poet.
Munshi Bhawanidas Kachroo:	Persian poet, husband of Arnimal.
Parmanand:	Great Kashmiri poet & Shaiva philosopher.
Prakashram Kurigam:	Author of Ramavtarcharit, poet.
Krishen Razdan:	Joo Great Saint poet. From Vanpoh.
Birbal Kachroo:	Historian.
Janki Madan:	Nath Translated Bhagvadgeeta into Urdu.
Dina Madan:	Nath Translated Bhagvadgeeta into Urdu verse.

Kalhana

“There is no record to tell us of the life of the poet, scholar Kalhana, the author of Rajatarangini”, says Stein. Facts about his person and contemporary life have been gleaned from his narration by patient research.

Kalhana was born in the beginning of 12th Century. His father Champaka was a Kashmiri nobleman, who held the office of ‘the lord of the gate’ - Dwarpal or commander of the frontier defences during the reign of the ill-fated King Harsha (1089-1101 AD). Kalhana speaks admiringly of his father. Kalhana’s ancestors were devout Shaivites. His father was a worshipper of Nandikeshwar, sacred to Shiva. Kalhana was an admirer of expositors of Kashmiri Shaivism, for instance Bhatta Kalatta. Though greatly attached to Shaivism, he equally held Budhism in high regard. He has recorded the names of those royal personages who made equal endowments to Budhist Viharas, Stupas and Shiva or Vishnu temples.

Kalhana was an accomplished poet, though there is no information about his formal education. However he had carefully studied the historical poem of his fellow countrymen Bilhan, as also Bana’s Harsha Charita - describing the exploits of King Harshavardhana of Kanauj and Thanesar. He had also deep knowledge of Mahabharata and Ramayana. It has almost universally been admitted that Kalhana possessed the competence of an impartial historian. He does not seem to have wished for royal patronage at the cost of truth. He does not share his father’s affection for his royal master, Harsha.

Kshemendra

Nothing is definitely known about the date of birth of Kshemendra, the well known Poet, Historian, Rhetorician and Humourist. Almost every important branch of Sanskrit literature has been enriched by this versatile genius. It is presumed that he was born during the period when King Ananta Raja (1028-1063 AD) ruled Kashmir.

Sanskrit was the language of the elite during Kshemendra's times. Kshemendra received his education from the famous scholars and teachers like Gangaka, Abhinavagupta and Somapada. Abhinavagupta was the famous Acharya and scholar of Shaiva Doctrine. Kshemendra himself was a Vaishnava though his father Prakashendra was a Shiva devotee. Some of the famous works of Kshemendra are Dash Avtar Charit Kaveya, Desh Updesha, Narmala, Loka Prakasha, Samay Matrika etc. He shortened the famous work Maha Bhaarat of one lakh shalokas under the title of Maha Bharat Manjri in 10655 shalokas only. He reduced Gunadeya's seven lakh shalokas Brihat Katha to 7500 shalokas titled Brihat Katha Manjri and 24000 shalokas of Ramayana to 6391 shalokas. His two works Rajavali and Nripavali are not traceable. According to Dr. Keeth, non-availability of Rajavali is a great loss to Sanskrit literature. Kshemendra's work on Budha's philosophy Budhavandana Kalpalata written in 1052 AD is well known.

Acharya Abhinavagupta

Abhinavagupta was a distinguished poet, critic and saint and one of the most outstanding Acharyas of the Shaiva philosophy. His exact date of birth is not known but we learn from references about him in Tantraloka and Paratrimshika Vivarana that he lived in Kashmir about the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century A.D. The earliest ancestor of Abhinavagupta was a famous Brahmin Attrigupta, a great Shaiva teacher and scholar of Kanauj, who had permanently settled in Kashmir on the invitation of Lalitaditya. One of Attrigupta's descendants, named Varahagupta, became a great scholar of Shaiva philosophy. His son, Narasimhagupta, alias Chukhala, father of Abhinavagupta, was also a great Shaiva teacher. Abhinavagupta lost his mother Vimalaka, a spiritualist of high order, in his childhood. Soon thereafter, his father renounced the world. The young Abhinav pursued his studies under versatile teachers. Some of them were well versed in Buddhist thought and scriptures, some were Jain scholars and some others were saints. He studied metaphysics, poetry and aesthetics with almost superhuman toil and mastered all knowledge.

Abhinavagupta possessed knowledge in all matters relating to Kashmir Shaivism. The versatility of this genius was recognised in his own time. He was one of the best authorities on Shaiva philosophy and various branches of Sanskrit literature.

Acharya Abhinavagupta possessed all the eight Yogic powers explained in Shastras. People also observed six great spiritual signs as explained in 'Malinivijayotara Shastra', in him and in his time, everybody looked upon him as Shiva incarnate. Kashmir Shaivism, called Trika Philosophy is classified by Abhinavagupta in four systems viz. Krama system, Soanda system, Kula system and Pratyabijnya system.

'Krama' deals with space and time, 'Spanda', with the movement, 'Kula' with the Science of Totality and 'Pratyabijnya' with the school of Recognition. Abhinavagupta enunciated 'Shanta Rasa', the mood of Serenity and Peace, as the ultimate end of art. He was a celibate all his life and became ascetic in his last years. It is believed that he entered Samadhi along with 1200 of his disciples near the village of Magam on the Srinagar-Gulmarg road.

Many works have been attributed to Abhinavagupta, though only a few are extant. Some of the works of his authorship are Tantraloka, Abhinavbharati, Bhairavastotra, Malinivijaya Vartika, Bharata Natya Shastra-Tika, Natyalochana, Parmartha Charcha, Kramastotra, Ishwar Pratyabijnya Vivriti Vimarshini, Parmarth Sara, Tantraloka, Tantra Sara etc.

Madhuraja, a devotee of Abhinavagupta, writes that Lord Shree-Kantha-Nath Shiva Himself appeared in Kashmir in the form of Abhinavagupta to enlighten the people. He also asserts that Abhinavagupta was, in fact, the incarnation of Bhairva-Nath Shiva.

Charaka

Charaka was an authority on Ayurveda, the Veda for (lengthening of) the span of life. He was a Muni and a physician. It is believed that he was the incarnation of the Serpent-king Shesha, who was the recipient of the Ayur-veda. Once, on visiting the earth, he found it full of sickness and was moved with pity. He determined to become incarnate as the son of a Muni for alleviating disease.

There was much controversy about the birth place of Charaka. But the Buddhist literature discovered by Professor Sylvan Levi in China showed that Charaka was the court poet of Kanishka (1st century A.D.) and his birth place was Kashmir. Chinese Tripitaka (translated in 472 A.D.) describes Charaka as the personal physician of Kanishka.

Charaka composed a new book on medicine called **Charakasamhita**. Though the origin of Indian medicine can be traced back to Atharveda, Charaka's work is a definite and masterly contribution to this science. In fact, history of the development of Indian medicine begins from this physician. With him, begins the dawn of Indian medicine and surgery, as all the later works are either based on his work or are mere extension of the same work.

The text of **Charakasamhita**, which is preserved in a dilapidated condition, was revised wholly by Dridhbala, a Kashmirian, who also prepared its appendix. The basic part of the work however, is probably the oldest of the extant medical manuals. The oldest extant commentary on the Charakasamhita, is one by Chakrapanidatta in the 11th century A.D. But before this, the work had already been translated into Persian and from it into Arabic.

Charakasamhita consists of 8 chapters:

- 1) Sutrasthana - on Healing, Diet & Duties of a physician
- 2) Nidanasthana - on 8 principal ailments
- 3) Vimanasthana - on Tastes, Food, General Pathology & Medical Stadium
- 4) Sarirasthana - on Anatomy and Embryology
- 5) Indriyasthana - on Diagnosis and Prognosis
- 6) Chikitsasthana - on Special Therapy
- 7-8) Kalpa & Siddhanta-sthana - on General Therapy

Charaka was not only a physician, he was also a moralist and philosopher. He prescribed even a number of moral instructions with reference to hygienic rules as well as in connection with the theory of sin being the primary cause of a malady.

Pandit Govind Kaul - Another Kalhana 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 Kashmiris 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 him as 'another Kalhana'.



Pandit Govind Kaul

Born in 1846 in Srinagar as the eldest son of Pandit Balbhadra Kaul, a universally respected scholar of his times (1819-96), Govind Kaul 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. Govind Kaul and Birbal Dhar's grandson Ramjoo Dhar maintained the ties as friends. Govind Kaul 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 Govind Kaul and Ramjoo Dhar learnt English much before Pandit

Anand Kaul and Pandit Shiv Ram Bhan. Govind Kaul came to know a good deal about world affairs also, through Ramjoo Dhar who held an important administrative position. Soon Govind Kaul 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, Govind Kaul 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 Govind Kaul. 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 Govind Kaul and he solicited his assistance in translating Kalhan's Rajatarangini - a job that Govind Kaul along with Pandit Sahaz Bhatt did with utmost competence from 1888 to 1896, and to Stein's great satisfaction. Govind Kaul 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 Govind Kaul 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 Govind Kaul. He 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 Govind Kaul's assistance to him was 'one of the many debts he ever owed to Stein'. On Govind Kaul's death in June 1899, a shocked Stein lamented that Govind Kaul, '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."

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 Shabdāmrita'. 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 lexicographical work on Kashmiri, though death prevented him from completing his 'Kashmiri and Sanskrit Kosha'.

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 of Srinagar.

Born on 4th July, 1833 in a family deeply steeped in Sanskrit lore, Ishwar Kaul 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 Ishwar Kaul 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, Ishwar Kaul 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, Ishwar Kaul 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. Ishwar Kaul 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." Modelled on the great Panini's 'Ashtadhyayi' and written in Sanskrit, Ishwar Kaul'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. Ishwar Kaul, 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. Ishwar Kaul 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 Ishwar Kaul'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 Ishwar Kaul that he was the first to use the Devanagari 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, Ishwar Kaul 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 Ishwar Kaul as Head Jyotishi or Chief Astrologer at his court, a post that he held until his death on 28th August, 1893. Ishwar Kaul's genius was best summed up by Sir Aurel Stein when he described him as the "Panini of Kashmir".

Religion

Background

Kashmir has been the cradle of religious thought and belief from times immemorial. The Nagas had their religious practices as documented in Nilamata Purana. Whether they were snake worshippers or not is debatable, but worship and pilgrimage to Nags (springs) is well established and in some cases continues till this date. The Indo-Aryans, who settled in the Valley and amalgamated with Nagas, brought the religious practices and thought from the Indian plains. Worship of Vaishno, Shankara (Rudra), Shakti are well documented. Rivers representing Shakti are worshipped. Vaishnav (Dwaita) as well as Shaivism (Adwaita, non-dualism) have been in vogue, although it was the later in its Kashmir version, that had larger sway.

Although Buddha is stated to have visited Kashmir to carry his doctrine there, it was Ashoka who brought Buddhism to Kashmir. It had its sway for few centuries - of course with an undercurrent of Shaivism, but it again gave way to Hinduism. Kashmir refined Buddhism, gave birth to Mahayana sect of Buddhists and carried Buddhism to Tibet and China.

Kashmir Shaivism (Trika)

To understand Shaivism, it is necessary to refer to two (of the many) thought streams of Indian philosophy: 1. Dwaita - me and the God, 2. Adwaita - the God in me. Shaivism (Monoism) is the name given to the later. There is one Supreme Reality (call it Siva, Brahman or what you may). It is a speck of this Reality which resides in all beings. The universe is an illusion (Maya). Kashmir Shaivism slightly differs from that of the rest of the country. Kashmir Shaivism is also called 'Trika' Shastra because it is the philosophy of the triad: 1) Siva, 2) Shakti and 3) Nara (the bounden soul) or 1) Para - the highest, 2) Parapara - identity with difference, and 3) Aparapara - the difference.

While Siva or Paramasiva is the Ultimate Reality, the Shakti is its power of manifestation. The universe is real (not an illusion) and a projection of the Shakti aspect of Siva. Maya, here is the creative force as also a veiling element.

Kashmir Shaivism does not concern itself only in finding the nature of Siva, Shakti and the Nara but devotes itself extensively on the means to be employed by the man to realise its real self and thus merge with Siva.

Shaivism does not preclude worship of individual Gods or anyway reduce the importance of Bhakti (devotion) as long as they lead one to the realisation of the Self. Worshipping Shakti in various forms is quite common.

Practices

Shiva worship, often as Shivlinga is prevalent in both ancient and modern temples. Goddess is worshipped in various forms as Raginya (at Tullamulla), Sharika (at Hariparbat), Jwala (at Khrew), Kali (at Khankah and Hariparbat), Badrakali, Sharada, Harmukat Ganga, Vetasta etc.

People have their own Ishta Devis, whom they feel attached. They are Raginya, Sharika, Jwala and Tripura.

Besides visiting places of worship, the Kashmiri has his own personal regimen of worship. Each house has a special place known as Thokur Kuth, earmarked for the purpose. Reciting Sanskrit verse in praise of Shiva and Maa Shakti is usual.

Hawans to propitiate the Gods would be held when possible. At such Hawans, Hums (offerings) are offered to the fire, reciting a thousand names of a God/Goddess, say Ganesh, Vishnu, Shiva, Mahamaya etc. Community Hawans are popular.

Observing fasts on auspicious days, particularly those connected with Lord Shiva like Shivratri, Shravan / Magh Purnima, Somari Amavsi, Shiv Choturdashī etc are common. Women observe Chandan Shashti for the welfare of their husbands, similar to Kadva Choth observed in Northern India.

It is customary to observe birthdays with religious prayer and prasad of yellow rice. Yellow rice (Tahar) offering is done on many occasions like Hara Chodah, Navreh, Ram Navmi etc.

