

Unmesh

उन्मेष

नमस्ते शारदे देवि काश्मीर पुरवासिनि

Monthly Newsletter of

N.S. KASHMIR RESEARCH INSTITUTE

D-7/7175, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi - 110 070 (INDIA)

Compiled by:

Sunil Fotedar

for

KASHMIR NEWS NETWORK (KNN)

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Compiled by:

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August 2002

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1 Editorial

A Philosophic Interpretation of 'Unmesh'

Dr. Chaman Lal Raina

'Unmesh' is the opening of eyes. It is verily, expansion of the cosmic consciousness, which helps a seeker to understand the status and dynamics of 'will, knowledge and action'. It is an experience of a mental state, which can be characterised by the subjective and objective understanding. For the readers, force behind 'Unmesh' is a sanction from the eyes of saints and seers, who identified themselves with the triene of time, place and situation. It is a timeless knowledge, which is pure in 'thought mind', surveying the global view on the basis of reason and intellect.

'Unmesh' can help us to see the greater truth around us. It can act as a hidden call to foresee delight, when our souls will be charged with the glory of the ancient times. All the murky clouds are tend to change the human destiny, but Unmesh, the early dawn leads us to see what is substantial, within the frame work of our mental set-up. Through the opening of the eye, every glance will pass through the ray of our heritage, still vibrant in our psyche, to analyse the matrix of apparent time.

'Unmesh' - the apparent eye will find the clue for survival through 'Jnanam' the knowledge portion for the development of the physical consciousness which is 'Annam' or life force.

2 September 1997 - Vol. I, No. 1

2.1 NSKRI Plans First Ever Exhibition on Kashmiri Pandit Culture

Aspects of Kashmiri Pandit culture and heritage form the theme of an exhibition that NSKRI has conceived and plans to hold in New Delhi in January 1998.

The idea is to focus attention on the society and culture of a people whose intellectual and creative attainments have brought glory to Kashmir and whose sense of values and ideals has contributed immensely in the evolution of Kashmiri ethos, yet who have been hounded out of their home and are facing the gravest ever threat to their existence and identity today. In a way, it will not be an ordinary exhibition, but an attempt to profile a culture in exile -- a uniquely rich culture that is in great danger of extinction.

The exhibition will be divided into various sections or segments covering the Kashmiri Pandit way of life, traditions, customs and dimensions of creativity. On display will be Sharada manuscripts, books, miniature paintings of the Kashmir school, folk art, architecture, costumes, ornaments, artifacts and articles of household and ritual use besides other items of cultural and civilizational significance. Old photographs depicting social and religious life of the Pandits during the first decades of the present century will be yet another interesting feature. The exhibits will be accompanied by explanatory write-ups.

With much of the community's heritage lying scattered in a state of neglect, or even damaged and lost, particularly after its recent diaspora, the organisers of the exhibition have appealed to community members, and others interested in Kashmiri Pandit culture, for help in collecting the various items required for mounting the display.

The exhibition will be held in New Delhi initially, but is likely to tour other Indian cities or even be taken to some foreign countries if it finds sponsors.

2.2 Album of Kashmiri Miniatures Under Preparation

As a top priority item on the agenda of NSKRI, an album of paintings of the Kashmir School, is being compiled for the first time and is expected to be published shortly. The work has been entrusted to Sh. P. N. Kachru eminent Kashmiri artist and a member of the core group of NSKRI. Compilation of the album assumes a special importance in view of the fact that no such attempt has been made so far and no effort has been made to systematically study extant works of this important but totally neglected school of art.

Although no survey has been conducted, it is generally known that the number of Kashmiri miniature paintings available today is very small, and none of these belongs to a period earlier than the first quarter of the twentieth century or last decades of the 19th. Most of the paintings have been lost mainly because their owners were totally ignorant of their worth and sold them away at throw away prices to foreigners. Some of the paintings found their way into the hands of some private collectors in the country also. In this manner a priceless treasure has been thrown away. The Jammu and Kashmir State Cultural Academy is no less guilty of total indifference to this wealth, its collection and preservation having never been on their agenda.

During the princely rule in the state, some Kashmiri miniatures were no doubt displayed in the Maharaja Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar, but their number was very small. In any case, no art historian or critic came forward to record chronological development of the Kashmir school of which the earliest extant evidence can be seen in the Gilgit manuscripts paintings, and of which the last great master was Pandit Narayanjoo Murtgar.

It may be recalled that the Kashmiri style survived in the wall paintings of Buddhist monasteries in Ladakh, Western Tibet and Spiti. Some of its masters, who migrated to Himachal princedoms due to

lack of patronage or fear of religious persecution during the Islamic rule in Kashmir, spread it to this region and it revived and flourished as the Pahari- Kangra School.

Sh. PN. Kachru, with his deep interest in, and long study of, the Kashmiri art movement, is going to dwell on these and several other facts in the introduction part of the album while bringing out the salient features of the miniatures. The task before him, however, has been made extremely difficult by the recent exodus of the Pandits from Kashmir. Hardly any of the fleeing Pandits who possessed any Kashmiri miniature painting thought of carrying their family heirlooms with them. Fortunately, however young Kashmir art lovers like Sh. Virendra Bangroo are enthusiastic about privately collecting Kashmiri minatures on their own initiative. Sh. Bangroo has provided access to his personal collection to Sh Kachru who already has paintings of the NSKRI collection available to make use of.

2.3 Hakim Sahaz Bhat

Physician or Scholar?

Pandit Sahaz Bhat, the legendary Kashmiri Hakim who lived in the late 19th century, was a great man of medicine. Stories about his medical miracles are legion and have become a part of Kashmiri folklore. What is not known, however is the fact that he was also a reputed Sanskrit scholar of his times. Dr. Raj Nath Bhat, the great Hakim's grandson, is not aware of it. The surprising revelation came after a recent bit of research by Mr. S. N. Pandita, a member of the NSKRI promoters council.

Pandit Sahaz Bhat had already established his credentials as a scholar of Sanskrit when the well known orientalist Dr. Aurel Stein came to Kashmir for working on his translation of Kalhana's 'Rajatarangini' in 1888.

Stein became interested in the reference to Sanskrit manuscripts of Kashmir by his mentor George Buhler in his famous "Report" of 1877 and came to know about a vast and huge collection of manuscripts lying in the personal library of Maharaja Ranbir Singh at Raghunath Temple. Dr. Stein pressed the Maharaja's administration for systematically cataloguing the Sanskrit manuscripts for the benefit of scholars. The Royal Council of Kashmir accepted his recommendations and entrusted the job to him.

Stein readily agreed and solicited the assistance of two Kashmiri Pandit scholars of the day, one of whom was Pandit Sahaz Bhat and the other Pandit Govind Kaul.

Sahaz Bhat acted as the literary assistant to Stein in preparing a classified list of the manuscripts, while Govind Kaul helped in preparing the extracts and indices. Collaboration of the three scholars resulted in the publication of the colossal "Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Raghunath Temple Library of Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir" in the year 1894. Cataloguing six thousand Sanskrit manuscripts was no small accomplishment and Pandit Sahaz Bhat's part in it was indeed of a very high standard.

2.4 NSKRI Has Undertaken a Commendable Task

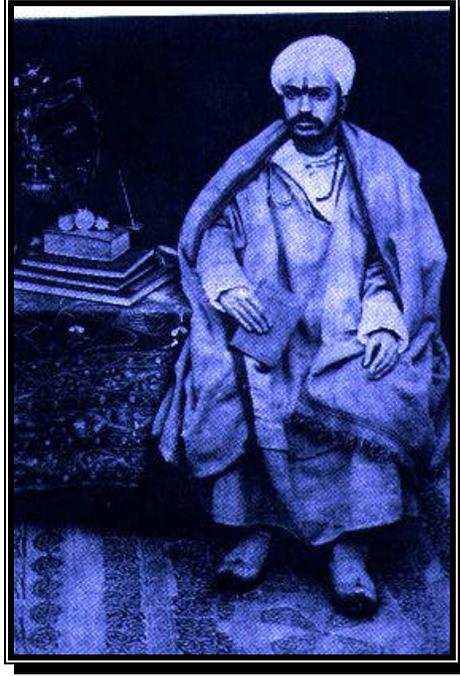
P.N.K. Bamzai

Eminent writer and historian, Sh.P.N.K. Bamzai, who is regarded as an authority on Kashmir history, has commended the NSKRI's objective of protecting and exploring Kashmiri Pandit cultural heritage.

Talking to members of the core group of NSKRI who visited him recently, for guidance and advice, Sh. Bamzai said "that an all out effort to protect Kashmir's centuries old heritage had become imperative in the present circumstances and in undertaking to work for it the NSKRI was doing a commendable job. "Only those who have real interest and concern for Kashmir at heart will venture to take urgent steps to save the immensely rich and fascinating culture and traditions of the Kashmiri Pandits from being obliterated", he said, hoping that NSKRI would be successful in its endeavour.

Sh. Bamzai, whose books on Kashmir history and culture have won him worldwide acclaim, disclosed that he was currently engaged in working on the subject "Kashmiri Pandits or Saraswat Brahmins", tracing the ethnic origins of the Pandits of Kashmir. He had undertaken the project two years ago and it may take some time before he would complete it.

2.5 Nityanand Shastri As Scholar and Man



Pandit Nityanand Shastri

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

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

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

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

those days, and afterwards became Professor of Sanskrit at Sri Pratap College, Srinagar in the year 1916. NS distinguished himself by going to college always wearing the traditional Kashmiri attire. He never wore a western outfit.

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

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

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

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

2.6 "Don Quixote" in Kashmiri

Cervantes' "Don Quixote" has been one of the most popular of world classics and has been translated into many languages. The 15th century Spanish classic was translated into the Kashmiri language too, and as far back as 1936 a time when Kashmiri had hardly any prose. It was translated jointly by Professors Nityanand Shastri and Jagaddhar Zadoo into Kashmiri and Sanskrit. Although it was the first translation of any European literary work in Kashmiri, literary historians of the language have made no mention of it. The reason perhaps is that the Kashmiri version of "Don Quixote" never saw the light of the day, unlike the first Kashmiri novel "Lila" written by Prof. S. K. Toshkhani which was serialized in "Bahar-e-Kashmir", a magazine published from Lahore. It was Sir Aurel Stein who had commissioned the two Kashmiri scholars, Prof. Nityanand and Prof. Zadoo, for the translation on behalf of his Harvard university friend, Carl T. Keller as part of a project to obtain translations of "Don Quixote" in all major languages of the world. The Kashmiri and Sanskrit translations were sent to Harvard University, Boston, where they presumably still exist. Prof. Jagadhar Zadoo later passed on his copy of the translation to a "loved friend" of his, obviously for publication, but nothing followed. Fortunately, NSKRI is in possession of a fragmentary copy of the Kashmiri translation of "Don Quixote", which it intends to publish in the near future. On publication, the work is bound to enrich Kashmiri prose.

3 October, 1997 - Vol. I, No. 2

3.1 N.S.K.R.I. Scholars To Set Out In Search Of Sharada Manuscripts

Scholars at NSKRI are contemplating to go on an extensive tour in search of Sharda manuscripts, wherever these may be found, in the country or even elsewhere. The project is likely to be launched soon after the proposed Kashmiri Pandit cultural heritage exhibition is over, or could be even earlier. It is believed that there is a good haul of Sharada manuscripts in several places in the country like Nalanda, Hoshiarpur, Madurai, Chennai and Mysore, and in Nepal. Nothing has been done so far to trace and explore this rich treasure. George Buhler, it may be recalled had collected Sanskrit manuscripts from "Kashmir, Rajputana and Central India", and published his report in 1877. Not many followed his lead afterwards.

The Maharaja's government set up a Research Department in Srinagar which did some significant work way back in the twenties and published a whole series of Kashmir Shaiva texts under the able stewardship of Mahamahopadhyaya Madhusudan Kaul Shastri and Mahamahopadhyaya Mukund Ram Shastri. Soon after independence the tempo slowed down and came almost to a grinding halt after sometime.

The nomenclature of the Research Department was changed to Research and Publications Department and then to Research, Libraries and Museums, but nothing significant came out of this exercise as very little was done to study and publish the collection of Sharada manuscripts lying with it. This despite the fact that a scholar of the stature of Prof. P.N.Pushp headed the department for quite some time. Perhaps it was government policy at that time not to encourage any work in Sanskrit or non-Islamic studies.

The Department was later tagged on to the Kashmir University, but the policy of the state administration remaining what it was, the situation did not show much improvement due to extra academic considerations. The cultural policy of the J&K Cultural Academy too did not prove to be any different. While anything pertaining to pre-Islamic cultural past was mostly an anathema to it, the Academy electrified itself into action to put up a grand statewide year-long show depicting Islamic contribution to Kashmir's culture as part of the official programme to celebrate completion of 1400 years of the advent of Islam.