Krishan Janam Ashtami (rather Saptami in case of Kashmiris) is celebrated similar to the way elsewhere, with fasts, fruit and worship.

Kashmiri Muslims

Muslims in Kashmir, being essentially from the Hindu stock, are both from Sunni and Shia sects. Some of their practices are influenced by their Hindu ancestry. They continue distributing yellow rice. They pay obeisance at the graves of saints.

Among Muslims, Sufi influence from Central Asia is an induction. But a different cult of local origin - the Reshi cult has been more popular. Reshis have been closer to the Hindu philosophical thought. The more known amongst them are Nunda Reshi (Tsrar), Baba Reshi (Tangmarg), Misha Saab (Rainawari), Batamol Saab (Anantnag & Srinagar) and Mukdam Saab (Hariparbat). They observe the annual day (Urs). Also observed are the Urs of Sufi cult saints Dastgir Saab (Khanyar) and Shah Hamdan (Zaina Kadal). Some Reshi saints are visited by Hindus also.

Muslims believe that a sacred hair relic of their Prophet exists at Dargah near Naseem Bagh. Its public appearance is made on the Prophet's birthday and some other

important occasions. Muslims celebrate the two Eids and Prophet's birthday with great joy. Shias hold the annual mourning processions around Moharram.

Christians

Two missionaries Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Tyndale Biscoe left England together. One landed in Africa and the other in Kashmir. One converted a whole country to Christianity which was named after him as Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The other could not convert any body in Kashmir to his faith. Christians otherwise, set up schools, colleges and hospitals and did quite a lot of good work in Kashmir. There are about five churches in Srinagar which serve those who came from outside. Some people claim that Christ came to Kashmir after crucifixion and died here and is buried at a place in Srinagar. Christians however do not subscribe to this theory.

Mysticism

Mysticism has remained a very potent factor in the spiritual journey of people in Kashmir. Mysticism connotes direct personal communion with the divine, devoid of intellectual intervention. This experience though not based on reason or earthly knowledge is achieved through self-discipline, inward purity and 'effort'. The 'effort' in the spiritual sense could be what we call as 'Yoga', or in Indian tradition as 'Tantra'. Tantra refers to actual spiritual practices which open the gates of perception to divine reality within and around us. Kashmir has throughout the ages remained a great seat of Tantra practices.

Mysticism being beyond religious denominations also attracted adherents from Islam. They usually called themselves as Sufis (or Rishis in Kashmir). On coming to Kashmir, they found congenial atmosphere for these practices and also established liaison with the local mystics.

Since mystic experiences do not lend themselves to description through common language or empirical knowledge, the adherents of this genre found their own way of expression through poetry with its own symbols and images. This is the reason that we have had a lot of Sufi or mystic poets in Kashmir, both Hindus and Muslims. No doubt Lalla Ded comes at the top of this pack, but many like Nund Reshi, Shamas Faqir, Parmanand, Wahab Khar, Swachha Kral, Krishen Joo Razdan, Master Zinda Kaul, Ahad Zargar are but a few of them.

The Tantra practiced in Kashmir had strong links if not basis in Kashmir Shaivism - most of it to Shakti (the manifest divine). Thus worship of Shakti in the form of Devi is also connected with tantric practices. The awakening of Kundalini i.e. the Shakti factor in each person through its various stages (from Muladhar to Sahastradal) has been part of the Tantra folklore. The famous Kashmiri works Panchastavi and Samudralahiri are in praise of Maa Shakti but at the same time alluding to the rise of Kundalini Shakti in the devotee. (Although the authorship of Samudralahiri is attributed to Adi Shankara on his visit to Kashmir, but it is not conclusively proved.)

Places of Worship / Shrines

Tullamul

Known widely as Kheer Bhawani and Ragnya Asthapan, Tullamul is situated 22 Kms. north of Srinagar, in Gandherbal Tehsil. It is said that Mata Ragnya came to Kashmir during the times of Ramayana. The holy spring of Tullamul is situated on the bank of a branch of river Sindh, called, according to Nilamat Purana, Tsandara Baga. It is approachable both by road and by river. The main temple is in the midst of a spring, the water of which is observed to be changing its colour. The present temple was constructed by Maharaja Partap Singh in 1912 A.D. on the foundation of an ancient temple, said to have been destroyed in 14th or 15th century. The stone image of Devi in the temple is believed to be more than 600 years old. The annual fair is held on 8th day of the lunar fortnight of Jetha. It is said that the present diety was installed on this day. The devotees usually visit the Shrine on every lunar asthami. The Shrine is managed by Jammu and Kashmir Dharmarth Trust. Devotees visit the shrine only when on vegetarian food.



Tulamull (Kheer Bhawani) : Image ~ indiamart.com

Hari Parbat

Legend has it that Sharikadevi in the form of Mynaka got a small pebble in her beak from Sumeru Mountain and dropped it on the demon Munda who was playing havoc with the lives of the residents. This small pebble, it is said, grew bigger and bigger and finally assumed the shape of a mount. Haer in Kashmiri being Myna, the mount came to be known as Hari Parbat. Rishis and Munis were afraid that the demon may appear

again and disturb their Tapasya, so they entreated Goddess to reside there for ensuring their uninterrupted Tapasya. The Goddess, Sharika Devi agreed and settled herself on the Mount and manifested in the form of Shrichakra - and the place came to be known as Chakreshwar. Shri is the name of all immanent Goddess and Chakra, having 6 triangles and 18 angles, representing Shat-Dal and Ashtadash Bujas of Devi respectively. This Soyambhu manifestation of Devi is highly venerated by all Pandits. Many gods & goddesses came to witness the event. They stayed on the hill. Hence Hari Parbat is considered the abode of a number of gods and goddesses to whom worship is offered. It is a practice to take a Parikrama (circumambulation) of the whole hill, about 5 Kms. to appease all of them in one go.



Hari Parbat : Image ~ Wikipedia

Sharika Devi Chakreshwar Mandir



Chakreshwar Mandir : Image ~ myoksha.com

The shrine of Chakreshwar has been a place of worship from the ancient day. The Goddess Sharika manifested herself in the form of 'SHILA' on the Hari Parbat. A legend from Sharika Mahatmaya records that in order to save the residents of SATIDESH from the evil deeds of the demon, the mother Goddess ASHTADUSBUJA i.e. eighteen armed Jagat Amba Durga took the form of bird (Harie in Kashmir) on the day of Ashad Shukla Paksh Navmi (Har-Navmi). It's believed to have carried a celestial pebble in its beak and dropped it on the demon to crush it to death. A miracle happened and the celestial pebble is said to have assumed the shape and form of a hill rock giving it the name of Sharika Parbat or Hari Parbat. Goddess Sharika (represented by the mystic Soyambhu-Shrickakra) made her permanent abode on the western face of the Hari Parbat on the vertical rock (Shilla) to assure the native people of her presence and protection.

Zeethiyar

This shrine is situated towards North-West of Srinagar, between Zabarwan and Shankracharya hill. It attracts pilgrims on every Thursday in the month of Jyeshtha. According to legend, Shiva assumed the form of Rudra and rescued Jyeshtha (Parvati) from the clutches of a demon at this place. There are ruins of ancient temples, scattered all around.



Zeethyär : Image ~ Wikipedia

Amar Nath Cave

The cave is 13500 ft. above sea level. Here, an ice lingam waxes and wanes with the phases of moon. Pilgrims are allowed to perform darshans over a time extending upto two months or so culminating on Shravan Purnimashi every year. Holy silver mace (Charri Mubarak) is taken from Srinagar every year, followed by sadhus and pilgrims

via Pahalgam. Main stops enroute from Srinagar are Anantnaag, Matan, Pahalgam, Chandanwari, Wavjan, Panchtarni and then the holy cave. Highest altitude to cross is 14000 ft. high Mahagunas. Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramtirtha have visited it.



Amarnath Cave : Image ~ [tourmyindia](http://tourmyindia.com)

Shankaracharya Temple

The Shankaracharya temple is situated atop a hill 1852 mtrs above mean sea level, on the bank of Dal Lake in Srinagar. According to Kalhana's Rajatarangini, it was first built by Jalauka, the son of emperor Ashoka in 200 BC. The temple was later rebuilt by Gopaditya who reigned from 253 AD to 328 AD. Even today, the hill is known as Gopadri and the village at its foot as Gopkar. Repairs of the temple are stated to have been conducted by Sultan Zain-ul-Abdin when it got damaged in an earthquake and also during the governorship of Sheikh Mohi-ud-Din.



Shankaracharya Temple : Image ~ [hindudevotionalblog](http://hindudevotionalblog.com)

The temple shows the early Kashmiri style of architecture trying to introduce a Shikhar. It rests on a solid rock and comprises an octagonal basement of 13 layers of stone, 20 feet high, on which is supported a square building. There are two projections on each of the four sides which terminate in pediment and a gable.

The general appearance of the temple is that of a cone with four sides formed by the rectangular adjustment of eight gable shaped slabs of masonry. The 25 feet high cone rests upon an octagonal raised platform about 100 feet in circumference. The temple commands a grand panoramic view of the Dal Lake and the Srinagar city.

From the base of the temple, there are 41 Devri stone steps leading to the sanctum sanctorum which is 14 feet in diameter. A huge Shiva Lingum is at the centre and at the back of the Lingam, is an image of Adi Shankaracharya, installed in the year 1961 by Shankaracharya of Dwarika Peeth.

Jawalaji



Jawalaji Khrew : Image ~ dailyexcelsior.com

Jawalaji, the Goddess of Fire is another popular Ishtadevi of Pandits. Situated in the small village of Khrew, about 20 Kms. away from Srinagar, Jawalaji is venerated as one more aspect of the Shakti. The Shrine, constructed by Dr. Bal Krishen in the eighteenth century, is perched on the top of a 200 feet high hillock approachable by flight of 360 Devri stone steps with more than a dozen landings. The octagonal shaped temple rests on an 18 feet high base. The sanctum sanctorum is an 8 feet x 8 feet square shaped structure. A six feet high, black stone image is placed here. It is said that the image turned black due to the occasional flames which sparked here from time to time. The flame is said to have been 2 feet high and was alight for about half an hour, when last seen in the year 1962. A fair is held on the 14th bright fortnight

of Ashada (June-July) every year. An offering of Tahar (yellow rice) and Sheeshanor (lamb's lung) are offered to the Devi and later served as Prasad.

Ishber

It is situated on Nishat-Shalimar road, about 12 kms from Srinagar. Renowned as the seat of Maa Durga, it has attracted men of spiritual quest from times immemorial. Great many saints and sages have spent their lives here in quest of truth. Till recent times, it was the ashram of great saint-philosopher Swami Lakshman Ji, an authority on Shaivism. Pilgrims assemble at Gupt Ganga on the Baisakhi day as well as on other religious days. A shrine dedicated to Maa Durga is situated 3000 feet ahead on the hill slopes.

Sharada

Sharada has been a famous Tirth of Kashmir since ancient times. It is situated on the left bank of Kishen Ganga river, at the confluence of Madhumati. Presently, the place is under the occupation of Pakistan. In olden days, a fair was held annually on 8th day of the lunar fortnight of Bhadun where Shraadh of deceased was also performed.



Sharada Peeth : Image ~ Wikipedia

In Rajatarangini, Sharada has been mentioned during the King Lalitaditya's times, when followers of the king of Godh (Bengal) came to Kashmir under the pretext of visiting Sharada, in order to kill Lalitaditya. Alberuni has clubbed Sharada with the famous Hindu Tirthas of India and ranked it second only to grand Surya Temple at Multan. People from far flung areas used to visit this Tirth in good numbers to perform Devi's puja. This proves that Sharada was famous as a Tirth throughout India. Hem Chandra, a Jain scholar refers to Sharada as a temple dedicated to Saraswati. Sultan

Zain-UI-Abidin, the great king of Kashmir popularly known as Budshah (1420 -1470 A.D.) is said to have visited this place in the early years of his reign.

Sharada temple is situated on a hillock. There was a 9 feet wide staircase, consisting of 63 steps, leading from river to the temple. In olden days, the temple had a wall all around it, which was eleven feet high from inside and much higher from outside. On south-west side, was a large entrance gate leading into the temple premises. Main temple was situated in the centre of the compound.

The Temple was based on a 24 feet by 24 feet plinth, 5.25 feet above ground. Entrance to the temple was on the west side with a 5.5 feet wide staircase leading upto the Sanctum Sanctorum. There was a 4 feet wide landing at the entrance gate, supported by two pillars. The pillars were 2.25 feet by 2.25 feet square in section and 16 feet high. The Sanctum Sanctorum was 12.25 feet by 12.25 feet square without any decoration. At the centre, is a stone slab 7 feet long, 6 feet wide and 6 inches thick, about which it is said that it covers the Kund, from which Devi appeared to pay a darshan to the hill. Devotees used to worship this stone slab as well.

Stein compares the architecture of Sharada temple with that of the Kapteshwar temple of Kashmir. The simple style of the architecture and absence of any decoration in the temple makes it amply clear that the temple has been constructed in the second half of the tenth century.

Mattan Tirath (Bhawan)



Mattan Tirath (Bhawan) : Image ~ YouTube

Mattan is situated on the left bank of Liddar river, about 3.5 kms. away from Anantnaag on Anantnaag-Pahalgam road. It is also known as Martand. Martand in

Sankrit means Sun, so the Asthapan is dedicated to Sun god. Mattan is also known as Vishnu Tirath, because Surya is another form of Vishnu.

Mattan is also known as Matsh Bhavan (home of fish). It is because the huge spring at the place breeds lot of fish, which nobody is allowed to catch or eat. The grand Sun temple, Martand, constructed by Lalitaditya (695-731 A.D.) is just three kms. away on a plateau. According to Nilamata Purana, the image worshipped at Bhawan, was that of Kashyap Swami. The image is no more now.

The spring at Bhawan, is rectangular in shape, with its banks pitched with devri stones. The stones look very old, either due to weathering, or may be that the stones were got from an old construction and laid here. The stones are very big in volume and resemble those used on other ancient temples.

There is a rectangular temple at the centre of the spring which has a stone image placed inside. The temple is open on all sides and its roof looks like a leaf of Khaasi-Sotsal. A black stone image of Lord Ganesha is also in the temple.

Just above the spring, there are two small temples at the foot of the plateau. The famous cave, which was believed to be endless, also lies here. Vadgal however writes that he had himself entered into the cave and it was not too long. The cave is very old and it is presumed that some Bhikshu would have used it for meditation. The temples however are not very old. They carry the Shikhar pattern of architecture, employed only during the Dogra rule.

Mattan Tirath is visited by people even from outside Kashmir, to perform Shraadha of the deceased, particularly during the Pitra Paksha. The local purohits keep a record of their yajmans from all parts of the country, who visit the place. Their books can some times give chronological record of entire clans.

Most important thing about Mattan is that the temple, a Gurdwara and an Iddgah are situated at one place. Sikhs believe that Baba Nanak has also visited this place. During Badshah's time, Mattan was the centre of administrative set-up of the region. It was during this time that sugarcane was grown here on experimental basis.

Vicharnaag

Vicharnaag is a famous and sacred place, situated near Nowshehra, 12 kms. away from Srinagar city. It is said that Lord Shiva, at the time of creation of Universe, counselled with other devis and devatas at this place. 'Counselling' in Kashmiri is called Vichar and this is how the place gets its name. Annual fair was held at the place on every 15th day of the dark fortnight of Chaitra, when devotees would take bath in the spring.

Vicharnaag is also called Sath Ras Naag because, it is said, there existed seven springs at this place, out of which four are still active. The main spring is 54 feet x 54 feet square in shape. The banks of the spring are pitched with three feet long and 1.5

feet wide stones. The spring is 8 feet deep and contains an Aasan made of white stones in the centre at its bottom. On the north-east corner of this spring, is embedded a black stone, 2 feet long and one foot wide, engraved with Sharda text. The spring is surrounded by a cement plastered brick fence.



Vicharnag : Image ~ Greater Kashmir

Second spring is on the south-east side of the main spring. It is 15 feet long and 12 feet wide. It has Devri stone steps on all the four sides. Third spring is on the west side of the main spring and the fourth one on its north.

There are two temples at Vicharnaag. The bigger one is located at the north side of the main spring. It has been constructed during the rule of Maharaj Pratap Singh (1885-1925). It is 54 feet long and 15 feet wide, made of stones and Maharaji bricks. It is cement plastered, both from inside and outside. There are four stone images, four shivlings and an image of Nandi.

Second temple is located at the North-West side of the main spring. It has been constructed during the rule of Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1857-1885 A.D.). It is made of Devri stones and has Shikhar pattern of architecture. There is a stone Shivalinga inside.



Historical Places in Srinagar

Pandrethan

Situated near Srinagar, Pandrethan is remarkable for a very old and interesting Hindu temple, standing in the middle of the tank, about 50 yards from the river bank. The tank is about 40 yards square. The temple is 18 feet square with a projecting portico on each side, and displays in a confused exuberance of decoration, more especially the repetition of pediment within pediment and trefoil within trefoil, clear indications of having been built at a later date than other existing ruins. It is probably the most modern example of the true Kashmiri style extant. It was erected during the reign of King Partha, who governed Kashmir from AD 921 to 931, by his prime minister Meru, who dedicated it to Mahadeva under the title of Meru Vardhama Swami. There are in the neighbourhood some few fragmentary remains, consisting of two large lingams, one 6 feet high, erect and entire, the other broken into three pieces, the lower part polygonal, the upper round with conical top, which together made up a height of 16 feet. Near these, which are separated from each other by a short interval, is a huge mass of stone, being feet and legs as high as the knees of a colossal seated figure, probably a Buddhist image. At some little distance beyond this, an isolated crag has been cut, as it stood, into some sculptured form, apparently a Chaumukhi, i.e. a square pillar with a figure on each side. Baron Hugel calls the Pandrethan edifice a 'Buddhist temple' and states that there are some well preserved Buddhist figures in the interior. But he is doubly mistaken, for the temple was dedicated to Mahadeva and the figures inside have no connection with Buddhism.



Pandrethan Temple : Image ~ bhaskarphakur.wordpress.com

Budshah's Tomb

Budshah Tomb, also spelled as Badshah Tomb, is the final resting place of the mother of Sultan Zain-UI-Abidin [1420 AD to 1470 AD]. Sultan Zain-UI-Abidin was popularly and respectfully referred to as the 'Budshah' by his people during his reign and lifetime in Kashmir, spanning over 50 years of the late 15th Century AD.

The Budshah Tomb is an excellent representation of a typical Shalmiri style of architectural brilliance yet to be seen elsewhere in India. The monument or memorial site is situated on the right bank of River Jhelum and is quite close to Zaina Kadal.



Budshah Tomb : Image ~ flickr.com



Islamic Monuments

Dargah or Hazrat Bal

The Hazratbal Shrine is the most important shrine of Muslims in Kashmir. It contains a relic, the Moi-e-Muqqadas, believed by Muslims to be Prophet Muhammad's [PBUH] hair. The relic was first brought to Kashmir by Syed Abdullah, a purported descendant of Muhammad [PBUH] who left Medina and settled in Bijapur, near Hyderabad in 1635.

The name of the shrine comes from the Farsi word Hazrat, meaning 'respected', and the Kashmiri word bal, meaning 'place'. The shrine is situated on the Northern bank of the Dal Lake, Srinagar, and is considered to be Kashmir's holiest Muslim shrine.

Hazratbal or Dargah, is the notified area in Downtown Srinagar situated about 10 km from city center. The area became famous after the construction of silvery-white Hazratbal Shrine where hundreds of thousands of people visit every year.

The caretakers of the shrine are known as Nishandehs. The eldest male heir of the previous Nishandeh continues the legacy of displaying the relic when the current Nishandeh passes away.



Dargah Hazratbal : Image ~ en.wikishia.net

Pathar Masjid



Pathar Masjid : Image ~ makemytrip.com

This mosque opposite Shah Hamdan mosque across the Jhelum in Srinagar is the largest surviving Mughal structure in Kashmir. Built in local grey limestone, the facade consists of nine arches, remarkable for their horizontal construction. Built in 1623 AD by Nur Jehan, the Pathar Masjid was, however, never used for prayers.

Shah Hamdan Mosque:



Shah Hamdan Mosque : Image ~ flickr.com

The medieval wooden style of Kashmir's Muslim architecture is best typified in the Khanqah mosque of Shah Hamdan in Srinagar between third and fourth bridge on the right bank of river Jhelum. Sultan Sikandar built the mosque in 1395 AD, to commemorate the visit of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani, popularly known as Shah Hamdan. Twice destroyed by fire, the structure as it stands now, with cloisters added later, was rebuilt by Abul Barkat Khan in 1732 AD. Some of the doors and windows in the mosque are exquisite specimen of the Kashmir wood carver's art at its best. The pyramidal roof culminates in a graceful steeple, rising 38 meters from the ground.

Jama Masjid:

The most talked about 'architectural' structure in the wooden style of Kashmir is the Jama Masjid of Srinagar. Built by Sultan Sikandar in 1389 AD and enlarged by his son, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, it was rebuilt (after fires) and repaired by several kings including Jehangir and Aurangzeb.

The mosque, a huge structure containing all the essential components of the Kashmir type of wooden building, is a quadrangle, roughly square in shape, its northern and southern sides measuring 107 meters. Four minars, one in the middle of each side, are covered by a series of pyramidal roofs. The compound is divided by two broad paths, planned after the pattern of a formal Mughal garden.



Jama Masjid Srinagar : Image ~ optimatravels.com

Kashmiri Missionaries in China

Among numerous Kashmiri scholars and Buddhist monks, who carried the message of Buddhism across the difficult mountain passes to China, as stated in the Chinese texts, the following may briefly be mentioned:

- 1. Kumarajiva:** Born at Kucha, a distant corner of Asia, educated in Buddhist scriptures in Kashmir by the Buddhist scholar Bhandhadatta, Kumarajiva, with the help of a large number of Kashmiri scholars translated Sanskrit Buddhist texts into Chinese at Kucha. He was taken as a captive by a conquering general Lu-Kuang to the capital of a southern state called Liang. He with the assistance of Kashmiri scholars, continued to add to his fame by his missionary work. At the request of the emperor of China, he agreed to go to the capital in 401 A.D. Accompanied by a large number of Kashmiri monks and scholars, he carried on with his mission till his death in 413 A.D. Two well known Kashmiri scholars Yasa and Vimalaksha collaborated with him in his missionary work. This is believed to have started spread of Buddhism in China. He was the central figure in the missionary work till he died.
- 2. Sanghabuti:** A Kashmiri monk reached the northern capital of China in 381 A.D. He translated some Buddhist texts like Vinayapitaka.
- 3. Gutamsanga:** He was a great Buddhist scholar. He went from Kashmir to northern capital Chang-ngan in China in 384 A.D. He preached Buddhism there and translated a number of Sanskrit texts on Buddhism into Chinese. In 391 A.D., he went on his mission to Lu-Shan in south China. Therefrom, he went along with his other Kashmirian collaborators to Nanking.
- 4. Punyatrat** and his pupil **Dharmayasa** are mentioned in the Chinese texts as great Kashmiri scholars who were associated with Kumarajiva in his work.
- 5. Vudhayasas** was a monk of high moral sense and a scholar. He worked in collaboration with Kumarajiva and translated many Buddhist texts in Sanskrit to Chinese, including Dhirghagama and Dharmaguptaka-Vinya, two celebrated works.
- 6. Budhajiva:** Collaborator and companion of Fa-Hien, the Chinese traveller reached south China by sea in 423 A.D. He translated some of the Sanskrit manuscripts which Fa-Hien had collected in Central Asia and India.
- 7. Gunavarman:** A prince of royal family of Kashmir, was responsible for introducing and preaching Buddhism in Java. At the invitation of the emperor of China, Gunavarman travelled to Nanking, converting to Buddhism, nearly all the islands en-route. The emperor of China went out of his capital to receive him. He also built a monastery named Jalavan-Vihara for him.

Festivals, Rites & Rituals

Kashmiri Pandit Festivals

Shivratri

Generally most of the people in Kashmir take Herath as the marriage day of Lord Shiva with Uma, and outside Kashmir, it is taken as the day when Lord Shiva manifested in His human form on the earth to bless His devotees. This is celebrated in Phalguna. Interestingly, during the Pathan rule in Kashmir, people were forced to observe the festival in the summer month of Ashada. This alteration brought a lot of misery upon the Valley. It got a snowfall in the summer month that resulted in crop failure and consequent famine. The Pathans are said to have called it 'hairat' - i.e. utter surprise. This festival starts on the first day of Phalgun - Hor-Okdoh and ends on Tela Ashtami. From the first day, the entire house is cleaned and washed. On Hor Ashtami, kirtans and jagrans are organised. On Dyara Daham, the day of the Lakshmi, all ladies visit their parent's home and come back with Atta Gat and Kangri, symbolic of good luck and prosperity. On the Herath day, new earthenware specially prepared for the occasion is installed in the puja room. This is called Watukh.



Watukh consists of a big earthen (now mostly brass) pitcher representing Vatak Nath Bhairov, two medium sized pitchers representing Vatak Vallabha (Parvati) and Vagur (Kalash), an open mouthed pitcher representing Reshi-Dullije, two small pitchers (Sani Vari), a Sanipotul (Shivling), a Dhupzoor and some bowls representing Bhairvas.

The whole Watukh is decorated with flowers and sindoor. Walnuts are placed in the pitchers and bowls. These are then filled with water, milk and some mishri. Puja is performed by all members of the household, which carries on till late in the night. Shivratri comes to a close in the evening of Amavasya when the walnuts are taken out and washed. Puja is performed once again. The samgri and flowers are immersed in the river. Walnuts are distributed as Prashad amongst friends, relatives and neighbours.

Navreh or New Year Day on first of Navratra. The day begins with the invocation of Laxmi. A young lady of the household takes a thaliful of rice with sugar, curds, fruit, a pen, walnuts, a mirror, and a Jantri round the family for the first darshan. In Kashmir, people congregated at Hari Parbat.



Zang Trai. On 3rd. Navratra, ladies go to their parents' home and come back with a pouch of salt and Attagat.

Reshi Peer's anniversary. On the fifth day of dark fortnight of Baisakhi (Baisakh Gata-pachh), a Havan is performed at the memorial of Reshi Peer at Ali Kadal. His relics are housed there. (Now anniversaries of many saints are celebrated on various days)

Zeth Ashtami and Haar Ashtami, the birthday and incarnation day respectively of Mata Raginya are observed. People offer prayers at Tullamul (Kshir Bhawani).

Shrawan Purnima. People worship Shiva, visit Shankaracharya Temple, Amarnath Cave, Chhota Amarnath at Bandipora, Thajevora (3 kms.from Bijbihara), Harishwar etc.

Vetha Truvah. On 13th day of bright fortnight of Bhadon (Bhadrapeth Zoonapachh), Veth (Vitasta) is worshipped. Lighted deeps and candles are floated on water as a mark of gratitude and to celebrate the birthday of Vitasta.

Khetsri Amavasya falls in Poh (Posha). Kashmir is believed to have been the abode of Yakshas in ancient times. The yaksha spirit is invoked to relish khetsri. The day is also celebrated in worshipping Lord Kuber.