Nor can the Kashmiri Pandits themselves be absolved for the cultural predicament they have landed into, leading to the neglect of the Sharada script. The fact is that an overall cultural drift could be witnessed in the community, particularly after independence, taking them far away from their moorings and placing them in situations that could eventually wipe out their identity as a distinct social and cultural entity. Yet nobody seemed to care less. One may hardly like to believe it, but the fact is that policies for their cultural extinction were being deliberately conceived and put into execution at various levels without as much as a whimper of protest from them. Even today, after the trauma of exodus, not much thought is being given by leaders of the community to adopt a cultural agenda. The result is obvious: cultural traditions are disappearing. It is a sad commentary on the present predicament of Kashmiri Pandits that despite their eagerness to crow over others for their intellectual superiority, there are hardly half a dozen persons in the community who are well acquainted with the Sharada script, and of them not many are competent scholars.

NSKRI's decision to revive interest in the Sharada script and discover the literary wealth hidden in Sharda manuscripts must be viewed in this context . It also arises from a genuine desire to promote research and scholarship in the field. NSKRI hopes that its labours will be rewarding and its scholars will be able to make some really significant and interesting discoveries when they set out on their mission.

3.2 Portrait Gallery of Kashmin Pandit Scholars

NSKRI has commissioned a young and upcoming artist, Sunil Handu to paint portraits of eminent Kashmiri Pandit scholars and men of letters of the present and the preceding century. The idea is to revive and perpetuate the memory of those who have brought honour to the community through their outstanding contributions in the field of learning and letters.

Born in Srinagar in 1965, Sunil Handu was initiated into the world of art in early childhood. Sketches from the Jataka tales inspired him to take to painting under the guidance of his Guru Shri Bhaskar Nath. So did the illustrations of Puranic and other mythological tales. During his formative years, young Sunil Handu was deeply impressed by the art of Peter Paul Rubens. Soon he attracted attention towards his paintings by winning several state level awards. He also got interested in drawing cartoons and made his mark by winning the 3rd position in the national cartoon contest held in 1995.

The young talented artist, who has been living in Delhi since the outbreak of militancy in Kashmir in 1990, has already started working on the portraits, expecting to complete them in about two months time. Among those whose portraits he has been asked to paint in the first phase are Nityananda Shastri, Govinda Kaul, Anand Kaul, Sahaz Bhatt, Krishna Joo Razdan, Keshav Bhatt Shastri, Prof. Jagaddhar Zadoo, Prof. S. K. Toshkhani and Swami Lakshman Joo. On being completed, the portraits will adorn the NSKRI office in Delhi for members of the community to see and feel proud of.

3.3 The case of Damodar's missing Rajatarangini

A question of history

Kalhana started the tradition of historiography in India with his monumental work, the Rajatarangini in 1148-50 A.D. Taking a vast historical canvas into his sweep, he showed a keen understanding of human affairs and a sharp critical eye in depicting the socio-political life of Kashmir. The tradition set up by him was followed by Jonaraja in his 'Jaina Rajatarangini', about three centuries later, in quite an admirable manner, covering the period of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin and his predecessors. Shrivara, his disciple, picked up the thread of the narrative after his sudden death in 1459 A.D. and went on to cover the period upto Hassan Shah's regime. Shrivara's Rajatarangini (1459- 77 A.D.) is almost as sublime as that of Kalhana, though its range is much narrower. Pragyabhatta and his pupil Shuka updated the historical narrative in their sequels to Rajatarangini and brought it down to Akbar's conquest of Kashmir in 1586 A.D. Thereafter the tradition of writing historical chronicles in Sanskrit is said to have stopped. Or did it really?

Ishwara Kaul's 'Durbhikshatarodayasta' can also be classified as a historical narrative, describing as it does the severe famine of 1878. Yet another historical work in Sanskrit that is worth mentioning is the Rajatarangini sequels attempted by Prof. Govind Razdan which were serialized in a Sanskrit magazine "Shri" brought out from Srinagar.

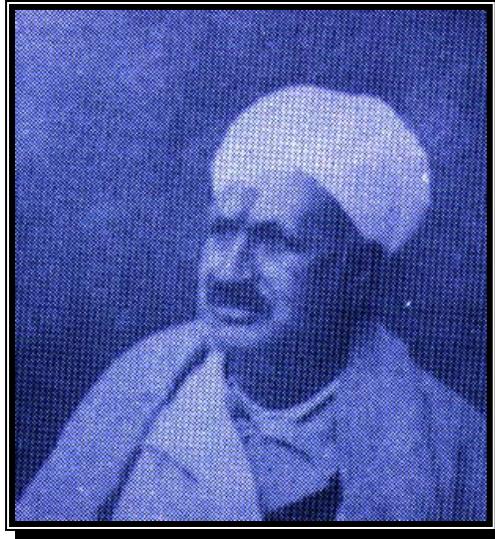
Recently, however, a significant bit of evidence fell into the hands of Shri S.N.Pandita of NSKRI core group, which points to the existence of yet another sequel to Rajatarangini written by Pandit Damodara, one of the most gifted Sanskrit scholar of his times. Damodara died in 1892 in an epidemic even as Stein's translation of Kalhana's Rajatarangini was under preparation. According to Sh. Pandita, records show that Pandit Damodara, a friend of Stein, had set himself to the task of writing yet another sequel to Rajatarangini, carrying the narration forward from Akbar's reign to his own times. Stein, who had seen some parts of this work, wrote: " Had Pandit Damodara been spared to complete it, his work would have shown that Kalhana could have found generations past no worthier successor." Writing about his scholastic endowments. George Buhler had observed earlier that "he would shake Sanskrit prose or verse alike from the sleeve of his garment."

With such talent, Pandit Damodara could have really produced a very impressive work, giving an authentic account of historical events down to his own time. A quite pertinent question that needs to be asked is what happened to this important record of Kashmir's history of a very critical period? Is it

still existing or has it been destroyed for obvious reasons? Why has nobody cared to make any mention of it so far? Nothing is known about the fate of Ishawara Kaul's 'Durbhikshatarodayasta' and Prof. Govind Razdan's sequel to Rajatarangini either.

These questions assume great significance in the context of Kashmiri Pandit exodus from Kashmir today. Is there any one who can provide the answers?

3.4 Pandit Govind Kaul Another Kalhana



Pandit Govind Kaul

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

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

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

With the winding up of the Translation Department in 1884, it was a trying time for G.K. He lost his job and could not find any alternative avenue to pursue his scholastic goals. Eventually, he had to

settle for a teacher's job at the state run Sanskrit Pathshala in Srinagar. But that too did not last and he was again without a regular job.

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

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

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

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

3.5 Keshav Bhatt Shastri's Legacy bequeathed to NSKRI

When Pandit Keshav Bhatt Shastri decided to set up a printing press in Srinagar in the early decades of the present century, his was not exactly a commercial proposition. What he was mainly interested in was to publish books on Kashmiri Pandit heritage, both religions and cultural, for the benefit of the younger generation in particular. The publication programme could be sustained by undertaking assorted printing jobs from clients which could generate income. And his plans did indeed take a practical shape with a whole series of low-priced, affordable editions of Sanskrit texts pertaining to Kashmiri Pandit religious traditions rolled out from the press for those interested.

With the passing away of the learned Pandit, and passage of time, the initial enthusiasm waned and the books began to go out of print. Then came the exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits in 1990, which created a situation in which it was not possible any more to continue the programme or to bring out fresh editions of the already printed books.

It was in such circumstances that Sh.M.L. Pandit, of core group of NSKRI, met Sh. S.N. Jotshi, Pandit Keshav Bhatt Shastri's grandson and the present proprietor of the press in Jammu, during his recent visit. Impressed, perhaps, by the agenda of NSKRI, as explained to him by Sh. Pandit, Sh. S.N. Jotshi offered the rights of publishing their entire range of such books to NSKRI. Overwhelmed by this gesture, Sh. Pandit readily accepted the offer on behalf of the Institute. NSKRI will be publishing some of the books from this series. Infact the process has already begun with the collection of some of the immediately available copies of these out-of-print- books. These were offered by Pandit Kashi Nath Handu who also has appreciated the work being done NSKRI.

These valuable texts, which include Tirtha Mahatyamas and works relating to Kashmiri Pandit religious customs, rituals and traditions, are at present being examined by the reputed Kashmiri scholar, Dr. C. L. Raina on request by NSKRI, to assess as to which of them could be reprinted or used in any other manner deemed proper.

3.6 Book Review

Roopa Bhavani Rahasyopadesha: Reflections on the True Self

Roopa Bhavani, or Alakh Ishwari as some prefer to call her, is revered next only to Lalleshwari as a great woman saint and mystic of Kashmir. Quite a number of people, particularly those belonging to the Dhar families of Kashmiri Pandits, regard her as an incarnation of goddess Sharika, and worship her as such. To them her 'Rahasyopadesha' is a sacred text - a work of great spiritual significance providing guidance and inspiration through the ups and downs of life.

As a poetess, Roopa Bhavani, who lived in the 17th century, composed verses much in the manner of Lalleshwari, whom she has referred to in most reverential terms. Echoes of Lalleshwari's Vakhs can be heard clearly in many of her verses even as she talks of the essential oneness of individual and cosmic consciousness. Experiencing the ecstasies of this union, as a goal of human life, forms the dominant strain of her poetic expressions. Roopa Bhavani's spiritual quest, as reflected in the Rahasyopdesha leads one through her mystical experiences to revelations about the true nature of self. However, the archaic touch that she has preferred to give to her language, perhaps to lend it an authentic aura, sometimes appears to obscure the meaning at least for those who are not familiar with her philosophy. True, her sayings passed on from generation to generation through oral tradition for quite some time before they were written down in the Sharada script, but this esoteric element kept their appeal confined to a few initiates. For the masses at large, to understand her message obscurity could well be a barrier.

The problem was partially solved by Dr. Shiv Nath Sharma who edited the 'Rahasyopadesha' verses and brought them out in the Devanagari script in 1941. While this helped to spread Alakhishwari's message to a wider audience, the need for its lucid interpretation and translation into English continued to be intensely felt. Dr. C.L.Raina, eminent Kashmiri scholar and an authority on Shakta philosophy, has now fulfilled that need in his brilliant translation -cum- commentary on the "Rahasyopadesha" under the title "Mystic Revelation of Shri Roopa Bhavani." Showing amazing competence, Dr. Raina has decoded the mystic symbology encapsuled in Roopa Bhavani's aphorisms and aphorisms they are despite Dr. Raina's assertion that they are " lucid analytical poetry"- making it possible for the ordinary reader to capture Roopa Bhavani's spiritual insights into man's relationship with Nature and God.

In the book " Mystic Revelation of Shri Roopa Bhavani", Dr. Raina has not attempted just literal or word for word translation, but tried to explore the whole world of meanings behind the word, making his way through a maze of concepts, allusions, symbols, motifs and patterns of thought, sifting a pan-Indian stock of philosophical terms before presenting his interpretation. The Rahasyopadasha comprises four different works of Roopa Bhavani: the 'Nirvana- Dash-Shloki-Stava'. 'Vakya Manjari'. 'Svanubhava-ullasa-Dashkam' and 'Antar Drishti' all of which have been analysed and explained in the light of yoga. Vedanta and Shaiva-Shakta streams of thought. According to Dr. Raina, his interpretations of Roopa Bhavani are based on what he calls his " integrated approach". He has splendidly succeeded in his efforts to guide the reader through the text to the great mystic's dazzling vision of "final beatitude".

Well known Punjabi poet and writer Amrita Pritam's brief but beautiful forward is indeed interesting. It would have further enhanced the value of the book if some information had been given about the painting on the cover page and the ones on the inner pages.

To conclude, one cannot but be inclined to pray with Dr. C.L. Raina, asking Alakh Ishwari to "bless us to visit Her shrines again which are the Shakti Pithas of Kashmir."

Shri Roopa Bhavani Rahasyopdesha

Mystic Revelations of Shri Ropa Bhavani" by Dr. C. L. Raina

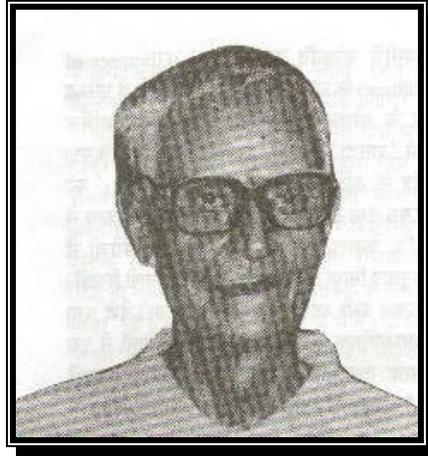
Shri Alakh Sahiba Trust, Jammu
pp:134 Price: not given.

3.7 Proverbial Scholar

The memory of Pandit Ratanakanth Razdan in its colloquial form "Ratha Razdan" lived in Kashmir until as late as 1900. This great scholar and a very fast writer is today an unknown name, inspite of the fact that as a youth he would write whole text in one day what his teacher expounded in a fortnight. He is credited with having been able to habitually write six hundred Sanskrit S'lokas a day and as amazing fast writer wrote complete Bhagavadgita while his fellow companion busied himself to a meal. It will be welcome if any living Razdan can trace his or her ancestry to this proverbial scholar.