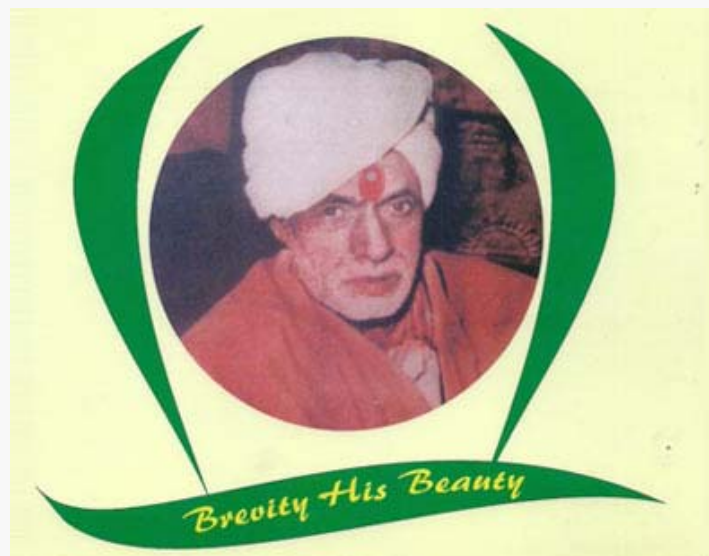
Gori Trai.



On the 3rd. day of bright fortnight in Magha, Saraswati puja is offered. The family guru brings a picture of Sarswati for every child with a suitable prayer for his/her attainment in learning. The newly wed bhus also receive one from the guruji of her parents. Tradition has it that it was the convocation day at the ancient Sharada University.

Sahib Saptami. Saptami tithi in the month of Magha Krishnapaksha (dark fortnight) and also in the Pitrapaksha are widely observed by Dhars and the off-shoots of their daughters, in honour of the Maha Nirvana day of the Saint Poetess Rupa Bhawani (1521-1621), believed to be the incarnation of Mother Sharika.

Bhagwan Gopinath Ji's birthday as well as Mahanirvana day are widely observed by his devotees in India and abroad.



Kashmiri Pandit Rituals

Every society, modern or ancient has its rituals. They represent continuity in social conduct. Kashmiri being a very old civilisation has large number of them. Some of course got obscured with time. Some got refined or even redefined. Some of them are given below:

Birth Rituals

Pre-natal: Few months before arrival of the baby, a function called Dodh is held. It is a formal announcement of the event to come. The mother to be is given presents and there is feasting. Similar function 'Godh bharna' is known in other parts of the country.

Post-natal

Shran Sondar. On or about sixth day of the birth, the mother and the child are given a ritual bath with water impragnated with herbs. Then a ritual burning of birch bark and giving a name to the child is done. Earlier to this, a prasad of fried Til, candy and walnut is distributed on the third day (Trui).

Kahanethar. It is a purificatory ceremony usually performed on the eleventh day. Kaha means eleven and nethar Nakhshetras - Planetary formations.

Anna Pravesh. First feeding of the baby.
Zara Kasay First tonsure of the baby.

Yagnopavit or Mekhla

Yegnopavit is by far the most important Samaskar, a Kashmiri Pandit male must undergo. The function derives its name from the sacred thread Yagnopavit (a strand of three threads with a common knot Brahmagand which turn into six strands on marriage). Mekhal comes from the name for the thread worn round the girdle on this occassion. For a Brahmin, it is treated as second birth. Hence Brahmins are called twice born. Though this is for males only, Arya Samaj sect does it for girls also.

Traditionally, it was an occassion when the boy would be initiated by his teacher-Guru as a householder in performance of his duties towards the society, the Gods and the Manes (dead). All the Samaskars from birth are again repeated on this occassion. The Guru does not only bestow the sacred thread to the subject but also conveys the Guru Mantra - in this case the Gaytri Mantra, into the boy's ears. A Yagya (Havan) accompanies the ceremony where Hums (offerings) are made through the Agni (fire) by which all Gods and Goddesses are invoked to bless the boy. The boy is made to shed his hair, wear ochre robes and hold a staff and a begging bowl like a mendicant. Abhid (alms) collection is passed on to the Guru as Dakshina.

The social aspect of the ceremony appears to have overtaken the sacred value of the function. Like a marriage ceremony, it starts with livun, Mehandraat and Devgon. The function proper takes nearly twenty four hours. Close relations observe fast for the day. Those observing fast are entertained with milk, fruit and other permitted items like Shakarpara made of waternut flour, by other relations. These are then shared with whoever comes to offer Abhid. The ceremony concludes with the boy returning to the dress of commoners including a turban, visit to a nearby temple and a meal as Prasad. Following day, a small thanks giving puja with a meal is held (Koshal hom).



Yegneopavit Ceremony : Images courtesy ~ Rajinder Raina

The focal point of the Yagnopavit is the Gayatri Mantra. A mantra achieves special significance when it is transmitted by the Teacher-Guru to the student. Although Gayatri Mantra is prayer in itself, it is not the meaning but the sound and the meter that matters the most. Gayatri is rather a meter, to which Savitur Mantra with its estonic sound is set to.

Om bhur bhuvah svah
Tat Savitur Varenyam bhargo devasya
dhimahi dhiyo yonah prachodyat

Marriage Rituals

Match making. An extract of the boy's horoscope (Tekni) is made public. The girl's side, which find it matching and meets their specifications, approach boy's side for the alliance.

Kath Baath . To formalise the alliance, a party of males from the boy's side meets a party from the girl's side at a place fixed by the latter. After tea and snacks, bouquets are exchanged to signify the acceptance of marriage proposal on both sides. The date of marriage is fixed.

Marriage Ceremony - Livun. House cleaning is done few days before the marriage, formally with some feasting and distribution of Ver, a concoction of rice, condiments and sheep entrails or walnut. Colour mottifs are put on entrance gate (Krool). Now-a-days this function is done more formally a day before the ceremony proper starts, while a pseudo livun is done earlier.

Mainzirath. It is the night when Mehendi is applied on the hands / feet of the groom / bride by her father's sister. It is also offered to guests. Singing takes place all night, often supported by professional singing & dancing parties (Bacha-nagma).

Devgon. A long pooja (longer in case of girls) is a religious preparatory ceremony. Father gifts all jewellery and utensils etc to his daughter ceremonially at this function. Kheer as prasad is distributed on the occasion.

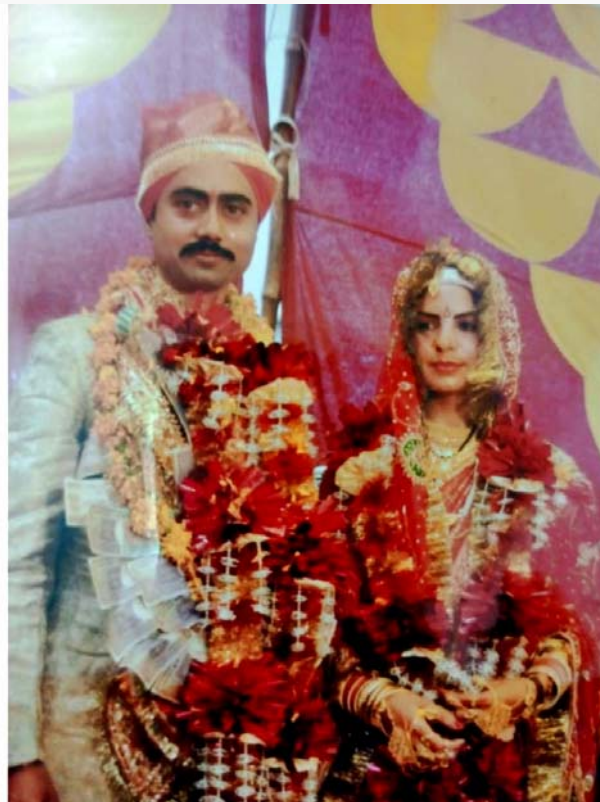
Marriage proper. Grooms wear a kesari colour turban (**Dastaar**) which is tied by the uncles. The elder lady of the house bids them bye on a Vyueg (a rangoli like round, coloured pattern on ground) with feeding of candy. No musicals accompany the party except a conche shell. On arrival at the bride's place, he is again welcomed by the elder lady of the house on a Vyueg (of course this time together with the bride) with an aarti with lamps made of rice flour and feeding of candy. Although some have introduced Jaimala (Vijaymala) exchange recently, majority of people would instead have Mananmaal (**Mala of agreement**) tied as the bride was not by vijay (conquest) but by agreement.

The guests (**Baraatis**) are entertained to a meal, usually a lunch as morning marriages are more common than night ones. The food served is vegetarian since

early 1930 when Pt. Hargopal, a reformer made it a norm. The marriage proper is performed by the priests and can take anything upto five hours. It starts with the groom worshipping the doorway to the bride's home (**Dwara pooza**). In the ceremony, the most important part is when the couple takes seven steps together and also when they are worshipped with flowers by the relatives of the bride as if they are embodiments of God and Goddess (**Posha pooza**).

The bride and groom feed each other ceremonially (**Dai-batta**). The food for that is paid for by the groom's side, so are all the requirements at the ceremony, the responsibility of the groom's side. Even the cosmetics and the outer robe for the bride is provided by the groom's side. Farewell again is at the Vyueg, in the same manner as the welcome. The groom alongwith his bride is welcomed back at his place again on the Vyueg.

The groom's sister ritually bars their entry to the house which is allowed after she is promised a gift by the groom (**Zaam Braand**). They are then led to the kitchen when the mother-in-law after formally seeing her daughter-in-law (**Maetemur**) entertains them to some food while they sit on the hearth. All the women at this stage sing in the joy of the arrival of the new bride.



Kashmiri Pandit Bridegroom & Groom : Image courtesy Dilip Langoo



Poshi-Pooza of the Couple after Lagan

Sat-raat. The same night, the couple again visits the bride's house (except on a Saturday) and have the ceremonial dinner before leaving back.



Death Ritual

The cremation takes place after the body is given a wash at home. Some pooja including worship of the dead person takes place before leaving for cremation ground. The pyre is lit by the son(s). For ten days, mourning is held at home. Early morning a kriya is done at the river front (usually not done these days). Sympathisers come, but they are not expected to be entertained with anything except a glass of water. The food from the bereaved family carries *hontsh* which is not good for others. Tenth day, a kriya is held at the river front. Male sympathisers come there. Tonsuring of the Karta is done. From there they proceed to home. Rites are held on 11th day and some on 12th day. Ashes are immersed in auspicious rivers like Ganga. Every month a Shraadha would be held and big ones after six months (Shadmos) and one year (Vahar vaer). A shraadha is held every year on the death anniversary and corresponding tithi in Pitra-paksha of the year.

Pann

Around September (on or about Vinayak Chaturthi of the Bhadra Shukla-paksh), each family one day, with all solemnity, purity and sanctity, prepare Roth (sweet pancake) from wheat flour, raw brown sugar and ghee. Big elaichi seeds & khaskhas is added for effect. Five of these (one with saw-teeth like edge Kanki-vor) together with some fruit is put on a clean container (Gadwah) containing clean water. The container is embellished with Sindoor & Silver foil. All these are covered with cloth. Tradition has it that some one in the distant past got pancakes of gold from underneath the cloth after a puja of utter devotion.

The eldest lady of the house presides over the ceremony. She puts tilak on the forehead of every member of the family and ties the Bandin (Nariwan) around their wrists. She then narrates with full solemnity, the folk tale of a poor lady and her daughter, who once held this puja in utter poverty. They were bestowed with luck by alliance with the king. King disregarded the solemnity of the function and suffered. These ladies picked up the thread and started again. King became repentant and everything was nice again. So prayers to the Goddess Beebgaraz Maej that she may make everything nice for the family like she did for the ladies in the tale.

The lady of the house puts a home-spun cotton thread, spun by a young girl, first in the ear and narrates the story. Then she puts it in the container. This gives the ritual its name.





The prasad of Roth is sent to all neighbours and relations. It gives a social content to the function. It serves as one of the links in the social chain. The function coincides with the fortnight starting with Vinayak Chaturthi and concluding with Anant Chaturdashi.

Gadda Batta

Around December, in the dark fortnight of Posha (Poh Gata-pachh), each year, a Kashmiri Pandit family observes a day as Gadda Batta - literary Rice and Fish Festival. On this day, the house deity (Ghar Devta) is offered a meal of rice and fish. The food is prepared in thoroughly clean kitchen and utensils during the day and the puja and offering is done in the night.