3.8 Scholar 'Kamal' passes away

With the sudden and tragic death of Prof. Janaki Nath Kaul "Kamal" in a road accident in Jammu on 15th October 1997, Kashmir has lost yet another Sanskrit scholar and writer of eminence. The Kashmiri Pandit community was stunned by the sad news, finding it difficult to believe that the acclaimed translator and commentator of 'Panchastavi' and 'Bhavani Sahasranama' is no more. It was only in June this year that the entire community felt proud on his being honoured by the President of India for his outstanding contribution to Sanskrit.



Janaki Nath Kaul "Kamal"

A loving and unassuming person. Prof. Janaki Nath Kaul "Kamal" displayed none of the outward trappings of a profound scholar that he was. Born in 1914 in Srinagar, he earned early fame as a Hindi poet and writer. Starting his professional career as an educationist, he remained associated with the D.A.V. Institute throughout his life and retired from it as the Professor and Head of Department of Sanskrit. His English translation of the 'Panchastavi', as also of 'Bhavani Sahasranama', pointed to the range and depth of his scholarship. His translation and commentary on Shankra's 'Vedanta Dimdimah' were greatly applauded by scholars. The erudite Prof. Kamal was a winner of several awards and honours at state and national level. In 1990, he won the Sanskrit Research Scholarship of J&K Dharmartha Trust. In 1992, the U.P. government honoured him with the Sharda Samman for his extraordinary service to Hindi as a non-Hindi speaking writer. He was honoured at the global Kashmiri Pandit Summit held in Jammu in June 1997 for his attainments as an erudite scholar. During his last days, Prof. "Kamal" was engaged among other things in research on Lalleshwari's verses, a subject that was dear to his heart throughout.

NSKRI deeply mourns the loss of the departed scholar, feeling that it has created a void that is difficult to fill.

4 November 1997 - Vol. I, No. 3

4.1 Encyclopaedia of Kashmiri Culture

Project to be launched soon by NSKRI

Yet another pioneering work of great importance is being undertaken by N. S. Kashmir Research Institute shortly in the shape of preparation of an encyclopaedia of Kashmir culture. A major project of the Institute, the encyclopaedia will cover the whole gamut of Kashmir's cultural, artistic, philosophical religious and literary traditions. This will include architecture, sculpture, folk art, festivals, rituals as well as performing arts like music, dance, folk and classical theatre, in fact everything that constitutes the basic weave of the Kashmir's thousands of years old rich cultural heritage.

Top ranking scholars in various fields of Kashmir studies will be approached and involved in this ambitious project and entrusted with preparation of material of different subjects.

A committee of these scholars will be formed and requested to go into all aspects of the project and prepare an exhaustive outline of the contents. It is only after receiving the report of the committee that experts will commence work on the compilation of the encyclopaedia. A meeting of the scholars' committee will be soon called to discuss how best the project can be started.

Though no time-frame has been fixed for the completion of the stupendous work, it is hoped that the first volume of the proposed encyclopaedia will come out in about three or four years. When completed the encyclopaedia is expected to be of great help to all scholars and researchers interested in exploring and studying various aspects of five thousand years of Kashmir's cultural past.

4.2 Sharada Stotram

[In their every day prayers to Sarasvati, Hindus in South India respectfully refer to Kashmir as the abode of the Goddess of Learning Recited by millions in the country, the Sharda Stotram or the Hymn to Goddess Sharda begins with the famous line. "Namaste Sharda Devi Kashmir Puravasini" reflecting the reverence in which Kashmir is held even today for its contribution to learning and literature. We are extremely thankful to Shri C. V. Gopinath, an eminent scholar, for giving us beautiful verse to verse translation of the Stotram together with its full text in both Devanagari and the Roman scripts, which we are reproducing below. Shri Gopinath is also Deputy Director General, Telecom Commission.]

namaste sarade devi Kashmir - puravasini tvamaham prarthayer nityam vidyadanam ca dehi me (1)

namah - salutation; te - to you; sarade- O Sarasvati: devi -O Devi Kasmira- puravasini - one who resides in the city of Kasmira; tvam - you; aham - I; prarthayer-pray to; nityam - always; vidyadanam-gift of knowledge; ca - and; dehi- give; me - to me

O Goddess Sarasvati in the shrine of Sarada Pitha in Kasmira, I offer my salutation to you. I pray always to you to give me the gift of knowledge.

yasraddha dhyarana medha vagdevi vidhivallabha bhaktajihva grasadana samadigunadayini (2)

ya- which; sraddha- faith; dharana- the power of retention; medha - the power of memory; vagdevi-goddess of speech; vidhi- vallabha-the consort of Lord Brahma; bhakta-jihvagra-sadana- the one who dwells at the tip of the tongue of devotees; samadi-guna-dayini- one who grants qualities like mastery over the mind.

You are the faith, the power of retention [of what is learned] and the power of memory. You are the goddess of speech. You are the consort of Lord Brahma. You dwell at the tip of the tongue of devotees. You are the one who grants qualities like mastery over the mind (to your devotees).

***namami yaminim nathalekhalankrta kuntalam
bhavanim bhavasantapanirvapanasudhanadim (3)***

namami-I salute; yaminim-the one who has mastery of everything; natha- lekhalankrta-kuntalam- one whose hair is done to the liking of Lord Brahma; bhavanim-Parvati; bhava-santa- panirvapana-sudhanadim-one who is the river Ganga that extinguishes the fire of the afflictions of samsara.

I salute you, who has mastery of everything, whose hair is done to the liking of Lord Brahma, who is Parvati and who is the jnana-ganga that extinguishes the fire of the afflictions of samsara.

***bhadrakalyani namo nityam sarasvatyani namo namah
vedavedangavedantavidyasthanebhya eva ca (4)***

bhadrakalyai-to Goddess Durga; namah -salutation; nityam-always; sarasvatyani- to Goddess Sarasvati; namo namah- repeated salutations veda-vedanga - vedanta- vidyasthanebhyah- to the abode of knowledge such as Vedas, Vedangas and Vedanta; eva ca-also

My salutation to Goddess Durga always My repeated salutations to goddess Sarasvati who is the abode of knowledge such as Vedas, Vedangas and Upanisads.

***brahmasvarupa parama jyotirupa sanatani
sarvaidyadhidevi ya tasyai vanyai namo namah (5)***

brahmasvarupa - whose nature is Brahman; parama- who is supreme; jyotirupa - whose form is the light of knowledge; sanatani- eternal; sarva- vidya-adhidevi-the presiding deity of all knowledge; ya-who; tasyani- to her; vanyai - to Sarasvati; namo namah repeated Salutations.

My repeated salutations to Sarasvati whose nature is Brahman, who is supreme, whose form is the light of knowledge, who is the presiding deity of all knowledge and who is eternal.

***yaya vina jagtsravam sasvaj jivanmrtam bhavet
inanadhidevi ya tasyai sarasvatyainamo namah (6)***

yaya-vina- without whom; jagat-savam - the entire world; sasval - for ever; jivan - living; mrtanl - dead; bhavet - would become; jnanadhidevi - who is the presiding deity of knowledge; ya - who; tasyai- to her; sarasvatyai- to sarasvati, namo namah - my repeated salutations.

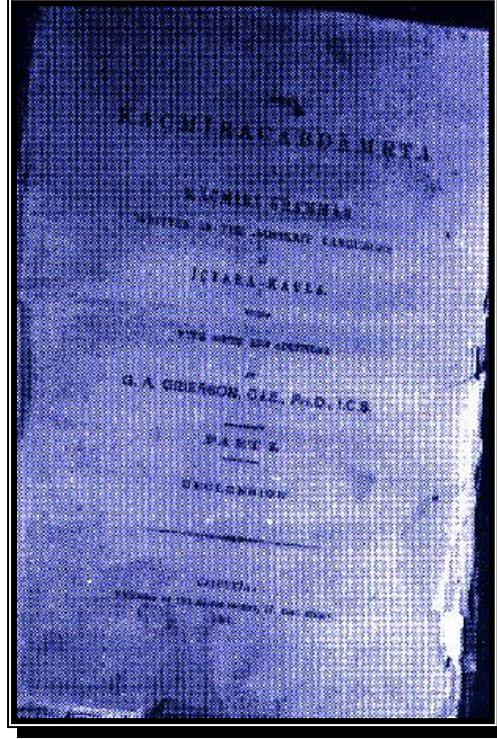
My repeated salutations to goddess Sarasvati, who is the presiding deity of knowledge and without whom the entire world of living beings would become like dead for ever.

***yaya vina jagatsarvam mukamun - mattavat sada
ya devi vagdhisthatri tasyai vanyai namo namah (7)***

yaya vina - without whom; jagat - sarvam - the entire world; mukam - dumb; unmattavat- like mad; sada- always; ya - who; devi - goddess; vak-adhisthatri - the presiding deity of speech; tasyai - to her; vanyai- to Sarasvati; namo namah- My repeated salutations

My repeated salutations to Sarasvati who is the presiding deity of speech, without whom the entire world would be like mute and mad for ever.

4.3 Pandit Ishwar Kaul Panini of Kashmir



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4 Bhagawaan Gopinathji: Birth Centenary Celebrations:

Shaiva is unlimited consciousness

Prof. M.L. Kukiloo explains essentials of Kashmir Shaiva philosophy.

New Delhi: Eminent Kashmiri scholar, Prof. M.L. Kukiloo explained the essence of Kashmir Shaivistic philosophy to an appreciating audience at Bhagawaan Gopinathji Ashram, Pamposh Enclave, on 16th Nov.1997. He was delivering the first Bhagawaan Gopinathji lecture organised by Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust as part of the great saint's centenary celebrations.

In his illuminating lecture, Prof. Kukiloo elucidated some of the basic concepts of Kashmir Shaivism which, he said, does not believe in accepting or giving up any thing, least of all the world, which it holds to be not different from Shiva Himself. This universe, he clarified, is created by Shiva in his own image, for He is unlimited consciousness, and consciousness alone exists. Dwelling on the concept of 'Swatantrya' or absolute independence in Shaiva philosophy, Prof. Kukiloo said that it is the sovereignty of will that makes Shiva both immanent and transcendent. Form and space do not limit Him. Prof. Kukiloo said that according to Kashmir Shaivism, man, nature and God or the ultimate reality, the experience and the experienced are but one. Every individual, the Shaiva philosophy says, is endowed with three inherent faculties of will, cognition and action or Ichcha, Jnana and Kriya, which when in perfect harmony lead one to a state of eternal bliss.

Explaining how Kashmir Shaiva philosophy is different from the traditional religious doctrines, Prof. Kukiloo spoke about its rationalistic approach to man's spiritual evolution. In his lecture, the learned professor also discussed briefly the three Upayas or practical ways - the Anavopaya, Shaktopaya and shambhavopaya - for self realization that Kashmir Shaivism suggests for men of different dispositions.

Prof. Kukiloo, it may be mentioned, is a founder member of the Delhi chapter of Ishwar Ashram of Swami Lakshman Joo and is also among the scholars associated with NSKRI.

4.5 Letters from India

NSKRI invites researchers' attention to a treasure haul

It reads and sounds like the title of a book. And sure it is one. But what makes it important from NSKRI point of view is that this book contains a rich scholarly exchange of letters concerning Sanskrit and studies of antiquities of Kashmir. Brought out as a memorial volume, these letters were exchanged between a Canadian scholar Dr. Straton Booth and a Kashmiri Sanskrit scholar Prof. Nityanand Shastri in the early years of the present century - from 1902 to 1905 to be precise. Interestingly, it also contains references to letters of some of the contemporary Kashmiri scholars who were in communication with the Canadian scholar, the great Shaivite thinker, Harbhata Shastri and Mukund Ram Shastri being among them. Published in London in the year 1908, the volume widely acclaimed both in Europe and America, unfortunately, appears to be lost. Referential evidences of the book are, however, being pieced together by Mr. S.N Pandita of the NSKRI core group, who feels that the letters could well provide a wealth of material on Kashmir's cultural and literary traditions, and so it would be worthwhile to launch an operation discovery to trace out a copy of the book. Following this, further studies on its contents could be undertaken.

As endeavour to procure and retrieve materials relating to heritage and culture of Kashmir forms an important part of its agenda, the NSKRI would like to solicit help from other interested scholars and researchers who might be aware of the existence of the book "Letters from India" in locating the book. The search for the book, lying as it might be in an obscure corner on a dusty shelf in a library or in a home, in India or elsewhere, may be in London itself, could surely prove to be quite a rewarding effort.

4.6 Holy soil from Amarnath and Amriteshwar Bhairva Temple spread on Switzerland hill

Sacred soil of Amarnath and Amriteshwar Bhairva Temple, Kashmir, besides holy soil of Rishikesh, was brought to Switzerland and spread on a hill-top there to mark the conclusion of International Earth Festival. Organised by Foundation 'Friends of People', of Mantreu for peace and prosperity of the world, the Festival was held at Waldenburg, Switzerland from 25th of September to 28th of September, 1997. Three hundred and twenty five delegates from Japan, Canada, U.S.A., Bali (Indonesia), Australia, Newzealand and India, besides thirty European countries, participated, delivering lectures and reciting Mantras throughout the festival. Shiva Yogi Shiva Svambhu Gideon Fontalba, Director of the Festival supervised the deliberations.