Image courtesy : Namrata Wakhloo

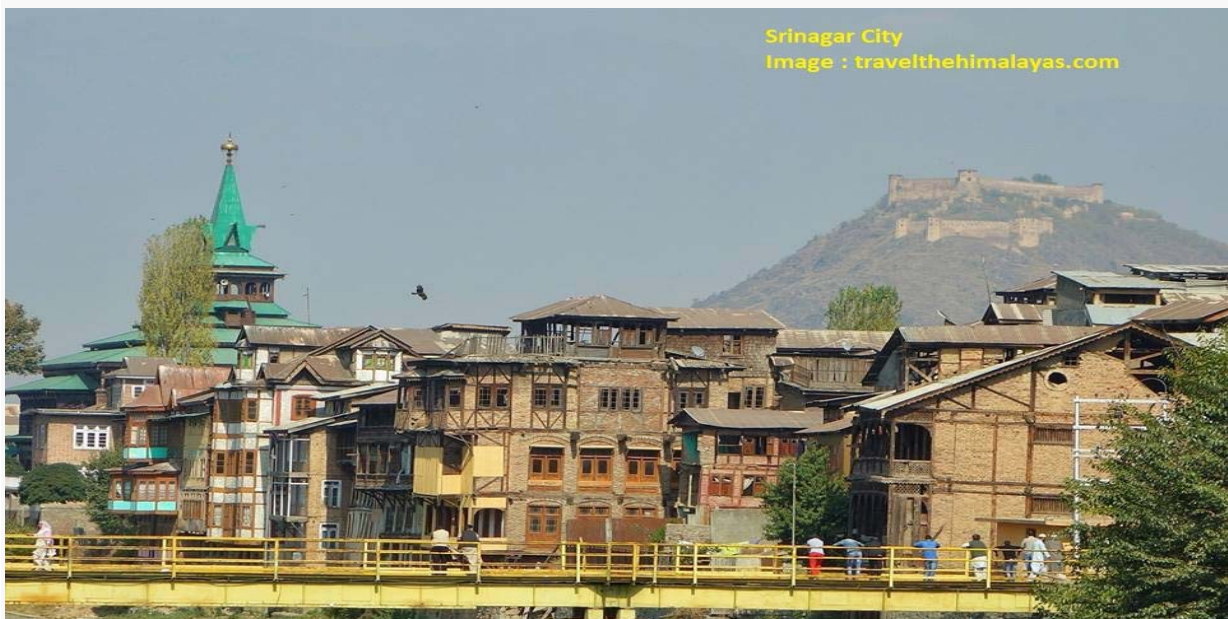
An offering of rice in a thali (plate), with cooked fish and one raw fish, is made to the Devta in the puja. This thali is then kept somewhere in the upper reaches of the house with all solemnity for the Ghar Devta. After that, rice and fish is served to the family members and the extended family. This being a very cold part of the winter, the prasad of nicely cooked fish is very much relished.



Historical Places

Srinagar

Srinagar is the summer capital and the largest city of Jammu & Kashmir State. It is 1585 mts. above mean sea level. Its area is 218 sq. kms and it extends from Harwan to Panta Chhok and Chhanapora to Gulab Bagh. There are two famous lakes namely Dal Lake and Anchar Lake and two hills namely Shankracharya Hill and Hari Parbat Hill in the city.



Srinagar City
Image : travelthehimalayas.com

Srinagar Old City : Image ~ travelthehimalayas.com

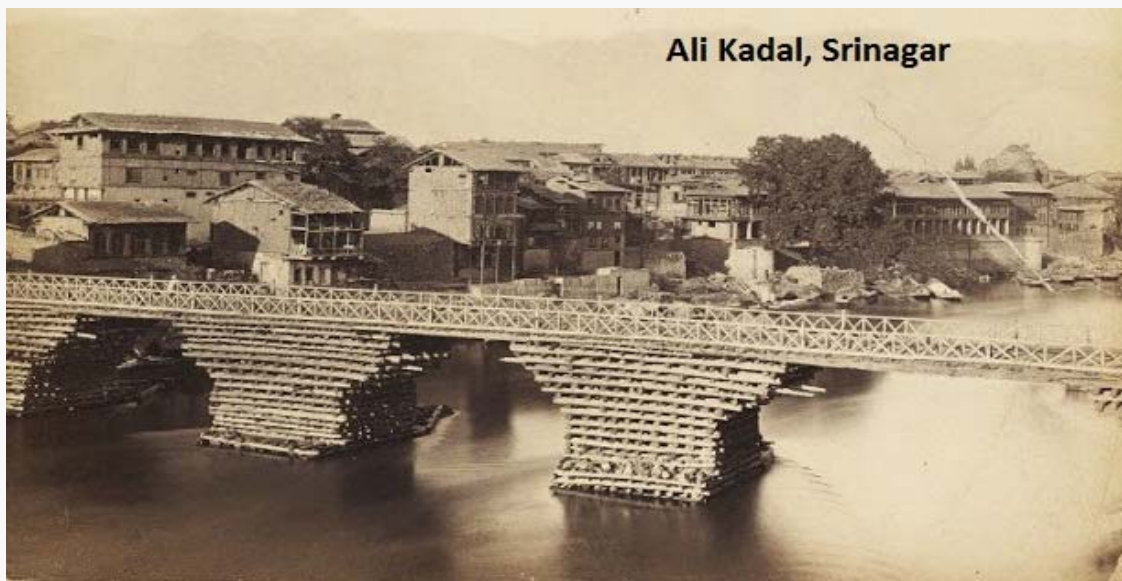
Srinagar city has also been known as Himavat, Shri Nagri, Parwarpor and Parwarsenpor. It is said that the original city named as Shri Nagri was established between Zabarwan Hills and Pandrethan during the reign of King Ashoka in the 3rd century B.C. According to Heun Tsang, a Chinese traveller, the city stretched from Harwan to Zewan.

Srinagar was known as the City of Seven Bridges till 1957. All these bridges connected two parts of the city bifurcated by river Jhelum, also known as Vitasta. Ali Kadal bridge was the oldest, constructed by Sultan Ali Shah in the year 1415 A.D.

There is a fort on Hari Parbat Hill. During the reign of Akbar, a 20 ft. high stone wall was constructed around the fort for a length of 5.6 Kms. During Mughal period, Nishat Bagh, Shalimar Bagh and Cheshma Shahi were also laid.



Hari Parbat Fort : Image ~ thekashmirmonitor.net



Old Ali Kadal Bridge : Image ~ Unknown

Srinagar has many places of historical and tourist interest. Mughal Gardens rank first amongst them. Mughals were great builders. Their art of garden planning reflected their varied aesthetic taste. Mughals, in fact, embellished the Valley with resplendent glory of their garden-designing by laying famous gardens like Nishat Chashma-Shahi, Shalimar, Naseem, Achhabal and Verinaag etc. Some important places are described below:

Nishat Garden

It is situated on the bank of Dal Lake, on the foothills of Zabarwan.



Nishat Bagh : Image ~ YouTube

This was conceived and laid by Asif Khan in the year 1636 during the reign of Shah Jahan. The garden is 1755 feet long and 1108 feet wide. Its front wall is 13 feet high. It has 10 terraces. Three of them are 16 to 18 feet higher than the lower ones. A water channel, 13 feet wide and 8 inches deep runs all through its length. There are fountains in various beds. Water falls in cascades, some of which are 12 to 18 feet high. Tall and mighty chinars provide shade to the visitors. Lush green turf is all around. Multi-coloured flower beds along sides of the water channel add to the attraction. Usually the garden is thrown open to the public on 1st of Baisakh. Sundays attract large crowds.

Shalimar Garden

The best example of the existence of a garden tradition in Kashmir from ancient times, is provided by the famous Shalimar Garden on the Dal Lake. A garden existed here in ancient times. During the reign of Pravarsena II, the founder of Srinagar city, there is said to be a villa called Mar Shalla or the Hall of Love. The king used to visit a saint named Sukram Swami living near Harwan. On his way to his Ashram, or back from it to his place, the king used to rest at his garden villa. In the course of time, the villa vanished and the village came to be known as Shalimar.



In 1619, Jehangir laid out a garden at this spot, calling it 'Farahbaksh' or 'Delightful'. Eleven years later, Zaffar Khan, a governor of Kashmir, extended it and the addition was called 'Faizbaksh' or 'Beautiful'. In the course of time, this came to be called as Shalimar Garden.

Shalimar is laid in typically Mughal design. It is rectangular in shape, the area being divided into a series of parterres. Being at the foot of a hill, it has become easier to divide it in four terraces. There is a line of tanks along the middle of the whole length of the garden. These are connected by a canal. The tanks and the canal have their own scheme of fountains and cascades. The canal and the tanks are lined with polished lime stone resembling black marble. The water to feed there, is brought from Harwan stream flowing in the back of the garden. The water enters at the upper end and flows down from terrace to terrace feeding numerous fountains. After leaving the garden, the water finally joins the lake by a canal.

The garden is tastefully laid. There are flower beds on either bank of the canal and around small lawns. Decorative plants lend their charm, especially in the evenings in the artificial light. Huge Chinars provide shade to the visitors.

The fourth terrace was private portion of the garden, where the ladies of the harem stayed. It contains a magnificent black-stone pavilion on a 65 feet square platform. The pavilion is surrounded by a reservoir 52 yards square and about 3.5 feet deep. It is lined with stones and has 140 fountains.

It is said that Jehangir had the intense delight of making up quarrel he had with his charming queen Nur Jehan, 'the light of the world' while resting here.

Cheshma Shahi

Cheshma Shahi or the 'Royal Spring', nearly 10 Kms. from Srinagar is the smallest garden laid by the Mughals. The Garden was laid in the reign of emperor Shah Jehan by his governor Ali Mardan Khan in 1632-33 AD. The Garden has pure crystalline spring rising from the base of Zabarwan mountains.

The mineral water of the Spring is reputed for its curative properties. The Garden has three terraces. In the middle of the Garden, run cascades and fountains play in the water beds. The Garden has varied and multi-hued flowers. It can safely be called the 'Nursery of Floriculture'. From the second terrace, one can have panoramic view of the Dal Lake. Below Cheshma Shahi, is the famous Jawahar Lal Nehru Botanical Garden.



Cheshma Shahi Garden : Image ~ tourmyindia.com



Jawaharlal Nehru Botanical Garden : Image ~ yashnews.org

Pari Mahal

Pari Mahal is situated in the lap of Zabarwan Hill on the South East of Dal Lake between Oberoi Palace Hotel and Chashma Shahi garden. It was constructed by Dara Shikoh during the reign of Shah Jahan (1627-58) to serve as an institution for astrology. He would himself observe the movement of stars from here. The architecture of Pari Mahal very much resembles to that of Greek temples. The Garden has five terraces in all which would have had fountains in the olden times. During 1969-74, when the garden was given a face-lift under the supervision of Dr. Kailash Nath Kaul, earthen pipes were discovered during excavation of the ground, which subscribed to the view that water was fed into the fountains through underground pipes. According to Huen Tsang, there existed a grand Bodh Vihar and a Stupa at or around the same place in olden times, where a tooth of Lord Buddha had been preserved. There are no traces of any such place now.



Pari Mahal : Image ~ tourmyindia.com



Martand Temple

The ruins of Martand, built by Lalitaditya, speak of Hindu architecture. It is situated on the Mattan Udar (plateau), 8 kms. away from Anantnag at 75° 17' longitude and 33° 45' latitude. It is 1 km. to North-West of the sacred springs of Martanda, mentioned in Nilamata Purana as a celebrated place of pilgrimage, sacred to Surya. Jonaraja says the temple was destroyed by Sikander, a zealot egged by his minister Saif-Ud-Din (Saha Bhatt).



Martand Sun Temple : Image ~ Wikipedia



Martand Sun Temple : Image ~ flickr.com

Features

The Martand Temple is called Architectural Lion of Kashmir. It has a majestic plinth off set by an impressing gateway. The temple is 18 Mtrs. long and 11 Mtrs wide. Its height as at present (ruins) is 12 Mtrs. which may actually have been 23 Mtrs. in pyramidal form. Its courtyard is 66 Mtrs. x 42 Mtrs. The central edifice standing on a quadrangle, is surrounded by 84 columns (7x12 i.e. No. of days in a week x No. of Zodiac signs). The temple consists of three chambers, the outer two highly decorated and inner one plain. Two Surya and two Laxmi figures are engraved on four walls of the middle chamber. Walls of the gateway are decorated, both internally and externally.

Avantivarman's Temples

Avantivarman's Temples, two in number, were built by Avantivarman (855-883 A.D.) at a place now known as Avantipur, 29 kms. from Srinagar, on the Jammu-Srinagar road. The larger of the two, is the Shiva Avantipura Temple, commanding a magnificent view of the broad bend of the Vitasta (Jhelum) over a ridge. The extensive courtyard enclosed by a massive stone wall, western face of which is adorned on the outside with a row of fluted columns, indicates that it must have been one of the best achievements in the field of architecture. The temple base, the only existing part of the main edifice, is seventeen meters square and three meters high. The sanctum has been reduced to a mass of ruins. Second one, the more ornate and better preserved temple known as Avantiswami Vishnu, comprises a spacious paved courtyard, a colonnaded peristyle, in the centre of which is the main shrine, raised on a double base with four smaller shrines at the corners. The structure closely follows the plan of Martand and is a more refined product of art. The peristyle has a row of fluted columns on the west side. The front pilasters of the side walls bear figures of Vishnu and his consorts carved in relief. The chief beauty of the temple lies in its cellular colonnade which consists of 69 cells. The walled courtyard served as fortification in parlous times that followed Avantivarman's reign. The temple was completely destroyed by the time of Sultan Sikandar in the 14th century.



Awantivarman Temple : Image ~ tourism-of-india.com

Baramulla

55 Kms. away from Srinagar, Baramulla is the western entrance to the Valley. Till 1947, it was the export-import trading centre of Kashmir, the nearest rail head being Rawalpindi.

Baramulla is situated on both the banks of Vitasta.

The town on the right bank, in ancient times, was called Varahmula, derived from the ancient tirtha of Vishnu - Adivaraha - at the site of Kotitirtha, which is situated at the western extremity of the town, close to river bank. [The Linga, the sacred image was destroyed by Sikander Butshikan, according to Jonaraja.] On the left bank, is the ancient site of Hushkapur (now Ushkur). Hushka had built a town, a Buddhist vihara and a Stupa here. Later Lalitaditya also built a vihara, a stupa and a Vishnu temple. Heun-Tsang, on arrival in the Valley, stayed here for the first night. He says, some copper plates, on which the proceedings of Kanishka's council were engraved, lay buried here. These two ancient and sacred sites are now connected by bridges and form the present Baramulla. In ancient times, a dwarpal in charge of the security of the Valley was posted at the watch tower called Drung, which was situated a little below Kotitirtha. The following religious places, situated in the town are famous:



Baramulla Town : Image ~ Greater Kashmir

- Chhatipadshahi in honour of the visit of the sixth Sikh Guru.
- On the right bank, forming the back wall of Varahmula, is Gosaniteng hill, which is the abode of seven springs and a temple sacred to the memory of the heroes of Ramayana, including that of Sita.
- Bhairao Mandir amidst an almond orchard at the foot of Gosaniteng.