As part of the concluding day function, according to a press release issued by Foundation 'Friends of People', Fire was enkindled at a hill-top nearby the festival site which lasted for nearby four hours. The festival came to an end with spreading of holy soils of all the participating countries on the fire site. These included India from where soils of Rishikesh, Amarnath and Amriteshwar Bhairva Temple of Nishat, Srinagar, were brought for the ceremony.

It may be mentioned here that Kashmir's great Shaiva saint, Swami Laxman Joo used to worship Bhairva at the Amriteshwar Bhairava temple and "receive direct vibrations for the welfare of mankind."

4.7 International Earth Festival, Switzerland

Kashmiri Scholar delivers lectures on Kashmir Shaivism

Prof. Makhanlal Kukiloo, a leading Shaiva scholar of Kashmir and a disciple of Swami Lakshman Joo, delivered three lectures on three different topics of Kashmir Shaivism at the Earth Festival held at Waldenburg Wasserfallen, Switzerland, at the end of September, '97.

Prof. Kukiloo was specially invited to attend the festival. According to a press release issued by Foundation 'Friends of the People', Montreux, Switzerland, organisers of the Earth Festival, all the participants from the various countries attending the festival were very much impressed by the contents of these lectures, hoping to be benefitted by the learned professor's experience in Shaiva meditation in future also.

5 January 1998 - Vol. II, No. 4

5.1 Intellectuals endorse NSKRI agenda for preservation of Kashmiri Pandit culture and heritage

In what can be described as a meaningful interaction, intellectuals, scholars, writers and social and cultural workers of the Kashmiri Pandit diaspora in Delhi signalled their approval of the programmes chalked out by N.S. Kashmir Research Institute for the community's survival as a distinct social and cultural entity. At a meeting called by NSKRI on the 55th death anniversary of Pandit Nityanand Shastri on December 21, 1997 in New Delhi to share with them its perceptions on the post-exodus cultural predicament of the Pandits, they paused and pondered over the points put forward by the Institute, overwhelmingly endorsing its stand.



Giving a background of the situation into which this numerically small but culturally significant community has been pushed into by "cataclysmic events" triggered by the "fundamentalist fury of Islamist terrorism" in Kashmir in the recent years, Dr. S. S. Toshkhani, of the NSKRI core group observed: "That a people who have contributed so richly to the cultural and literary traditions of the country are today facing the most sinister threat to their identity is perhaps the greatest tragedy of post-independence India." He lamented that the community itself was drifting away from its cultural roots "at a pace too fast for comfort" while facing the exigencies of the present situation.

"A state of amnesia seems to be overtaking us about our traditions and heritage, our attainments in the fields of learning, literature, aesthetics and philosophy," he added, "so much so that Abhinavagupta and Anandvardhana, Utpalacharya and Somananda, Kalhana and Bilhana, Kshemendra and Somadeva, why even the great Lalleshwari are today for most of us nothing more than shadows from a forgotten past."



Dr. Toshkhani said that it was agonising that priceless treasures of Kashmiri Pandit heritage - old manuscripts, paintings, pieces of art - have been irretrievably lost or irreparably damaged as a result of the fundamentalists depredations and our own unconcern. What is still left - lies scattered in a state of callous neglect.

Realizing the disastrous dimensions of these tragic developments, a group of concerned community members felt the imperative need to save and sustain a culture in exile, so vitally important for giving a meaning to their existence, through a collective and concerted drive at an organised and institutional level. "Not only have all-out efforts to be made to salvage and snatch back whatever is possible from the jaws of time, but also a bulwark has to be built against sinister onslaughts seeking to destroy the Pandit identity", Dr. Toshkhani pointed out, referring to the circumstances in which the N.S. Kashmir Research Institute took its birth on January 19, 1997. The Institute has been since engaged in drawing up parameters for the study of the factors defining and determining this identity, seeking to "explore and bring to light areas and territories so far unmapped and undiscovered in Kashmiri culture, art, aesthetics, language, religion, rituals, philosophy, folklore and allied fields," as put forth in the Institute's introductory brochure.

Heritage Centre

Dr. S.S. Toshkhani presented on behalf of NSKRI, a brief outline of the programmes and tasks the Institute is thinking of undertaking in pursuance of its objectives. The Institute shall endeavour, in the first place, to procure, preserve and document materials relating to Kashmiri Pandit culture and heritage available from all possible sources in the form of manuscripts, books, miniature paintings, sculptures, inscriptions, photographs, artefacts, documents etc. with the ultimate aim of setting up a heritage centre in Delhi which can be used for reference and research purposes by all those interested in Kashmir studies. The task of documentation, preservation, collation, compilation and display of such materials shall be entrusted to experts in the field well-versed in modern methodologies.

Exhibitions

Thematic exhibitions on various aspects of Kashmiri Pandit culture and heritage shall form an important feature of NSKRI's activities. Work on mounting the first of such exhibitions, likely to be held towards March end '98, is in full swing. The exhibition shall have various sections covering Kashmiri Pandit culture, traditions, customs and creative and artistic attainments. Sharda and Persian manuscripts, miniature paintings, artefacts, costumes, folk art and other items of cultural, civilisational and ritual significance will be on display besides old photographs depicting the Kashmiri Pandit way of life.

Search for manuscripts and miniature paintings

The Institute plans to launch an extensive search for Sharada manuscripts and miniature paintings of the Kashmir school. Details of the tour programme NSKRI scholars propose to undertake for this purpose are to be worked out and will be finalised soon after the cultural heritage exhibition to be organised by the Institute is over. The quest is likely to take them to different places in the country and also, possibly, abroad.

Quarterly Research Journal 'Spanda'

'Spanda', a quarterly research journal, is being launched by the Institute, featuring well researched articles on various subjects related to Kashmiri Pandit cultural and literary heritage and shedding light on the community's attainments in different fields of intellectual and artistic activity. The first issue of the journal is under compilation and is expected to be brought out in about two or three months.

Album of Kashmiri Miniatures

Another top priority item on the agenda of NSKRI is the compilation of the first ever album of Kashmiri miniature paintings. No systematic study of the Kashmiri school of art has been attempted so far and no one has ventured to prepare an album of these miniatures, notwithstanding their importance in the overall context of the history of Indian art, the Kangra and Pahari styles being but

offshoots of this precious school of art. While a large number of such paintings have been lost - sold by their unscrupulous owners or others to foreigners and private art collectors in the country in a most callous manner, the Institute has managed to acquire about two dozen Kashmiri miniature paintings and is in the process of acquiring more. The album will be published with an introduction and critical assesment of individual paintings included in it.

Publications Programme

NSKRI is embarking upon an ambitious publications programme to project Kashmir Pandit literary and cultural attainments in new details and dimensions, shedding light on hitherto untouched aspects and uncovered areas. Of the works that are to be taken up for publication, several are already in different stages of preparation.

Encyclopaedia of Kashmiri Culture

A major project which the Institute is contemplating to start is the compilation of an encyclopaedia of Kashmiri culture designed to cover the entire gamut of Kashmir's indigenous cultural, artistic, philosophical, spiritual and literary traditions - a vast canvas indeed. A pioneering project of gigantic proportions, the encyclopaedia will have illuminative entries from competent experts together with photographs and illustrations. Besides philosophy, religion and literature, the contents will include topics related to creative and performing arts like music, dance, folk and classic theatre and other relevant fields. Top ranking scholars will be involved in the project and requested to prepare an exhaustive synopsis of the probable contents.

Critical Editions of Classics

Critical editions, with introduction, notes and comments, of some classics of Kashmiri literature will form yet another important feature of the NSKRI publication programme. Work on Vakhs of Lalleshwari, Kashmiri Ramayana, poetic works of Krishna Joo Razdan, will be taken up in the first phase.

Biographical Sketches of Scholars

This series shall include monographs portraying life and work of eminent Kashmiri scholars like Nityanand Shastri, Govind Kaul, Madhusudan Kaul Shastri, Mukund Ram Shastri, Anand Kaul, Ishwar Koul, Sahaz Bhatt, Swami Lakshman Joo, Prof. Jagaddhar Zadoo and Prof. S.K. Toshkhani. Portraits of these scholars are already being prepared by a young and upcoming artist, Sunil Handoo. The idea is to revive the memory of those of whom the community can feel proud for their outstanding contributions in the field of scholastic endeavour.

Seminars and Symposia

Seminars, symposia, conferences and discussions on various subjects pertaining to Kashmiri Pandit culture and heritage will be organised from time to time as an important activity of the Institute.

Other Publication Projects

Books introducing Kashmir Shaivism, Shakta philosophy, besides tracts and booklets on Kashmiri Pandit religious practices, rituals, places of pilgrimage etc. shall also form part of NSKRI's publication programme.

NSKRI is fully aware of the enormity of the tasks and goals it has ventured to pursue, Dr. Toshkhani said, but its efforts could well take the shape of a movement calling for the involvement of everyone concerned about the predicament of the Kashmiri Pandit community.

The NSKRI agenda for protection, preservation and projection of Kashmiri Pandit culture, heritage and traditions drew tremendous response from the participants who had come from all parts of Delhi and its satellite towns.

Among those who took active part in the discussions were Dr. Susheela Bhan, Dr. B.N. Kalla, Shri Virendra Bangroo, Shri S. J. Raina, Shri Brij Lal Kaul Chaman, Shri L. C. Kaul, Shri Virendra Qazi, Dr. Alope Kalla and Shri Susheel Pandit.

Apart from these, Prof. H. K. Kaul, Prof. Subhash Razdan, Capt. S. K. Tikoo, Col. O. N. Razdan, Shri K. S. Raina and Smt. Veena Pandita also participated in the meeting.



Sh. P. N. Kachru speaking at the intellectuals' meeting

An interesting feature of the meeting was the presence of a number of non-Kashmiri intellectuals who enthusiastically participated in its deliberations which lasted for several hours. These included: Padmashree & Smt. G.B.Meemamsi, Shri N.S. Chakarvarti Dr. & Smt. Uday Kant Mishra, Shri S.P. Punj and Shri Bal Krishna Bhatt.

Speaking on behalf of the NSKRI core group, eminent Kashmiri artist, P.N. Kachru fervently appealed to the participants to understand the exigencies of the situation and come forward to help the Institute in salvaging and collecting cultural and heritage material.

Forgetting the intellectual and philosophic gymnastics, we want to preserve in whatsoever form available relevant material pertaining to our culture - painting, art pieces, artefacts and such other items", Shri Kachru said, emphasizing that it is the Kashmiri Pandit heritage that is most representative and most valuable in the context of Kashmiri culture. It is this foundation that is sought to be dismantled he lamented, referring to the situation created by terrorist violence and asserting: "We want to keep this foundation strong, for on it alone will any superstructure stand."

Supply to us whatever is possible, even if it be some reference or piece of information regarding heritage material, if not the actual items", he said. "Photographic evidence of the Kashmiri Pandit way of life would also be welcome", he added, referring to the forthcoming cultural heritage exhibition that NSKRI is organising. " You can loan these items to us for the purpose of the exhibition if you feel any hesitation in gifting them to the Institute", Shri Kachru appealed. "We want to preserve them,document them for history", he went on to say, " whether it be a piece of art, or a piece of literature, or any find of some value. Even small items need to be preserved and documented. That is what the Institute is all about."

5.2 Sanskrit speeches win big applause at NSKRI intellectuals' meet

As if to underline the link between Sanskrit learning and Kashmir, several speakers at the intellectuals' meeting called by NSKRI on December 21,1997, spoke in Sanskrit. These speeches charmed the audience, who not only received them well but appeared to be swept by them, understanding easily and lapping eagerly every word spoken, contrary to the impression sought to be created by some that Sanskrit is a difficult and dead language. The effect was indeed tremendous, the speakers winning thunderous applause while expressing their views.

C.V.Gopinath, an eminent scholar from Karnataka and a high officer in the telecommunications department, set the tone for eloquence in the country's cultural lingua franca and recalled the great

reverence in which Kashmir has been held throughout India for its outstanding contribution to Sanskrit language and literature.



Shri C. V. Gopinath delivering his Sanskrit speech

He referred to the famous first line of the Sharda Stotram: "Namaste Sharada Devi Kashmiri Puravasini", which he said he had heard as a child from his mother. Answering his query, his mother had explained that Sharda, the Goddess Saraswati, was said to reside in Kashmir as that land had been a great centre of learning and had the same place in the country that head has in the human body.

The Pandits of Kashmir, Shri Gopinath said, held a sway in the past over various branches of knowledge like poetics, ethics, philosophy, prosody and other subjects studied in ancient India. "Who does not know of the works of literary giants like Mammata, the author of *Kavya Prakash*, or the world famous Kalhana, who wrote *Rajatarangini*", he asked, referring to the outstanding attainments of Kashmiri Pandits which hold a pride of place in Sanskrit literature. Praising the Kashmiri Pandit culture and intellectual tradition, he said that Kashmir has indeed blazed a glorious trail as a repository of ideas and values. "Hail Kashmiri Pandit culture! Hail India!" he exclaimed, concluding amidst cheers.

Shri Balkrishna of Sanskrit Bharati another eminent scholar from Karnataka whose mission is to popularise Sanskrit in the country and abroad and who even in ordinary conversation makes it a point to express himself in Sanskrit, said that Kashmir was linked to India mainly through Sanskrit, of which it has been a great centre in the past. "Kashmiri Pandit parampara (tradition) minus Sanskrit is zero", he said emphasizing his point and recalling the peaks of glory that stalwarts of Sanskrit literature produced by Kashmir, like Abhinavagupta, Anand Vardhana, Kalhana and others, had attained. The Pandits, he said, shall have to go back to the Sanskrit roots of their culture and tradition if they want to regain their past glory.

Dr. B.N.Kalla, a well known Kashmiri scholar, also eulogised the contribution of Kashmiris to Sanskrit, referring to great names like Abhinavagupta, Ananda Vardhana, Bhatta Kallatta, Mammata, Utpalacharya, Somadeva, Kalhana, Bilhana and Kshemendra to stress their brilliant achievements in the fields of literature, aesthetics and philosophy. He quoted the popular verse of Bilhana, "Sahodaram kunkuma kesaranam", which testifies to the versatility of Kashmiris in the literary field, claiming that even women and cooks are engaged in composing poetry in Sanskrit and Prakrit in his native land. Paying tributes to Pandit Nityanand Shastri, Dr. Kalla said that he shared his place of glory in the grove of academe with other great scholars like Pandit Harbhata Shastri, Pandit Madhusudan Shastri, Pandit Mukundram Shastri and other stalwarts.

5.3 Glowing Tributes paid to Pandit Nityanand Shastri

Scholar extraordinaire, Pandit Nityanand Shastri was remembered with profound respect and immense admiration on his 55th death anniversary which fell on December 21, 1997. Homage in glowing terms was paid to his memory at a special function organised by NSKRI on the day in New Delhi with speaker after speaker hailing him as a symbol of the scholastic renaissance in Kashmir in the early decades of the present century.

Speaking on the occasion, S.N.Pandita a member of the NSKRI core group, who also happens to be the youngest grandson of the great Sanskrit scholar, said that while offering his respectful homage to him he was paying tribute not to Pandit Nityanand Shastri alone as an individual for his extraordinary scholastic attainments, but to the "whole galaxy of great Kashmiri scholars" that the age threw up and whose spirit of "perseverence, dedication and excellence" he represented." He seems to be a representative of that ethos, that sensitivity of a community" towards cerebral graces that he and his contemporaries like Pandit Harbhata Shastri, Pandit Madhusudan Shastri, Pandit Ishvar Kaul and others shared, Shri Pandita said.



Shri S. N. Pandita paying homage to Pandit Nityanand Shastri

"Reflecting the Kashmiri Pandit mind, NS had respect for knowledge ingrained in him as one of the main traits of his character. Throughout his life he made it a point to go round the house of the master at whose feet he learnt, Pandit Damodar, making parikarma of it as the first thing in the morning", Shri Pandita added.

And in turn, the cream of Western Sanskritists of that age - Straton, Stein, Grierson, Edgerton, J.Ph Vogel, Vereese, Hobbart Winternitz < had developed a unique respect for NS for his great learning.

Through NS, S.N. Pandita said, he was actually paying homage to all the stalwarts of his time - great Kashmiri men of learning whose interface with Western scholars led to an amazing exploration and re-interpretation of Kashmiri literary tradition.

Equally eloquent was the tribute to NS by C.V. Gopinath, an eminent scholar from Karnataka who, choosing to speak in Sanskrit, described him as "Pandit Shiromani" and a "KarmaYogi" dedicated selflessly to the service of knowledge. Shri Gopinath referred to the immense respect in which European scholars held NS, acknowledging the stunningly vast range of his erudition. Expressing his happiness at NSKRI having been named to honour the memory of the profound Kashmiri scholar, he expressed the hope that the Institute would successfully pursue its objective of preserving the Kashmiri Pandit cultural tradition.

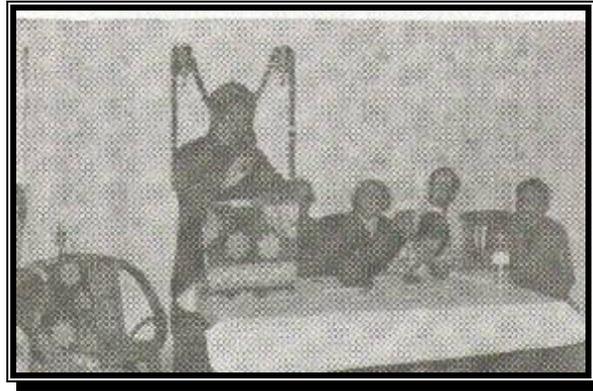
Shri Balkrishna, of the Sanskrit Bharati, Delhi, also praised NS for his outstanding services to Sanskrit, and so did Dr. B.N.Kalla, well known Sanskrit scholar from Kashmir. Both the scholars offered their tributes in Sanskrit like Shri C.V.Gopinath.

But, perhaps, what won everybody's heart in the audience were the simple lines spoken by little Apeksha Pandita in English, tracing her ancestry to Pandit Nityanand Shastri as her great-grandfather.

5.4 NSKRI has alerted cultural defence mechanism to safeguard Kashmiri Pandit identity

C. V. Gopinath

"The rich Kashmir Pandit culture has been subject to onslaughts from time to time, century after century, yet its special significance lies in the fact that it has still been retained in the original form and content", said eminent scholar CV Gopinath while delivering a scintillating speech on culture and defence mechanism at the intellectual's Meeting organised by NSKRI.



An interesting feature of the meeting was the participation of a good number of non-Kashmiri intellectuals in its discussions, including Shri Gopinath who extended hospitality to the participants. These non-Kashmiri intellectuals, mostly from South India, expressed their deep admiration for the Kashmiri Pandit community. For its immense contribution to Sanskrit and Indian culture.

"History will tell you Shri Gopinath explained, " that whenever there is an onslaught on any culture, the defence mechanism of that culture has always stood it in good stead."

Emphasizing his point, Shri Gopinath said, "The greatest example of such defence mechanism being alive in the Kashmiri Pandit community is the birth of N.S. Kashmir Research Institute itself. During the last one or two decades there has been a lot of disturbance in Kashmir, and the Kashmiri Pandits have been driven out from their own places, their own motherland. In such circumstances even the culture defence mechanism tends to get weakened to loss its strength that is why the Pandits are feeling a great danger to their identity."

Declaring that Indian culture is incomplete without Kashmir Shaivism, Kashmiri cultural and literary tradition, Shri Gopinath assured the Kashmiri intellectuals concerned about retaining their cultural identity outside their native land that "India's defence mechanism" was there to protect them. "We are all here to see that we safeguard your identity, because in your identity lies our identity", he said amidst thunderous applause.

5.5 Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri *A collosus among scholars*



Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri

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

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

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

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

1,50,000 verses with great competence and ability. This enhanced further his reputation as a scholar and earned him a cash award of Rs.500 - quite a huge sum those days.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To his Western counterparts he was a kindred spirit. Grierson called him his "old friend". Stein observed: "I shall always be glad to remember him among my friends". Dr. Hutzch records "In him also I hope to have found at once a friend whom I shall never forget". To all those for whom Kashmir

is not just a geographical denomination but a repository of learning and ideas, MRS will ever, remain a guiding star.

5.6 Mahabharata Manuscripts from Kashmir in Prague

The critical edition of the Mahabharata brought out by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune and edited by P. L. Vaidya is largely based on two Sharada manuscripts of the epic from Kashmir. When Prof. Maurice Winternitz of Prague University published his " Mahabharata - the Great Epic of India " in 1925, he too relied on Sharada manuscripts with commentary by Nilakantha, which were found to be more authentic. Not only this, Prof. Winternitz took much help in compiling and completing this work from Prof. Nityanand Shastri.

These Sharada manuscripts, however, were sent out of Kashmir between the years 1923 and 1924. No details are known about these manuscripts since they are lying in the Library of Prague University of the present day Slovakia, which was earlier known as Czechoslovakia. It is not known whether any copy or micro-film of these valuable Mahabharata manuscripts is available in India, but NSKRI shall make efforts to trace them out and obtain a copy from the Prague University. Meanwhile a translation of the full epic in Kashmiri prose by Pandit Suna Ram Razdan is lying with J&K Cultural Academy has still to see the light of the day. The manuscript, purchased by the Academy has one thousand octavio sized pages.

Manuscript of a verse translation of the Mahabharata is lying with the University of Kashmir. A portion from it was published by the Sahitya Akademi in 1959.

5.7 The "Khaat Bazaars" of Amritsar

Interested in a Kashmiri miniature painting? A Sharada manuscript? An antique piece of sculpture? Step into the periodic Khaat Bazaars (cot markets) of Amritsar and chances are that you will find yourself bargaining with footpath peddlers unabashedly putting Kashmiri Pandit culture on sale - especially if you happen to be a foreigner or even an Indian art collector and can afford the astronomical price asked for. It is equally possible that a priceless treasure may be offered to you for a song.

It is not just coincidence that business in such heritage material started flourishing in the recent years, soon after the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir. While it is common knowledge that frenzied groups of Islamist terrorists burnt down or damaged thousands of Kashmiri Pandit houses, not many know the fact that a large number of their houses were ransacked and looted, mostly for the property that the fleeing Pandits left behind but also for more precious items like old manuscripts and miniature paintings. The more clever and sophisticated among the looters knew that these treasure troves could well fetch them a fortune and so they set out foraging for them from one deserted house to another. Finding a new avenue of making easy lucre opening up for them, several of them collected old manuscripts by the kilogram. Some of them must have indeed hit the jackpot! And so while Kashmir is burning, the plunderers are earning.

Thus it is that several shady business houses have cropped up in the past seven or eight years in and around Srinagar.

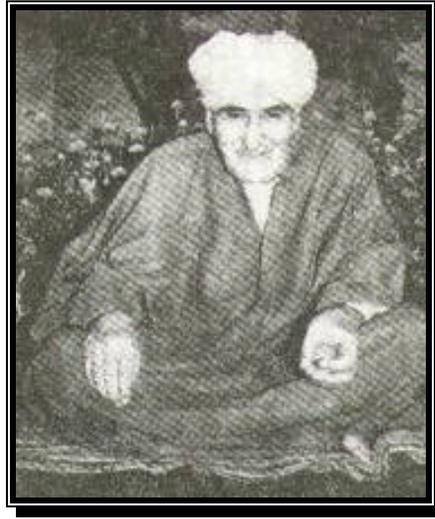
Some of them are acting as fake research centres, as for example the one that has come up near Nishat, with looted manuscripts neatly stacked for sale. These "centres" are doing brisk business, striking deals with collectors, antique dealers and societies. It is here that the peddlers and scrap-dealers from Amritsar are proving of great help.

But why take the trouble of longish trip to on Amritsar Khaat Bazaar? You could easily bump into a dealer in alleys and lanes of Delhi itself. Their visits from the doomed valley to the country's capital in search of channels of collectors, agents of antique houses and organisations, and to make lucrative

bargains of the looted possessions, are getting more and more frequent. Often these people put on a mask of sophistication while on the prowl, well-versed in the art of entrapping potential buyers as they are. Their suave behavior makes many fall to their bait and loosen their purse strings to acquire an old manuscript or a miniature. In a recent case a birch-bark manuscript in Sharda carrying two miniature paintings was offered by one such dealer to an arts centre for a whopping rupees one lakh.

As for the Pandits, most of them are hardly aware of such goings on to be disturbed by the loss of their most valuable treasures. The only way to put a stop to such practices is to acquire these materials at any price possible and preserve them in a heritage centre. NSKRI is contemplating steps to set up such a centre in Delhi something which requires raising of considerable funds. Will members of the Kashmiri Pandit community come forward and cooperate?

5.8 NSKRI offers homage to Pandit Raghu Nath Kukiloo



Pandit Raghu Nath Kukiloo

NSKRI deeply condoles the passing away of Pandit Raghu Nath Kukiloo - saint, scholar and astrologer of great reputation popularly known as "Baigaash". The news of his sad demise was received with great shock by the exiled Kashmiri Pandit community which is already reeling under the impact of losing two of its best known scholars, Prof P. N. Pushp and Pandit Janki Nath Kaul 'Kamal' in just one year or so.

The end came on December 23, 1997 at about 3 P.M. when Pandit Kukiloo had just finished distributing Prasaad among devotees and disciples after his daily worship and had hardly taken a morsel or two of his lunch, according to "Maalini", the quarterly journal of IshwarAshram Trust, Ishber, Srinagar. Suddenly, says the journal, he felt the divine effulgence of Kundalini engulfing him. Trying to address the divine presence, he went into a trance from which he never woke up. Pandit Raghu Nath Kukiloo has, however, left behind him his hallowed memories for the host of his disciples and admirers in the community who looked to him for guidance in spiritual as well as mudane matters. They regarded him as a great yogi, an erudite scholar and a master of astrology gifted with the extraordinary power of clairvoyance.