- The famous Shrine of Dastgirsahib.
- On the left bank are situated the Shrine of Janbaaz Sahib at Khanapora and Devibal, the famous sacred spring of Shailaputri.

Baramulla town is the headquarter of Baramulla district. The town bore the brunt of Pakistan aided tribal raid in 1947 and halted its onward march to Srinagar for two vital days. The town was the native place of Shaheed Sherwani who laid down his life, defending Kashmir against Pakistani invaders in 1947.

Anantnag

Anantnag town is the administrative headquarters of the Anantnag district in Jammu and Kashmir. It is located at a distance of 53 kilometres from Srinagar.

Anantnag District is in southern sector of Jehlum Valley. It is because of its its lofty mountains, the melodious flow of sweet waters of its springs and streams, fertile soil, fragrant flowers and delicious fruits that the district has come to be synonymous with greatness. The entire Southern sector of the district, which is contiguous with tehsils of Reasi, Banihal and Kishtwar of Jammu province, and Eastern sector which is contiguous with tehsil Kargil of Ladakh division comprises of thick forests and mountains. The Northern and Western sides of this district are bounded by Pulwama district while Kulgam district falls in its west. Of all the districts of the state, Anantnag claims the largest number of streams (Nallas) like Sandran, Brengi, Arpath and Lidder. The most important among these is Lidder which takes of from Sheshnag lake and irrigate maximum area of the district.



The name of Anantnag, according to a well known archaeologist, Sir A.Stein, comes from the great spring Ananta Naga issuing at the southern end of the town. This is also corroborated by almost all local historians including Kalhana according to whom the town has taken the name of this great spring of Cesha or Ananta Naga "land of countless springs". The spring is mentioned in the Neelmat Purana as a sacred place for the Hindus and Koshur Encyclopedia testifies it.

The district as well as its headquarter town are also called Islamabad. Regarding this second name no mention is to be found in the old chronicles of Kashmir. It is however, said that the name of Islamabad was assigned to the town by one Islam Khan who was the Governor of Kashmir during the Mughal rule in 1663 A.D., but the change in its nomenclature proved temporary and during the reign of Gulab Singh the town as well as district again resumed their old name, Anantnag. It also continues to be the official name of the District and town.

Parihaaspur

Parihaaspur, also known as Paraspur, is situated on and below a plateau, at right side of the Srinagar-Baramulla road, about 27 kms. from Srinagar. The plateau is known as Paraspur Udar. In the early period of Dogra rule, the whole area around this plateau, was called Paraspur. Parihaaspur, in Sanskrit means the 'The Laughing City'. The town is known as 'the Town of Stones' now.



Parihaspora : Image ~ livehistoryindia.com

Parihaaspur, of which only ruins are available now, was laid by the famous king Lalitaditya (695-731 A.D.) to establish his capital. Ruins are also available at four different places near the plateau. Three of them are known as Divaryakhmanpur, Govardhan Udar and Tregaam. The fourth one is on the north-east side of the plateau where ruins of Bodh constructions are available. Till now, there have been no discoveries to prove that residential places existed there in ancient times. The discoveries prove that the plateau had been reserved only for religious places and palaces whileas the residential places were confined to the area between Divaryakhmanpur and Tregaam. During the time when Parihaaspur was established, the Sindh river confluenced with Vitasta (Jhelum) at Tregaam and flowed via Naid Khai before confluencing with the Wular lake. Goverdhandhar, Muktakeshav, Parihaskeshav, Mahavarah, Rajavihar, Chitiha and Vinaysaman, were some of the famous places, constructed by the King within the Parihaaspur area. The king had also built a fort with iron bricks, in the city. The exact location of this fort has not been established, but it is said that iron bricks of the fort, would be found during ploughing of land in the vicinity, even upto early twentieth century. Chunkan, a Turk wazir of the king, had also built a stupa here, the ruins of which still exist. During Kushan rule, a royal Bodhvihar was built on the plateau. It is said that summary of the proceedings of third Bodh conference which was held in Kashmir, was engraved on copper plates and kept here. The plates are believed to be buried under the Bodh viharas.

Destruction of Parihaaspur started taking place immediately after Lalitaditya, when his son Vijadatta (733-774 A.D.) took over the control of the property of various temples. During the reign of Avantivarman (855-883 A.D.) Suyya relocated the confluence of Vitasta and Sindh at Shadipur. This resulted in the tremendous loss to Parihaaspur, because the source of potable water shifted 5 kms. away from the city, and secondly, it hampered the water transport system in the area which was of prime importance because of the absence of any other transport system. The next phase of destruction of Paraspur came when King Shankarvarman (883-901 A.D.) demolished the temples and used those stones and other material in the construction of a new town Pattan and the temples here. Abu Fazal says that Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413 A.D.) was responsible for the final destruction of Parihaspur.



Literature & Language

Kashmir, a seat of learning from ancient times, has produced thinkers, philosophers, scholars and poets in all ages. Some of the celebrated names who contributed in different languages are:

1. Sanskrit

It was the ancient language of religion, philosophy etc. It continued to be the language of the courts and the administration even during the first 100 years (approx) of Muslim rule (till the times of Zain-UI-Abidin).

- i) Abhinavagupta (933-1015 AD) ~ A poet, critic, saint, philosopher, wrote more than 40 books, notably some on Shaivism.
- ii) Kalhana ~ Historian, poet, author of Rajatarangini in 8000 verses of high poetic merit.
- iii) Kshemendra ~ His contribution to Sanskrit literature is unique. He authored Samayamatrika.
- iv) Jonaraja, Srivara, Sukha ~ carried the work of Kalhana in Sanskrit.
- v) Hieun Tsang and Ou-Kong travelled from China to learn Sanskrit in order to read Buddhist thought already written in Sanskrit.

2. Persian

With the advent of Muslim rule and introduction of Persian as court language, Kashmiri Pandits adopted Persian as the language for literary work. Pandit Narayan Koul, Pandit Chandra Bhan, Pandit Bhawanidas Kachroo, Gani Kashmiri, Pandit Raj Koul Arzbegi, Dewan Kripa Ram (in the reign of Gulab Singh) are prominent names.

3. Kashmiri

The Language: Kashmiri is the language spoken by the people living in Kashmir Valley and with some variance on its border like Kishtwar, Banihal etc. Although no specific account is available of its origin, its evolution from Sanskrit (rather its older version - the Vedic Sanskrit) is evident from its texture and vocabulary. The theory of Sir George Grierson that it is a part of Central Asian Dardic group of languages, has since been discredited. It appears that the mother tongue of the Indo Aryan, who settled in Kashmir, must have been Sanskrit (or the Vedic Sanskrit). In course of time, it changed into Prakrat and then to Kashmiri.

The earliest written material available is Mahanaya Prakash of Siti Kantha. It is about a hundred years after Kalhana and is in old Kashmiri. But from Kalhana's writing, it appears that the language had already made inroads before his time (12th century AD). The earliest writings in modern Kashmiri are only from Lalla-Ded (14th century AD). The language has absorbed words from Persian, Arabic and dialects spoken on the Valley's fringes.

The language has a large number of vowel sounds. A slight stress on a particular sound can change a word into another one of entirely different meaning. Kashmiri verb assumes many shapes according to number, gender, person and tense. All this has given it a rich vocabulary. It has a rich collection of Proverbs, an own stock of Riddles (Pratsa), and, a very well developed poetics.

The Script

The earliest available Kashmiri manuscripts are written in the Sharada script. This script was widely used by scholars, rulers and common people of all religious denominations alike. Among Hindus, it was used for transcribing Sanskrit texts as well as compositions in Kashmiri. The Sharada script was much in use not only in Kashmir, but also in North Western India (Gilgit etc.), Punjab and Himachal Pradesh and even in Central Asia. This script enjoys a foremost position among all the ancient Indian scripts. It was evolved from the Western branch of Brahmi nearly 1200 years ago. Almost all the ancient Sanskrit literature is written in this script. The earliest Sharada inscription discovered on a stone slab at the village Hund at Attock, Pakistan, date back to 774 AD. According to Pt. Anand Koul Bamzai, Sharada alphabets were used in stone inscriptions even up to 18th century. This is corroborated by his discovery of a Sharada inscription dated Vikram 1846 (1789 AD). This script is said to have reached perfection by the 15th or 16th century. The epigraphists Kielhorn and Hoernle hold the view that Sharada alphabet is a very conservative alphabet as it changed very little across the centuries.

Sharada script was replaced by Persian / Urdu scripts when Kashmir came under Mughal and Afghan rule. The Kashmiri Pandits, nevertheless mastered Persian language and script and used it widely in official and private communications. This relegated Sharada to the background, being limited to religious & devotional texts & writing and calculating astrological and ritual formulations.

The history of the adoption and modification of the Devanagari script for Kashmiri has not been documented authentically. But the very fact that the script was used freely by eminent western linguists like Grierson and Temple in their profound works and treatises on Kashmiri language and literature is ample proof of its having been standardised over the decades in the 19th century. This universally acceptable writing system came handy to the intelligent and discerning community of Kashmiri Pandits for whom the Indian connection has always been primary. Benefitting from the experience of this enlightened community, the Western research scholars like Grierson, Buhlar, Temple, Stein etc. associated renowned scholars of their times like Mukund Ram Shastri and Ishwar Koul with their work and modified the Devanagari of Kashmir as against the Persian script. The qualities of better phonetic representation inherent in Devanagari seems to have weighed more with these discerning scholars.

Writers and Scholars

There has been considerable contribution to Kashmiri language from the Poets. A number of them belong to the Mystic genre. Mystic poetry, according to Late Moti Lal Saqi is “reflection of spiritual way of life. It has esoteric content which sows the seeds of metaphysics and rhythm of life. It is receptacle which overflows with peace and intrinsic love for the entire humanity without boundaries of caste & creed”. Kashmir, which is often called ‘Resh Waer’ has been the cradle genre of many a mystic poets. Some of the more known and popular mystic poets of Kashmir are Lalla-Ded, Nunda Resh, Swachha Kral, Neyma Saab, Shamas Faqir, Wahab Khar, Parmanand, Rupa Bhawani, Maqbool Shah Kralwari, Ahad Zargar, Samad Meer and hosts of other lesser known mystic poets, who have treaded the Vale of Kashmir between 14th & 19th centuries.

Prominent Poets

Lalla Ded

Lalla-Ded (Lalleshwari) was perhaps the first Kashmiri poetess. She is regarded as the founder of modern Kashmiri language as well as literature. Her Vaakhs preach tolerance and harmony. She was born in the 14th century (year disputed). All legends, fables or folklore of those times agree that Lalla-Ded came from a well-to-do family and was married into a household, where her mother-in-law and even her husband, it is said, were not kindly disposed towards her. Disappointment in love and domestic life turned the born mystic into an ascetic, wandering from village to village. She came under the influence of guru Siddha Sri Kantha or Siddha Mol - a great scholar, who eventually became her spiritual perceptor. It was this man who initiated her into Shaivite cult. Her internal spiritual lotus bloomed and she became a devout follower of ‘Triik’ philosophy and turned increasingly towards mysticism. There is hardly any Kashmiri house where her ‘Vaakhs’ do not reverberate and fill the air with the celestial aroma, even today.



Lalla Ded : Image ~ koausa

Lalla was mystic to the core and a born saint, who laid stress on the inner quest and sincere pursuit of spiritual perfection. To uplift people out of the Bog, she draws the attention of the aspirants to the foot prints she left behind.

Sheikh Nur-ud-Din

Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, known as Nunda Resh in veneration, was a great saint-poet. He was one of the twin stars of medieval Kashmir along with Lalla-Ded, with whom he shared the intensity of mystic experience and was next only to her as a Kashmiri poet. His poetry has great respect among the common people.

The poetry of Nund Rishi is termed 'Shruk'. The Shruks were collected and written down in 19th century in different 'Rishi Namas'. We hardly find Persian words in his Shruks. In his poetry, we see words borrowed from Sanskrit, like Gian Dhyana, Krodha, Bhag, Lobha, Bandhana etc. Sheikh Nur-ud-Din's Shruks represent the medieval aspect of the Kashmiri language. His usage of words, taken originally from the Sanskrit language, can shed lot of light on the state of Kashmiri language prevailing at that time.

Swachha Kral

Nothing is more reliably known about Swachha Kral who is believed to have been born in 1774 AD. His date of death inscribed on the Tomb-stone (which is of recent origin) is as 29th of November 1854. It is said that he was born in a family of potters in a remote village of Yender near Pulwama. His poetry, most of which has remained untraced, indicated that he was academically illiterate but spiritually, highly evolved. He was an ardent believer of One-God concept (monoism). He believed that life on the earth was a transitory abode for man and his eternal abode was in the God's land. So, Swachha Kral, in his numerous poems has exhorted that one should not give in to the temptation of this world, but should crave for the eternal bliss through one's righteous deeds in this world.

Parmanand

Parmanand (real name **Nand Ram**) was born in 1790 in a village near Mattan. Well versed in Persian on the one hand and the Vaishnava lore on the other, and knowing some Sanskrit, Parmanand took recourse to poetry for conveying his philosophy. Fed up with his work at the Revenue Department, he resigned his post as Patwari after 15 years of service. The profound sayings of Lalla-Ded and the study of Bhagvata Gita and the Upanishads buoyed him up until the realisation came to him that true spirituality lay in rising above the illusion - maya and not merely being other-worldly. He affected the synthesis of Sufism with the Vedanta. He penned Radha Svayamvara, Sudama Charitra, Shivalagan etc. He died in 1878.

Habba Khatun

Born in village Chandahar, Zooni (Habba Khatun's maiden name) was a precocious child and learnt the Quran and Persian classics. Her songs, remarkable for melody and spontaneity, expressed the deep craving of the heart and the soul. She and her successor, Arnimal, were the precursors of the romantic movement in Kashmiri poetry. Scared of her fame, her father had her married off to an illiterate peasant, who did not appreciate her songs. While singing, she caught the eye of Prince Yusuf Shah Chak, who fell in love with her. He arranged for her divorce and married her. She and her royal consort founded Gulmarg. She has been called the Nur Jahan of Kashmir.



Arnimal

Born in the 18th century, Arnimal fashioned the Lol lyric into plaintive wails, poignant and melancholic. Like Lalla-Ded and Habba Khatun, Arnimal's family life was unhappy, which contributed to the poignant pathos and the recurring note of resignation to fate in her poems. She was married to Bhawanidas Kachroo, a Persian poet (and a minister) who deserted her and she lived mostly in her father's home. The romantic poems of Arnimal constitute a watershed in the development of Kashmiri poetry.

Master Zinda Kaul

Born in August 1884, Zinda Kaul - Masterji was one of the most notable poets of his times. He is the first Kashmiri poet who won the Indian Sahitya Akademi Award in 1956. He showed great proficiency in learning Persian from a very early age and wrote poetry in that language under the pen name of Sabit.

Kaul initially wrote in Persian, Hindi and Urdu. His first poem was *Unity and Sympathy*, written in 1896 which he recited at the Sanatan Dharm Sabha meeting in Srinagar.

Masterji started writing in Kashmiri in 1942. In his Kashmiri poetry, he has written primarily on devotion, philosophy and peace. Masterji's poetry has been published in all the four languages, however, he made his name by writing in Kashmiri. He wrote mysticism in simple metaphor. His collection of thirty five Kashmiri poems Sumran won him the most prestigious award. Kashmiri Shaivism, Vedanta and Upanishads are portrayed most eloquently in Sumran.

Masterji's poetry was greatly influenced by Lal Ded and Parmanand. His writing style is mystical and is influenced by bhakti tradition.

Masterji remains one of the foremost poets of the twentieth century. He left his mortal frame in Jammu in the winter of 1965.



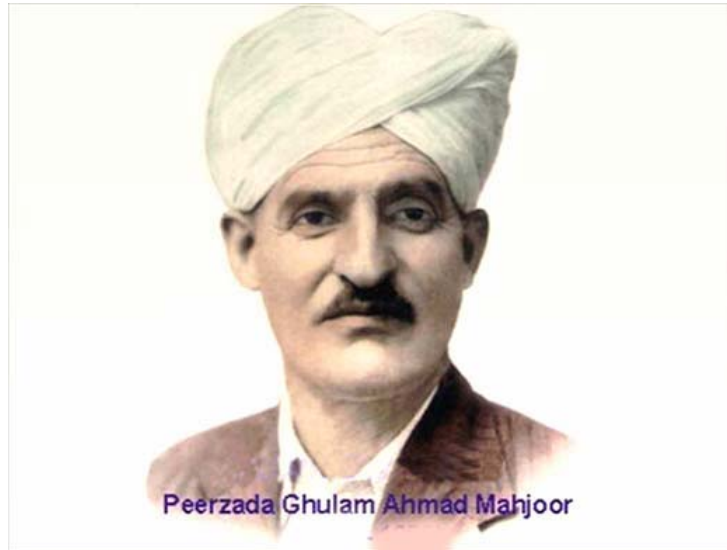
Master Zinda Kaul

Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor

Born on 11 August 1887 in Mitragam village, about 37 Kms. from Srinagar, Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad got his pen name Mahjoor when he visited Punjab and started writing poetry under the influence of great Urdu poet, Shibli Namani. He followed in the academic footsteps of his father, who was a scholar of Persian language. He received the primary education from the Maktab of Aashiq Trali (a renowned poet) in Tral. After passing the middle school examination from Nusrat-ul-Islam School, Srinagar, he went to Punjab where he came in contact with Urdu poets like Bismil Amritsari and Moulana Shibi Nomani. He returned to Srinagar in 1908 and started writing in Persian and then in Urdu. Determined to write in his native language, Mahjoor used the simple diction of traditional folk storytellers in his writing.

Mahjoor worked as a *patwari* (regional administrator) in Kashmir. Along with his official duties, he spent his free time writing poetry, and his first Kashmiri poem 'Vanta hay vesy' was published in 1918. Determined to write in his own mother tongue, Mahjoor

used the simple diction of the folk. With his emergence, Kashmiri literature entered a period of creative poetic revival. His poem *Baghe Nishat Ke Gulo* became popular throughout the Valley. When recognised by Rabindranath Tagore, the Kashmiri bard's fame spread beyond the Vale of Kashmir. His poetry increasingly epitomised the struggle of Kashmiris for self government. Among the poets of the 'New Kashmir' period, Mahjoor ranked as the greatest in the love of his motherland. Mahjoor showed his keen awareness of the changing times in poems like *Wolo ho baagvano* and *Gulshan vatan chhu sonuy*. Kashmir lost this greatest poet of the century on 9 April 1952.



Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor

The literary contributions of Mahjoor clearly prove that as a writer he is so powerful and imaginative that he has been able to inspire his readers not only aesthetically, spiritually, morally and socially but also intellectually. The gamut and cosmos of Mahjoor's creative art is so vast and infinite that there can be no end of research and any exploration in this direction shall be assumed as the greatest service to this nation.

Dina Nath Nadim

A progressive and one of the most popular Kashmiri poet, Dina Nath Nadim was born on 18 March, 1916. He lost his father Pandit Shankar Kaul when he was only eight years old. Nadim's mother had a significant influence on his growth who would recite Vakhsh of Lalla Ded and Lilas of other poets. He passed B.A. in 1940 and got B.Ed. degree in 1943.

Nadim was influenced by poets - Iqbal, Chakbast and Josh. He started writing in English when he was 17 years old. He wrote his first Kashmiri nazm - *Maaj Kasheer* -

Zagat Zanani Bhavani Maaj Panani in 1940. Between 1938 and 1946, he wrote mainly in Urdu.

Nadim started his career as a school teacher in 'New Era' in 1937. He was founder member of Hindu High School. His most important phase of life started in 1947 when Pakistan instigated invasion on Kashmir. The writers, poets and other artists formed 'National Cultural Front'. He was one of the leading organisers of the new cultural movement that spear-headed Kashmir's literary renaissance. Since then, till his death, Nadim Sahib remained in fore front in all educational and cultural fields. Name any association of this period, he was either secretary or chairman. He was Principal, Lalla Ded Memorial High School, Secretary, Writers Association, Folk Theatre, Peace Committee etc. and also elected member of Sahitya Akademy and J&K Akademy.



Nadim was the most progressive and prominent poet of Kashmir. He restored the Kashmiri language to its pristine glory. He was poet of the people. He always showed great concern for down-trodden. In his short stories 'Jawabi Card' and 'Sheen Peto Peto', he presented his keen concern for trampled down, beautifully and sensitively.

Nadim introduced Sonnet and Blank Verse in Kashmiri. His first blank verse poem Bu Geva Na Az (I will not sing today) was published in 1950. This poetic form caught the imagination of Kashmiris. Nadim Sahib gifted opera to Kashmiris. His first opera in Kashmiri Bombur Ta Yemberzal (The Bumble bee and the Narcissus) which depicted ultimate triumph of good over evil, was written in 1953. This opera was an instant success. The opera was shown to Marshal Bulganian and Khrushchev in 1956 when they came to Kashmir. It is this opera which earned him Soviet and Nehru Award in 1971. He later wrote many operas which included Heemal Nagirai, Shihul Kul, Vitasta, Neki ta Badi etc.

The most significant poet of the period is Nadim. He infused poetry with vigour and masculinity. His poetry collection Shihul Kul won him Sahitya Akademi Award in 1987. His most famous poems are Irada, Bu Geva Na Az, Swo Viz, Son Vatan, Subadam,

Lakhchun, Aadanuk Posh, Dal Hanzni Hund Vatsun etc. But to him ME CHHAM AASH PAGAHUCH remained most dear and near to his heart. About this poem, he said, "It expresses my cherished faith, my values, my lust for peace. To me, to my family and to my people - 'Morning' - remains reliance and support."

Nadim died on 7 April, 1988. It will not be wrong to call the period from 1848 to 1988, the age of Nadim - Nadim Era. His contemporaries were not only influenced by Nadim but also inspired to write in his vein. Some of them went to the extent of copying his style while some adopted his themes in their poems.

Krishen Joo Razdan

Pandit Krishen Joo Razdan was born in Vanpoh, Anantnaag in 1850. He was the only son of his father Pandit Ganesh Raina. In books, Razdan Sahib is also called Rajanak - Guide or Raza Darbari. He was called so, perhaps because of Maharaja Pratap Singh's deep and close rapport with him. Maharaja Pratap Singh was a great devotee of Razdan Sahib. The Maharaja used to come for his darshan twice a year in Spring and in Autumn on the occasion of Darbar move.

Razdan sahib was one of the most famous 'bhakti poet' who wrote delectable bhajans in 'Lila' form in praise of Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna. Among his impressive works are Shiv Lagan, Shiv Parinay and Harihar Kalyan. Though a Shaivite by faith, he has yet composed songs in praise of other devas. His first poem Shiv Parinay was published by Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in six different volumes in Devanagari script.



Krishen Joo Razdan

Razdan Sahib was a Sanskrit scholar of repute and had command on Persian also. He also wrote Lilas in Hindi. He had love for music and used to play sitar. His poetry is full of music. His description of nature and local colours, has cooling and refreshing effect. He was mastermind in handling of language and was singer of love. He was great yogi and sadak of his time. He favoured bhoga (indulgence) as against tyaga (renunciation). He had great influence of Lalla-Ded and Nuda Rishi. Meditation, yoga and knowledge, is the essence of his poetry. In Shivratri Mahima, he tells us the real meaning of Shivratri. He has written many Leelas describing different gods and devatas.

Some of his songs gained popularity among common masses and have become part and parcel of Kashmir folk literature.

Moti Lal Saqi

Born in 1936, Moti Lal Saqi was a prominent Kashmiri poet, scholar and folk-lorist. He was awarded Padama Shri for his services to Kashmiri language and literature. He received Sahitya Akademy Award in 1981 for his book of verses 'Mana Sar'.



Moti Lal Saqi

Saqi belonged to village Mahanoor of Chadoora tehsil of Kashmir. He was one of the youngest poets of his village to recite poems in the literary meetings of Cultural Front during 1950's. Starting his career from the village level, he worked on 'Kashur Dictionary' and 'Urdu Kashmiri Farhang' and later edited the Kashmiri Encyclopaedia, published by J&K Akademy of Art, Culture & Languages. In between, he also served Radio Kashmir, Srinagar for broadcasting Kashmiri language programme meant for farmers. His book titled 'Neeri Nagma' containing 100 Qudrains (Rubayees), several poems, gazals and verses is well known. He collected numerous folk songs and edited several Kashmiri folk song volumes published by the State Akademy including

two volumes of Kashmiri mystic poetry known as 'Sufi Shairi'. He also compiled authentic Shrukhs of Nund Reshi entitled Kulyat-e-Sheikh-UI-Alam. His book 'Aagar Naib' published in 1998, contains his prominent articles on Kashmiriology, wherein he has mentioned the sources of discovering past of Kashmir. He breathed his last on 21.5.1999 at Delhi.

Saqi will always be remembered for his immense contribution to Kashmiri language and literature as a poet, scholar, folk-lorist and an expert on Kashmiriology.



Saints & Sages

Lalla - Ded

Like all great saints, Lalla Ded, also known as Lalla-Maj & Laleshwari, came upon scene to redress the sufferings of Kashmiris. Through her Vaakhs, she brought solace to the bruised hearts of the people among whom she lived.



The life of Lalla Ded is shrouded in myth, miracle and legend. Miracles and legends have been associated with Lalla Ded from her very birth. Some of the legends are :-

- a) In her in-laws, she was known 'Padmavati'. She was cruelly treated by her mother-in-law. She would serve food to Lalla, spreading a thin layer of cooked rice, to cover 'Kajwat' (a lump of stone). Once she was asked by the ladies at the river bank, what she had for dinner on previous night. That night there was a great feast at her inlaw's place. Lalla replied, "Hond maran ya kath, Lalli nilawath tsali no zanh".
- b) Once, when after her meditation, as usual, at 'Nata Keshava Bhairva', with pitcher of water on her head, Lalla entered the compound of her house. Her husband, in his rage, struck the pitcher with a stick. The pitcher broke and water stood frozen on her head till she filled all pots in the kitchen. She threw what remained of it, outside, which surprisingly, collected into pond. That pond came to be known as 'Lalla Trag' - The pond of Lalla.
- c) It is said in 'Tarik-i-Hussaini' that Nund Rishi was once breaking into a house, as ordered to do so by his step brothers, who were thieves by profession. Lalla passed by, rebuked Nunda and told him that he will not get anything at poor man's house. She advised him to go to big house of God and break into it, perhaps in that way, he might obtain something worthy and great. After that Nunda Rishi gave up stealing and entered a cave at 'Kaimuh', for penance and prayers.
- d) Once Siddha Shrikantha was having bath in the river. He noticed, little above, Lalla was scrubbing the outside of an earthen pot. He remarked, "What use this scrubbing the pot outside, when dirt inside is not removed." Lalla retorted, "What profits it to bathe to cleanse the body while the inner Self is not purified.?"