Born in a scholarly family in the Banamohalla locality of Srinagar in the year 1911, the widely respected Pandit was spiritually inclined from childhood. A Shakta by faith, he was a devotee of the Goddess Tripurasundari. When in Srinagar he would never miss the daily Parikrama (circumambulance) of Sharika Devi at Hari Parvat, according to Shri R.C. Kaul Pamposh an old discipie of Pandit Kukiloo. While he had fathomed the depths of the Shakta philosophy of Kashmir, which he would interpret in his own unique manner, Pandit Kukiloo's understanding of the Vedantic

and Shaiva philosophies was equally profound. He was known for his performance of the annual Pancharatra puja on the occasion of Mahashivaraatri.

Pandit Kukiloo is said to have had a close association with the great Shaivaacharya of Kashmir, Swami Lakshman Joo. Swamiji would make it a point to obtain the blessings of Pandit Kukiloo on his birthday, showing in what high esteem he held him.

Pandit Raghu Nath was a sensitive soul who was moved by the sufferings of the people which he tried to mitigate in his own way through the methods of astrology. The number of people who believed that he could divine the future through accurate astrological predictions was legion, the Pandit having become a living legend in Kashmir. But what endeared him to everyone was his readiness to make himself available to the elite and the commoner alike for consultation and help.

Like hundreds of thousands of his suffering community men, Pandit Kukiloo was forced to leave Kashmir in 1990 under the terrorist threat and take residence at Jammu where he continued with his scholarly and spiritual occupations at 29, Ashok Nagar till his last breath.

While conveying its heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved members of his family, NSKRI joins the entire Kashmiri Pandit community in paying its humble homage to the departed saint and scholar.

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6.1 NSKRI unfolds its plan for Kashmiri Pandit cultural heritage exhibition

Intellectuals pledge support to make it a success

After a gestation of barely three months, NSKRI unfolded its plan for holding the first ever exhibition on Kashmiri Pandit cultural heritage at a meeting with community intellectuals on March 21, 1998. The meeting, presided over by well-known film and TV personality, Shri Arun Kaul, was held at the Constitution Club, Rafi Marg, New Delhi.

It was on December 21, 1997 that NSKRI had presented before them its agenda for preserving and protecting Kashmiri Pandit cultural identity.

"This exhibition will project the real cultural face of Kashmir before the world", said Dr. S. S. Toshkhani, speaking on behalf of the Institute. "A cultural face that has been long hidden from view or else maliciously distorted." Partly blaming his own community for this, Dr. Toshkhani said that cataclysmic though it was, it was the exodus that had waken up the Pandits to the threat to their identity. "It is not an identity fabricated in the 14th century," he said, "it is an identity that has been shaped by 5000 years of our culture, it being the 5074th year of our calendar today. When we speak we speak with an authenticity given to our voice by these thousands of years of our existence as the original people of Kashmir -- the people of the Nilamat Purana."

Dr. Toshkhani asserted that if there was a cultural mainstream in Kashmir, it was represented by the Pandits despite their small numbers. "If there is only a single person speaking a particular language, linguistically that person and that language are important and, therefore, must be protected," he observed.

Disclosing that the exhibition was scheduled to held from 12th April to 14th April, 1998, Dr. S. S. Toshkhani said that it would be broadly divided into three sections comprising miniature paintings of the Kashmiri School, a saga of Kashmiri Pandit scholarship for the past century or so as well as Sharada and Persian manuscripts and the Kashmiri Pandit way of life depicted through costumes, artefacts, objects of daily and ritualistic use, folk art patterns and old photographs.

"Our collection of miniatures is finest and most rare", he said, "revealing how vibrant the tradition must once have been".

"Equally appalling is our ignorance of the achievements of a whole galaxy of our scholars to whose erudition European Indologists have paid highest tributes. NSKRI has been named after one such outstanding scholars, Prof. Nityanand Shastri, whose guidance Western academicians constantly sought through correspondence or in perscin. Some of this correspondence shall also be put on view", Dr. Toshkhani said.

Manuscripts in Sharada, Kashmir's indogeneous script which hardly a handful of people know today, shall be yet another major feature of the show, he revealed. "How sad it is", he said, "that when the question of adopting an official scripts for Kashmiri came up, no one except poet Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor espoused the claim of Sharada." Official bodies like the J & K Cultural Academy and the Centre for Central Asian Studies, or the State Research and Publication Department, did nothing to preserve the heritage these manuscripts embodied. At present these manuscripts are lying at the Centre in a very bad shape. Dr. K. N. Pandita made an effort to salvage them by having them copied, but to no avail, Dr. Toshkhani disclosed. "Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan sanctioned an amount of Rs 3 lakhs for getting a descriptive catalogue of these manuscripts prepared, but instead of preparing such a catalogue more than half the grant was spent on buying steel almirahs", he said. "For obvious reasons", he quipped. The NSKRI is now thinking of pursuing the case from where it had been left, he revealed. After Buhler, it will be NSKRI scholars who will set out in search of Sharada manuscripts from wherever these could be found, he added.

Another section of the show shall depict the Kashmiri Pandit way of life: costumes, folk art patterns, artefacts, objects of daily and ritualistic use and the like, Dr. Toshkhani said, adding that there was much scope for research in these fields. "It is the Hindus who preserved folk art forms in Kashmir. Even some of the commercial arts like shawl-weaving or wood-carving are of Hindu origin, not to talk of the exquisite Kashmiri bronzes, he observed. Calling upon Kashmiri intellectuals, writers and cultural activists to join the NSKRI in its task to preserve and project Kashmiri Pandit culture, he said that the Institute did not believe in any "you" and "we" divide. NSKRI is not just an organisation, it is a movement -- everybody's movement in the community.

Shri P.N. Kachru of the NSKRI core group explained how the exhibition had been conceived and how it was to be executed. "It is not just an exhibition of culture", he said, "it is an exhibition of lost culture." "You have been receiving 'Unmesh' ", he added. "It is serving a specific objective -- that of presenting different aspects of the history and culture of the Kashmiri Pandits. Its contents are of lasting value. Soon we are going to bring out our quarterly research journal, 'Spanda'. Our immediate attention is, however, concentrated on the heritage exhibition. The way we have been able to gather a very good collection of exhibits points to the cooperation we have received. We have a two-fold purpose in mounting the display. Firstly, to revive interest in our present generation, and in the generations to come, in aspects of our culture which we have almost forgotten. Secondly, to encourage scholars, researchers and art historians to study it", Shri Kachru said.

Giving details about the three sections of the exhibition, Shri Kachru said that when murals in Kashmir were demolished, people took to preserving art through miniatures and book illuminations. All sections, he said, would be accompanied by write-ups giving the background of each item displayed. The portraits of scholars would have small biographical notes to indicate their achievements. Books and manuscripts would be displayed to facilitate research. "Then there will be folk patterns which will be drawn in the manner an old lady in a Kashmiri Pandit house-hold would draw them -- the 'Vyug' and the 'Haramandul' and the 'Krul'. "The 'Krul', he pointed out, "was not executed by a brush, but by knuckles dipped in dye, which would create what is called the 'almond' or the 'mango' motif. It had a thousand variations which could be connected by a stalk."

Shri S. N. Pandita urged the participants to help the NSKRI in putting up the show. "If the perspectives we have presented before you merit appreciation," he said, "then I beg you to help us, but if you think it is better to throw them in the dustbin, please don't hesitate. On our part we will keep our commitment, but please come forward and cooperate in every possible manner. It is not as though 'we' are doing it, it is all of 'us' doing it together. If we fail to do it now, then history will record that these were the hands from which it slipped into the oblivion. If we are able to keep it together, then history will remember these hands for protecting our heritage. "

Shri Virendra Bangroo offered to conserve free of cost items received on loan for the display, especially documents and paintings. He referred to the history of Kashmir art, recounting how Kashmiri artists were employed to paint murals at Alchi in Ladakh and some monasteries in Tibet. Taking the audience round the proposed three sections of the exhibition mentally, Shri Bangroo said that he designed to have a 'zoona dab' (bay window) constructed in the Kashmiri architectural style displaying typical Kashmiri Pandit ambience.

Responding to the appeal for cooperation, different speakers pledged their support to NSKRI efforts for preservation of Kashmiri Pandit cultural heritage. These included Dr. B. N. Kalla, Shri Triloki Nath Kundan, Shri R. N. Kaul, Shri Mohan Nirash, Ms Kishori Kaul, Ms Kshama Kaul, Shri Rajendra Premi, Shri Shambhu Nath Bhat Haleem, Dr. Utpal Kaul, Shri Shantiveer Kaul, Ms Nancy Kaul and Shri C. V. Gopinath.

Prof. Subhash Razdan rose to thank the participants for their active interest in the NSKRI programme for the exhibition. He expressed his happiness over the meeting ending on a positive note. "Kashmiri miniatures are the nerve cell of Kashmiri culture", Prof. Razdan said; "these paintings could help us to know about our roots."

Shri Arun Kaul, said in his presidential remarks that an exhibition on a rather small scale would make a good beginning. He was of the view that displaying miniatures at the exhibition was a good idea. "Kashmiri miniatures are essentially 'Bhatta' (Kashmiri Pandit) miniatures", he said. "May be the Mughal miniatures brought in different colours, a different style and luminosity, but we had our own colour sense", he observed, referring to a Swachhanda Nath painting lying with Shri Utpal Kaul, as an example. "The blue colour in this painting is just fantastic. I haven't seen such blue in Indian miniatures."

Shri Kaul said it would be worthwhile even if only ten paintings which people would remember were displayed at the exhibition.

"I agree with those who say that work on Kashmiri culture or art has not been done by Kashmiris -- not by many Kashmiris anyhow", Shri Kaul said. "We have Pratapaditya Pal who has come out with two major volumes on Kashmir ivory pieces. Again, it is gratifying to note that the centre of Indian philosophy has been named after Abhinavagupta, but not in Kashmir, nor in Delhi, but in Lucknow. The Centre for Sanskrit and Indian philosophy in Lucknow University has been named after Abhinavagupta."

Shri Utpal Kaul was of the view that culture was a way of life and not just limited to academic exercises. "We may not know, but more than 350 scholars in different universities all over the world have studied Kashmir's cultural past, obtaining their doctoral degrees on subjects related to it", he disclosed. On Anandavardhana and his suggestion (dhvani) theory alone as many as fifty scholars are engaged in research at present, he said.

"Culture is the mainstay of our life, and Kashmir is the fountainhead of Indian culture," he said amidst applause.

Shri Mohan Nirash, well known Hindi poet, cautioned that while it was good to take steps for preservation of past heritage, we should not let the present slip out of our hands as our today's achievements are going to be tomorrow's heritage. He pleaded for recording interviews with such talented persons of the community as are past fifty, taking them down the memory lane and asking them about their life and experiences.

Shri Shambhu Nath Bhat 'Haleem' made a forceful plea for keeping the Kashmiri language alive as a language of everyday parlance. "It will be impossible for us to preserve our culture if we are not able to preserve our language, because language is the foundation on which the edifice of culture stands. If this foundation is weak, we shall be only building castles in the air", he said.

Speaking in Sanskrit, Dr.B.N. Kalla said that the NSKRI should pick up the threads from where Prof. Nityanand Shastri had left them. There can be no Sanskriti without Sanskrit, he said, urging the Institute to go back to the Sanskritic roots of Kashmiri culture.

6.2 Pandit Jagan Nath Siboo honoured

Pandit Jagan Nath Siboo has been given the 'Samma-Ditthi Award' by the Foundation of Indology and Culture, Ajmer, for his scholarly work in Hindi, 'Kashmir Shakta Vimarsh'.

The award which was announced recently by the Patron-cum-Chairman of the Foundation, Shri B. S. Sahwal, consists of a 'Certificate of Honour', a memento bearing Shri Chakra, a citation and a cash prize of Rs. 1,501/- as a token of respect. Dr. Abhinav Kamal Raina received the award on his behalf as Shri Siboo could not receive it in person due to bad health.

The book, a scholarly exposition of the Shakta tradition of Kashmir, is a valuable contribution to Indology, according to the Foundation Chairman, Shri Sahwal. It may be recalled that the book has already been awarded by the HRD Ministry.

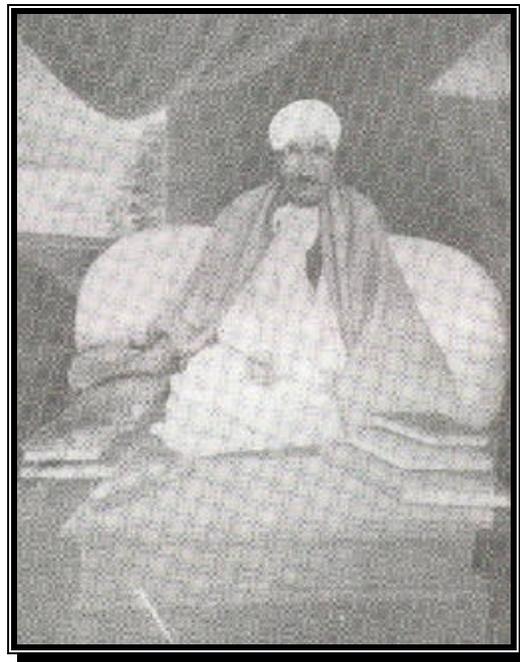
Kashmir has been a great centre of the tantric cult of Shakti worship for centuries, a faith that links it spiritually with Kerala and Bengal. Almost every Kashmiri Pandit family is devoted to one

manifestation of the Mother Goddess or other, with Bala, Sharika, Maharajna, Jwala, Bheda, Mahakali, Tripur Sundari, being their traditional tutelary deities. However, the Kashmir Shaktas consider Shiva and Shakti, symbolized by the bindu and the trikona, as one and inseparable.