The Yogeswari is called Lalla because she was seeker of truth. 'Lal' is a Kashmiri derivative of Sanskrit 'Lalasa' meaning 'to obtain', 'to long for', 'to seek'. She says in the following Vakh, that she was called 'Lalla' because she sought the truth, after burning up the impurities of her mind and resigned completely to Him:

mal vòndí zòlúm, jígar mòrúm
télí Lal nàv dràm, yélí dâi trävímas tâti

The great saint, 'Lalla-Mäj' was born to help overcome troubles, pains and human insanity. Her sayings act as a healing balm to people, which stand true and good for all times. In the warring world of today, especially Kashmir, her Vaakhs have relevance, more than ever before.

Nund Rishi

Sheikh Nur-Ud-Din Rishi, commonly known as Nund Rishi - Nund Riyosh, was born in 1377 A.D. at village Kaimuh, district Anantnag, in the home of Salar Sanz, a Hindu, who later embraced Islam & was renamed Sheikh Salar-ud-Din. The great Nunda Rishi's spiritual eminence and moral rectitude won him the designation of Sheikh-UI-Alam.

There is saying current even today in Kashmir - Yina mandachhokh na, chena chhukh mandachhan (Ashamed you were not of being born, why should you be shy of suckling now). It is said when Nunda Rishi was born, he would not suckle at his mother's breast till Lalla Ded unexpectedly appeared at the house, patted the baby and with these words asked him to draw milk from the breast of his mother, which he did.

The Sage started life normally. He married and had two issues. But the things around him made him intensely sad. He took to caves for penance and meditation. He lived for 12 years in wilderness. Thus nature became the Nund Rishi's first teacher. Later in life, he is said to have received the blessings of four Muslim divines of high spiritual attainments.

He preached non-violence, non-killing and adopted the severe self discipline. His poetry has glow of spirituality around it. He also talks of inequality, injustice, tyranny and social evils. He always stressed the unity of Hindus and Muslims. To serve the mankind, is noblest service and way to God. He made his poetry the message of his faith, love and brotherhood.

He, in his Shruks, talks of the shepherd who followed Siva (Lord) and entering Harmukh along with the Lord, disappeared. Nund Rishi prays - "Oh Lord, bestow a similar boon upon me".

Nund Rishi craves for that what was attained by Lalla Ded and cries :

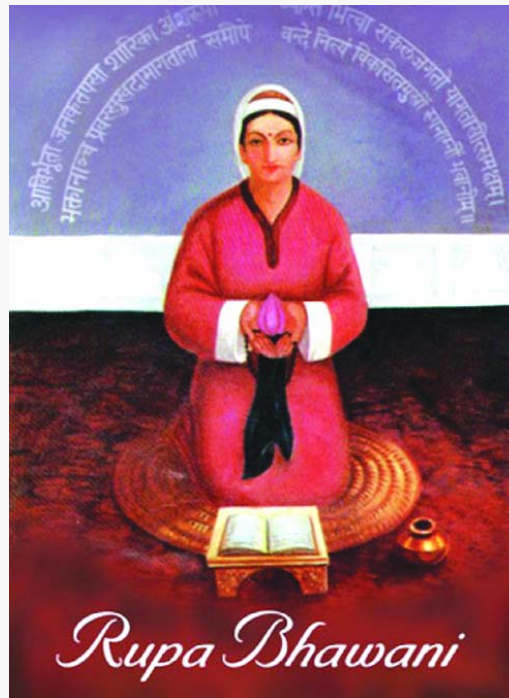
Padmanporachi Lalei
Tami galei amrit piva
Svai sani ti avtar lvalei
Tithuy me var dita Diva

(It was Lalla of Padmanpora, who drank, in long draught, nectar Divine. A beloved Avtar She was to us too. May thou Lord bestow a similar boon upon me.)

Nunda Rishi died at the age of 63 years in the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abdin in the year 1438 AD.

Roopa Bhavani

Roopa Bhavani shines as a bright star in the galaxy of mystic saints. She was born in 1621 A.D. to Sampat Majya, wife of Madhav Joo Dhar. Madhav joo was a pious scholar, who was great bakht of Godess Sharika and lived at Safa Kadal, Srinagar. Roopa Bhavani's father was her guru. She was married to Hiranand Sapru. Her married life was unhappy. Her mother-in-law, Samp Kuj and her husband always found fault with her. She renounced the worldly life and wandered to a number of places in the Valley.



Roopa Bhavani did meditation and intense tapasya in Manigaam near Lar, in Waskura near Gandherbal and in Cheshma-i-Sahbi near Chashma Shahi. In the year 1721 A.D.,

Roopa Bhavani's soul took flight for ever. Kashmiri Pandits, out of great reverence and respect, keep a fast on her death anniversary, which is known as 'Sahib Saptami'.

Roopa Bhavani used Kashmiri as medium for expressing her thoughts and teachings known as 'Shruk' (Shalok). She has enunciated the same truth what she visualised through her mystic approach, Sadhana and Yoga.

She gave message of peace, love and brotherhood. She affirmed that all are equal in the eyes of God. For attaining Samaadhi, she says, "The seeker has to undergo the penance, self discipline and devotion." She mentions that man is accountable for his own Karma - deeds, as he has the freedom of choosing his course of action. She says, "Take it for certain that Lord is very close to you, sitting in your vessel (body). You need not go anywhere in search of the Lord." Her blessings are filled with deep love, compassion and hope.



Music, Dance and Drama

Nilamata Purana reveals, the people of Kashmir were fond of music, dance and drama. They played, danced and sang to express their joys, to mitigate their pains, to please their gods and to appease their demons. Young girls were trained in fine art.

Dancing always goes hand in hand with music. On each and every festive occasion, religious or semi-religious, seasonal or agricultural, the chief item of celebration used to be dancing and singing.

Popularity of Music and dancing, in ancient times, is corroborated by Archaeology. A tile from Harwan, presumed to be of 4th century A.D. shows three musicians playing flute, cymbals and drum. Another tile represents a female musician playing drum, third one shows a female dancer.

In ancient times, the festival of sowing of seeds, was celebrated for about a month. Singing and dancing enlivened this noble period.

Music had been with people of Kashmir, both vocal and instrumental, as early as 200 B.C. receiving royal patronage. The mode of singing varied in three forms - simple recitation, singing in chorus, enchanting Vedic mantra.

Dancing girls were attached to temples. They would visit the king on his coronation day and take part in most of the festivals and ceremonies. Dances were performed to welcome the rich gift of grapes. Bilhan praises the high skill of ladies of Kashmir in dancing.

The words Preksha and Preksanaka mentioned in Nilamata Purana refer to theatrical performances. It is said there existed some dramatic clubs, which gave shows on demand. It is mentioned in 'Early History and Culture of Kashmir' by S.C.Ray that there were many theatre halls, provided with cushioned couches. Most of the functions referred to in 'Nilamata Purana' were performed either in the vicinity of bonfire outside the houses or in open fields. Bilhan extols the ladies of Kashmir for the excellent dramatic performance, which excelled the acting of heavenly damsels.

Dancers, Musicians and Actors were well respected in ancient times and they received honour and gifts on certain festivals. The festival held in the month of 'Asadha', had one of the ceremony to present gifts to artists. The 'Bhadrapada' festival was very significant and important to artists. On this day, the artists were given a bath, worshipped and then given gifts.



Position of Women in Ancient Kashmir

During the Hindu period, important and sometimes decisive role was played by women in the affairs of state. They must have been accomplished. Women, at least of upper classes received education in diplomacy and state craft, besides that of general nature.

According to Bilhana, the poet laureate at the Court of Chalukya king Parmadi (11th century A.D.) women of higher castes and affluent classes received education in biological sciences, arts, music, botany, painting, needle work, wood work, clay modelling, cookery, special training in instrumental music, singing and dancing. Women were as active as men in the discharge of public duties. Women fought alongside men on foot or on horseback.

Heroism displayed by Didda and Kota Rani was exemplary. Queens were anointed along with their husbands at the time of coronation. Women enjoyed equal rights as men.

There is evidence that wise women made their husbands' rule a success. Queen Suryamati made judicious selection of ministers and other officials to give public confidence in her otherwise weak husband, King Ananda. He was later made to abdicate in favour of his son. Didda dominated her weak husband Kshemagupta. She controlled the destinies of the kingdom as regent and a queen for half a century. Women could hold property in their own right.

The family life, at least of the rich, was polygamous. The kings had seraglio full of queens and concubines and their example was followed by the aristocrats. Polyandry was quite unknown except perhaps among some aboriginal hill tribes.

There is no evidence from Rajatarangini regarding the age of marriage. Widows were expected to live a pure life, devoid of luxury - no ornaments etc. Remarriage of widows and of other women does not seem to have been absolutely forbidden. Partapditya II married the wife of a rich merchant. Kota Rani's remarriage after Rinchana's death is well known. Sati seems to have been wide spread at least in the ruling classes. Damras did not have this practice. Instances of women burning themselves with their beloved deceased ones, be they brothers, mothers, sisters etc. are available. Gajja cremated herself with her son Ananda, Vallabha with her brother-in-law Malla, and the sister of Dilhabhattaraka with her brother. The custom persisted long after the Hindu rule till Sultan Sikander banned it.

Arts & Crafts

Kashmir is known throughout the world as much for its arts and crafts as for its scenic beauty. The products of unique craftsmanship have won the appreciation of connoisseurs from far and near. The articles range from woollen textiles of fleecy soft texture and matchless excellence in weaving, hand woven carpets of finest warp and weft, to the exquisite designs worked on papier-mache, wood work, silverware etc. The unique position among Kashmir textiles is held by the celebrated shawl. The shawl industry is as old as the hills. The Pashmina shawl is made from the smooth fleecy wool of the Kel goat and is highly priced. These shawls are generally woven with embroidered patterns. A high class shawl is expected to have designs worked out evenly on both sides. The celebrated 'ring Shawl' can actually pass through a ring. Rare and different from the others is Jamawar shawl. The peculiar charm of this shawl is derived from the symphony of colour schemes depicting architectural and mythological figures interwoven with landscape designs.

Namda is a felt rug, made from beaten wool, which is then embroidered over. Fine embroidery makes the namda sometimes more attractive than a pile carpet.



Gabba - a unique type of floor covering is prepared from old woollens in a variety of forms and designs. Rich blending of colours gives the old material a new appearance and makes it very attractive. It is used as divan-spreads, bedding material and even drawing room rugs.



Carpet : The carpet industry, introduced into the Valley by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, is justly renowned. From the point of weaving, carpets are broadly divided into two classes: smooth-faced carpets and pile carpets. Pile carpets (Kalins) made in Kashmir since the Muslim rule attained great perfection. Worked with floral and other designs, the hand woven pile carpet became the national craft of Kashmir. During the British days, Iranian motifs were introduced, providing further impetus to the industry. Kashmiri carpet can match the Iranian or any foreign make, and is high on the export list of Kashmir.



Kashmiri Carpets : Image ~ alamy & amazon.in

The embroidery of Kashmir, called **Kasida**, is world-famous. Varied, rich in colour, elaborate in detail and exquisite in execution, the kasida patterns are feely drawn by naqqash, mostly from memory. The finest kasida work, particularly embriodered on shawls or saris, has no 'wrong' side.



Kashmir's silverware compares favourably with that turned out by the most fashionable establishments in London and Paris. The range of silverware is very wide: tea sets, flower vases toilet sets, scent chests, picture frames, cigarette cases, tumblers etc. Both plain and engraved work is executed to cater to different tastes. Among the flora and fauna, leaves of chinar and the lotus furnish the popular patterns. The Kashmiri artisan also produces excellent products of copperware, consisting mostly of cooking pots and samavars and sundry articles for the household or the mantelpiece. Enamelled silver-work is also pretty.



Silverware of Kashmir : Image ~ karaffensammler.at



Silverware of Kashmir : Image ~ handicrafts-india-info.blogspot.com

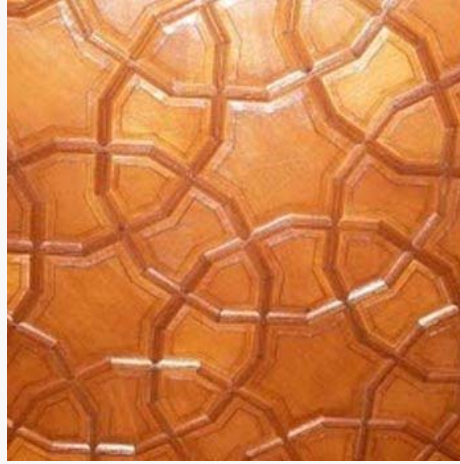
Papier-mache craft, peculiar to Kashmir, was also introduced into the Valley by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. The products, beautifully painted over with ornamental patterns, comprise picture-frames, pen-cases, tea pots, writing sets, screens, candle-sticks, vases and other utility goods.



Walnut and chinar wood provides material for the wood-carving, which is among the best known cottage industries of Kashmir. The Kashmiri carver, second to none in the world in his skill as a designer, uses walnut wood, which is durable and has a rich natural-veined surface. Articles made of carved walnut wood include chairs, cots, cabinets, tables, jewellery boxes and ornamental caskets. Floral designs of almost every conceivable variety are made with great accuracy of detail in chased or raise work.



Khatam-band is a speciality in Kashmir woodwork, and comprises ceiling of rooms, made from thin panels of pine wood, cut into geometrical designs. Builders of houseboats have kept this craft alive.



Khatambandi Woodwork : Image ~ indiamart.com

Wicker-work of Kashmir is also notable. Lunch and flower baskets, chairs, tables and various other articles of common use are turned out in elegant designs. Kangri, an earthen bowl encased in wickerwork, is also made as an artefact ornamented with wicker rings and coloured mica for the mantelpiece.



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