It goes to the credit of Shri Siboo that he has fathomed the depths of the Shakta doctrine and, through his lucid comments and explanations, brought its profound truths within the grasp of the ordinary readers. Yet the 'Kashmir Shakta Vimarsh' is a brief work and while congratulating Shri Siboo for the honour he has received for his pioneering work, NSKRI expects the profound scholar to throw more light on a philosophy that forms the bedrock of faith for most Kashmiri Pandits. The book, 'Kashmir Shakta Vimarsh' also needs to be translated into English -- a work for which NSKRI looks to the eminent scholar, Dr. C. L. Raina.

6.3 Pandit Sahaz Bhat

The scholar with a healing touch



Pandit Sahaz Bhat

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

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

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

Persian, Arabic and of course, Sanskrit. He started taking Sanskrit and Persian lessons at home from his family guru, but discontinued these when the teacher treated him harshly.

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

A deeply religious person, S.B. was, however, catholic and liberal in his outlook, refusing to distinguish between man and man on the basis of caste, creed or colour. He was always immaculately dressed wearing a saffron and sandalwood paste tilak on his forehead. While treating his patients, the religiously inclined physician would not depend on his pharmacopeia alone, he would even take recourse to reciting prayers in Sanskrit or Arabic if only for a psychological effect on the patient. Nobility, generosity and philanthropy were his basic character traits that he displayed at the professional level often. He would treat the poor generally free of cost, though he would not hesitate from accepting large sums from his affluent patients as he needed money to run his charitable clinic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inputs by:

Dr. R.N. Bhat

Dr. Ayushyaman Bhat

S. N. Pandita

6.4 Three hundred fifty foreign scholars have obtained doctorate on ancient Kashmir

Utpal Kaul

"There is hardly any corner of the world where people are not working on ancient Kashmir, its culture, its contribution", said Shri Utpal Kaul, speaking at the intellectuals' meet at Constitution Club, New Delhi. He revealed that there are 350 scholars who have obtained their doctorates from different universities in the world for their research on Kashmir. "Only the other day", he said, "I received a letter from a lady in Pizza, Italy, who is working on Kshemendra. Sometime back a researcher from Tokyo University came to me asking me for a copy of the Logaksha Griha Sutra. Till then I had not heard its name even. It took me 15 days to trace the work with the help of some local people, but I managed to obtain it. It was lying in an old sack in which Sanskrit manuscripts preserved by Maharaja Pratap Singh were lying. These were dumped into the sack in 1947 and are in a very bad condition. The book had been published in 1898 and I made four sets of it, giving two to the Japanese research scholar. He told me that they were five scholars working on the five-year project. The fact is that there is hardly any university in the world where work is not being done on one or another aspect of Kashmir's ancient culture and literature."

Shri Kaul further said: "There is a big art gallery in London, -- the Oriental Gallery. I haven't been there but one of my friends who has told me that in the Indian Section only three things about Kashmir have been highlighted -- the Martand Sun temple as an exquisite example of Kashmir's temple architecture; the Vaishnava art temples of Kashmir and Kashmir's contribution to Buddhism. That is all. No Sufism, no Islamic culture, no Sheikh Abdullah!

"Of the 52 Tirtha Mahatamyas only 23 or so are available in Jammu and Kashmir, but there are full records of each of them in the Leipzig University, Germany. As many as 50 students in the university are doing their research on Anandavardhana. We may not be knowing, but work on Kashmir's ancient art, culture and literature is being done by foreign scholars. Sadly, we are doing little.

7 May-June 1998 - Vol. II, No. 7 & 8

7.1 'Unmeelan' proves to be an eye-opening event

The first ever exhibition on Kashmiri Pandit cultural heritage leaves people spellbound

On April 12, 1998, people in the national capital opened their eyes on glimpses of the cultural and artistic heritage of the Kashmiri Pandits shown by NSKRI at an exhibition at AIFACS, New Delhi. Titled 'Unmeelan', the exhibition was opened to public view by Dr. Lokesh Chandra, eminent scholar. And what people, who thronged the exhibition on all the four days it remained open, were shown, left them literally rubbing their eyes with wonder. It may not have exactly taken Delhi by storm, but the event, the first of its kind to have ever been organised, did intellectually stimulate and inspire art lovers and the aesthetically inclined as well as those culturally interested in Kashmir.

As Dr. Lokesh Chandra lit the ceremonial lamp to inaugurate the exhibition, a forgotten but fascinating world of culture came alive with rare and beautiful miniature paintings of the Kashmir School, old Sharada and Persian manuscripts, letters and documents relating a saga of scholarship, artefacts and articles of daily and ritualistic use, costumes and folk art patterns and old photographs of social and religious gatherings unfolding unexplored and unknown dimensions of Kashmiri Pandit cultural life.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Lokesh Chandra said that the Kashmiri Pandits had played "a major role in the transformation of India's thought process." Kashmir, he said, was the "crown of India from where culture emanates." There are inscriptions, he said, which reveal that the great temples of Khajuraho were built in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Kashmiri Pandits in their Tantras.

According to Dr. Lokesh Chandra, "the Kashmiri Pandits were not only gifted but they were also equally adventurous." Giving examples of their genius and their adventurous spirit, he said that they went to Central Asia, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan and Phillipines for the dissemination of Indian culture, art and philosophy.

"In Japan the Lotus Sutra is considered to be the greatest and most popular Sutras of Buddhism today," Dr Lokesh Chandra said. "And this Sutra was translated into Chinese in the 4th century by Kumarjiva who was a Kashmiri. His father was from Kashmir and his mother, a princess of Kucha in Central Asia. He is regarded as the greatest Indian stylist of Chinese prose, and one of the eminent Chinese writers. Only four of five years ago the Chinese erected a special monument to Kumarjiva, instituting a very big prize for people who are associated with the cult of Kumarjiva.

"Kumarjiva's father had gone for trade to Kucha. On his way, he stopped at Kashgar, came to Kashmir and then went to Kucha. He left his wife and a son was born to them. His mother declared that she would take the same route to Kashgar, which was called Kashi in ancient times. Even today the Chinese call Kashgar Kashi. That was the place where the Kashmiri Pandits taught the Vedas. Then when they wanted to have the study of Vedangas and other higher subjects, they came to Kashmir."

Dr. Lokesh Chandra referred to yet another gift of the Kashmiri Pandits to Japan --Siddham calligraphy. "There is a tradition in Japan to write Sanskrit shlokas in a very beautiful script called Siddham," he revealed. "It is a major art in Japan and the Japanese learnt this art from two great Kashmiri Pandits, Prajna and Munishri. Even today there is practically no house where you don't find something written in Siddham." Dr. Lokesh Chandra explained that "the ink that is taken to write one bija or akshara cannot be replenished. So you have to take sufficient ink to write that particular mantra. Special dresses are created to write these mantras taking into account the size of the character. So Kashmir has given a sense of tremendous beauty to the people of Japan".

According to Dr. Lokesh Chandra, there is hardly any place in South East Asia where Kashmir is not spoken of as the land of scholars. "They went to Japan, they went to Korea, they went to Phillipines", he said. "A number of Kashmiri Pandits", he disclosed, went to Korea. Tyagabhadra, a Kashmiri, and his disciples were responsible there for the choice of the present capital of South Korea -- Seol."

There was a period in the 14th century when the Mongols were ruling over Iran, said Dr. Lokesh Chandra, giving another example of the role of Kashmiris in the propagation of Buddhism. There were a large number of Buddhist monasteries in Iran at that time, and this is confirmed by several Persian and Arabic texts, he pointed out. "The Americans have made an aerial survey of the Buddhist monasteries in Iran, but the results were never published because it is a politically volatile subject", he revealed. Just before the Islamisation of the Mongols there, the Khan wanted someone to write an account of their history and their religion. And this task, according to Dr. Lokesh Chandra, was accomplished by a Kashmiri Pandit named Kamalshila, who was the royal chartsman of the Mongols.

Dr. Lokesh Chandra further disclosed that in Mongolia proper, Kashmiri Pandits brought the Shilpashastras or canons of creation with them for which they were given free access to the Mongolian court. These canons were based on the aesthetic ideals of the human body or the body modulations stipulated by the Kashmiri Pandits and are followed in Mongolia, in parts of Western Tibet as well as in Kashmir. It is Kashmiri artists who decorated the huge walls of monasteries in Western Tibet in the 10th century, the learned scholar said, and also at Kabo in Lahul, Himachal Pradesh. Alchi in Ladakh was decorated with murals later. In this connection, Dr. Lokesh Chandra referred to a Sharada inscription which, according to him, "could give clue to the whole transmission of art in Western Tibet."

"That is why the Pandits from Kashmir were held in great affection throughout history", Dr. Lokesh Chandra observed. "Whether it was in Centra Asia, whether it was in China, whether in Japan, the Kashmiri Pandits played a very important role in spreading Buddhism and Indian culture", he said, concluding his illuminating speech which the audience listened with rapt attention. He expressed the hope that Kashmir would again hum not only with music, but also with great culture, provided the Pandits made a resolve like the Jews made during their diaspora. He was happy, he said, that an institution like the NSKRI had been started which accepted the Sanskritic tradition. "You have rejected everything that was yours", he pointed out, and it is that rejection that is responsible for the situation in which you find yourself today. You have to make up and say that you will react to every negative thought", he concluded, amidst thunderous applause.

Presiding over the inaugural function, Shri J. N. Kaul, SOS Childrens' Villages of India and President of the All India Kashmiri Samaj, referred to the present predicament of the Pandits and said that the Kashmiri Pandits had passed through many difficult phases in their history. "But inspite of all these happenings, I think we are on the way to further advancement. We have earnestly sought not only physically but also intellectually our place under the sun. Normally, under the circumstances which we have faced, our culture should have been wiped off, but we have always had a rebirth and we have flourished." Shri Kaul said that it was his firm belief that "the Kashmiri Pandit is bound to lead. He is bound to lead by his destiny, by the circumstances of his life, so he must prepare himself for a better performance." He regretted that the Kashmiri Pandits have never been recognised because of their small numbers. "But", he said, "in the circumstances in which we have been thrown today, we have to assert ourselves. We have to say where we are in our journey and put it before the nation. We have always been taught to keep our heads low while talking -- 'nemni-kremni' as the Kashmiri phrase goes. But our children must walk with their heads high."

Lauding the NSKRI for having undertaken to work "in a very important field", Shri J. N. Kaul said that the Institute has been named after a great scholar, Nitvanand Shastri." but there are many Shastris, some of whom may even be sitting here, who are waiting to be re-discovered". Shri Kaul "complimented" the NSKRI "for this beautiful work" ('Unmeelan').

Earlier, in his introductory address, Dr. S. S. Toshkhani said on behalf of the NSKRI that the exhibition was "an attempt to present the real cultural face of Kashmir -- a face that has been long kept away from view". He regretted that "a state of amnesia is today clouding the minds of the people about the role that the Kashmiri Pandits have played in shaping the country's cultural and civilizational history." "It is they", Dr Toshkhani pointed out, "who evolved some of the seminal ideas and concepts that stimulated intellectual and creative activity in ancient India. Mahayana has been their greatest gift to Buddhism, while Kashmir Shaivism represented one of the greatest heights that Indian philosophical thought has attained", he said. "In fact contrary to the general impression that they remained cut off due to geographical isolation, the Pandits of Kashmir crossed their mountain barriers to unite north and south India through Shaivite thought."

Referring to the Kashmir school of art, Dr. Toshkhani said that it had a deep impact on the adjoining Himalayan regions and was one of the principal formative forces of Lamaistic art. "Can there be anything more tragic than this that inheritors of this great cultural legacy, the descendants of the ancient people of the Nilamata Purana, are today facing a sinister threat of cultural extinction?" he asked. The NSKRI has been set up to protect and project the cultural heritage of the Kashmiri Pandits, he said, 'Unmeelan' being the first in a series of thematic exhibitions which the Institute was going to organise in the near future.

Offering the vote of thanks on behalf of the NSKRI, Shri P. N. Kachru complimented all those who offered their valuable cooperation in making the event a success.

7.2 Unmeelan Glimpses of Kashmiri Pandit Cultural Heritage

Introductory Address by Dr. S. S. Toshkhani

Respected Dr Lokesh Chandra, Shri J. N. Kaul and distinguished guests,

It is, indeed, a great privilege to welcome you all on behalf of the NS Kashmir Research Institute to this first ever exhibition on Kashmiri Pandit cultural heritage titled 'Unmeelan'. The word 'Unmeelan' means 'opening the eyes', and this exhibition is literally an invitation to opening of eyes if only to have a glimpse of the heritage of the Kashmiri Pandits, a people who have contributed most significantly to Indian culture, philosophy, literature, art and aesthetics quite out of proportion to their small numbers. That these people stand uprooted today from their native soil and are fighting a grim battle for their survival as a distinct social and cultural entity, is perhaps the greatest tragedy in the history of post-independence India. There is every danger that these ancient people may be wiped out of existence together with five thousand years of their culture and traditions, their literature and lore. And, if such a catastrophe does take place, posterity shall have much to regret.

It is most unfortunate that a state of amnesia is clouding the minds of people about the role that the Kashmiri Pandits played in shaping the country's cultural and civilizational history. It is they who evolved some of the seminal ideas and concepts that stimulated intellectual and creative activity in ancient India. Is it to be forgotten that Mahayana has been their greatest gift to Buddhism, a doctrine that penetrated into and swept across entire Central Asia, South Asia and the far eastern countries through the efforts of Kashmiri missionaries? One such missionary, Shyam Bhatt devised a script for the Tibetan language and gave it its first grammar. Does not Kashmir Shaivism represent one of the greatest heights that Indian philosophical thought has attained? In fact, contrary to the general impression that they remained cut off due to geographical isolation, the Pandits of Kashmir crossed their mountain barriers to unite north and south India through Shaivite thought. In the same manner, Shaktivad and the Tantric philosophy evolved in Kashmir linked the land of Vitasta with Kerala in the south and Bengal in the east. Surely, the best in Sanskrit literary tradition bears an indelible stamp of the genius of Kashmiri Pandits. It was Kalhana who started the tradition of historiography in India with his immortal work, the Rajtarangini, displaying a keen sense of history and sharp critical talent. Kshemendra, one of the sharpest critics of men and matters, was the first Sanskrit writer to have made

satire as his main mode of expression. Somadeva's Kathasaritsagara is one of the world's most wonderful collection of tales comprehending a wide range of myth and mystery, fun and frolic, love and lust, ambition and adventure, cowardice and chivalry.

And what remains of Sanskrit aesthetical writing if Kashmir's contribution to it is taken out? The inquiry into the nature of aesthetic experience by such master minds from Kashmir as Bhamah, Udbhatta, Vamana, Rudratta, Kuntaka, Anandavardhana, Mammatta, and the greatest of them all Abhinavagupta, soared, in the words of Krishna Chaitanya, "into philosophy risen from the world of poetry to a poetic world-view".

In the field of Indian music, one of the most important treatises ever written is Sharangadeva's Sangeet Ratnakara - the work which formulates the basis of Karnataka music and has few other works in the world to compare with it.

In the history of Indian art, Kashmir occupies a very important place, drawing to it all the power and beauty of the Gandharan and Gupta art, and at the same time evolving a distinct metaphor and style of its own. The Kashmir school of art had a deep impact on the adjoining Himalayan regions and was one of the principal formative forces of Lamaistic art. In the 9th to 11th century Kashmiri artists were producing exquisite bronzes and painting murals in Alchi (Ladakh), Western Tibet and Spiti (Himachal Pradesh). The grandeur of Martand and Avantipur temples testifies to the heights of glory which Kashmiri sculpture and architectural art had attained.

Can there be anything more tragic than the fact that the inheritors of this great cultural legacy, the descendents of the ancient people of the Nilamata Purana who gave Kashmir its own creation myth, are today facing a sinister threat of cultural extinction? Shaken by such a horrifying prospect, a group of concerned members of the Kashmiri Pandit community set up the NS Kashmiri Research Institute in Delhi on January 19, 1997 to launch a concerted drive to preserve, protect and project the heritage and culture of the Kashmiri Pandits. It has been named after Prof. Nityanand Shastri, one of Kashmir's most outstanding Sanskrit scholars who was a contemporary and friend of great European Indologists like Sir Aurel Stein, Prof. J. Ph. Vogel, George Grierson and Winternitz.

The Institute has chalked out a well thought-out agenda and programme for achieving its objectives which had been endorsed by the intellectuals of the community. This exhibition is an effort in that direction, but it is only a curtain raiser, being the first in a series of thematic exhibitions which the Institute proposes to organise in the near future. On display are rare miniature paintings of the Kashmir school, Sharada and Persian manuscripts, documents and books relating to Kashmiri Pandit intellectual attainments and scholarship. Also on view are Kashmiri Pandit costumes, artefacts and objects of ritualistic importance besides old photographs showing social and religious customs of the Pandits.

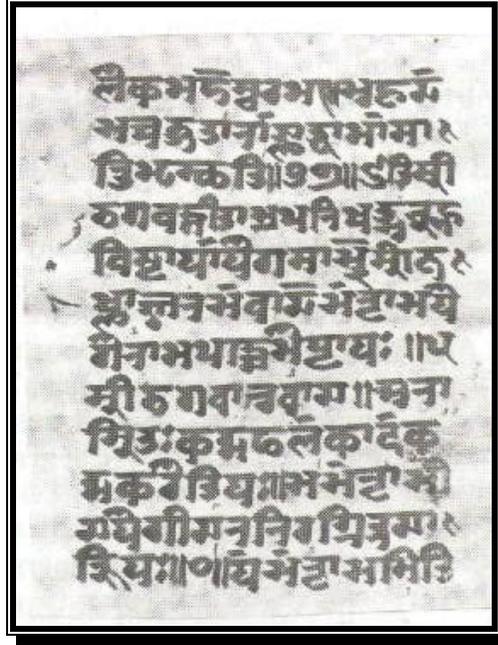
'Unmeelan' is an attempt to capture the real cultural face of Kashmir, battered and bruised, though it is today. A face that has for long been kept away from view: I along with my colleagues in the NSKRI hope that you will find the exhibition visually satisfying and intellectually stimulating despite the many shortcomings that it obviously has.

7.3 Sharada Script

Named after "Sharada Desh", the ancient name of Kashmir, the Sharada script developed from Brahmi, the mother of all Indian scripts, around the 8th-9th century. Employed for writing Sanskrit, and Kashmiri in ancient and medieval Kashmir, it is related to the Devanagari script and is built along the same lines with the letters sa and ha coming at the end of the alphabet. Aurel Stein has called it "the elder sister of Devanagari."

Even after Persian was made the court language of Kashmir, Sharada continued to be used for quite some time even by Muslims. Several 15th and 16th century tombs in Kashmir have epitaphs written in both the Perso-Arabic and Sharada scripts. Medieval saint Sheikh Makhdoom Hamza's will

preserved in the Srinagar Museum is written in Persian as well as Sharada. The will was written in 1577.



Sharada alphabet soon spread to the neighbouring Himalayan regions where it was widely used. Gurumukhi, the script in which Punjabi is written, evolved from Sharada. However the use of Sharada script is now limited to a very few members of priestly class of the Kashmiri Pandits for writing horoscopes.

Revival of the Sharada script is a priority item on the NSKRI agenda.

7.4 Kashmiri Pandit Costume

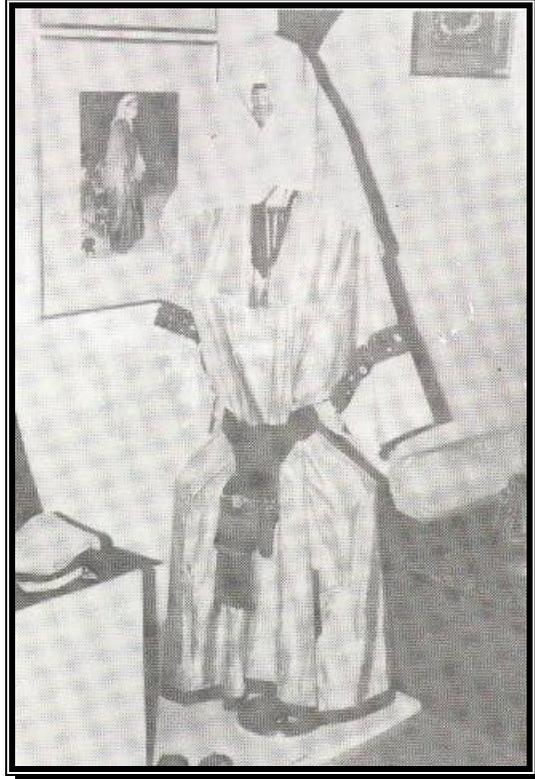
Literary and archaeological evidence shows that in ancient and medieval times the costume of the Kashmiri male consisted essentially of a lower garment, an upper garment and a turban. If Kashmiri sculpture is any guide, men as well as women wore a long tunic and trousers, probably due to Kushana influence. According to Hieun Tsang, they dressed themselves in leather doublets and clothes of white linen. In winter, however they covered their body with a warm cloak which the Nilamata Purana calls Pravarana. The rich among them were also draped in fine woollen shawls while the ordinary people had to rest content with cheaper woollen articles like the coarse sthulkambala.

The use of different kinds of turbans known as ushneek or shirahshata was widely prevalent. Strange though it may seem, the dress of a woman in early Kashmir consisted mainly of sari and tailored jackets or blouses. She is also shown wearing a long flowing tunic and trousers. It was fashion for both men and women to braid their hair in different styles, wearing sometimes tassels of varied colours.

It is, therefore, difficult to say how long back in tradition does the present attire of Kashmiri Pandit males and females go. Of course, in early Kashmir men and women both were fond of adorning themselves with ornaments. They wore rings in the fingers, gold necklaces, ear rings, armlets and wristlets and even amulets. The women also wore anklets, bracelets, pearl-necklaces, pendants on the forehead and golden strings at the end of the locks (a forerunner of the attahor perhaps). One thing is certain, the traditional dress of Kashmiri Pandits underwent a definite change after the advent of Islam. Today the following articles compose their attire:

A. Pheran

The long flowing dress called the pheran-pravarna of the Nilamata Purana is traditionally worn by both Pandit males and females. The dress is always worn in a pair, the underlayer called potsh, being of light white cotton. In case of women, the pheran has wide sleeves, overturned and fringed with brocaded or embroidered stripes. Similar long stripes of red borders are attached around the chest-open collars (quarterway down the front of shoulders and all along the skirt. A loongy, or a coloured sash was tied round the waist.



The traditional male garment is always plain and has narrow sleeves and a leftside breast-open collar with a kind of lapel or lace emerging from it.

B. Women's Headgear: Taranga

Taranga or the female headgear is reminiscent of the racial fusion of the Aryans and Nagas to which the Nilamata Purana has referred. It symbolizes the decorative hood of the crelestial serpent (nag) with a flowing serpentine body tapering into a double tail almost reaching the heels of the wearer. It is composed of the following parts:

Taranga - The elements for composition of the Headgear:

- a) Kalaposh - the cap, a conic shape of decorative brocade or silken embroidery, attached with a wide and round band of Pashmina in crimson, vermilion or scarlet. The conic shape would cover the crown and the band would be shortened threefold around the forehead.
- b) Zoojy - a delicate net-work cloth topped by embroidery motifs, and worn over the crown of kalaposh and tapering flowing down to the small of the back.
- c) Taranga - it comprises of three narrow and continuous wraps over and around the head, the final round having moharlath, starched and glazed over with an agate-stone, crystal or a soft giant shell.
- d) Poots - the two long lengths of fine white muslin hemmed together longitudinally with a "fish spine" pattern. Lengthwise, then the whole piece is rolled and wrapped inwards from both sides so as to form the long bodies of a pair of snakes with a pair of tapering tails at the lower end and a hood at

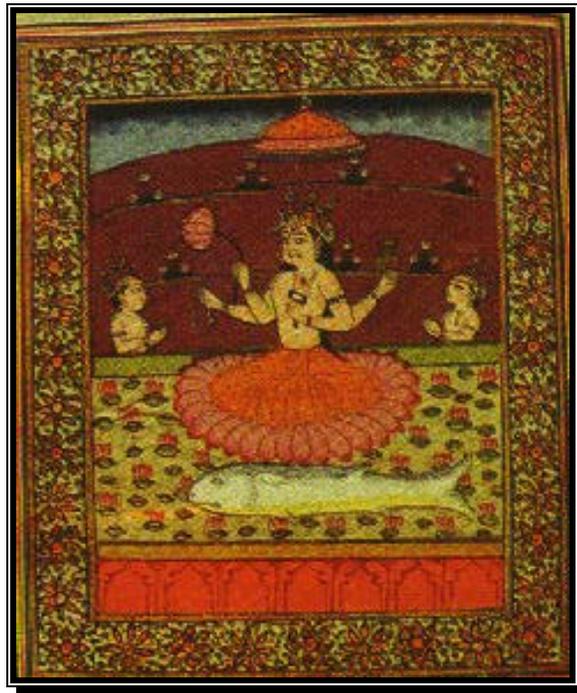
the other end (top) to open up and cover the apex of the headgear while flowing down over the back almost touching the heels.

C. Men's Headgear:

The turban is the traditional headgear of the Kashmiri Pandit males, though its use is very restricted now. This turban is not much different from the turban the Muslims wear except that the Pandits do not wear any scalp cap inside. The priest class among the Pandits would wear their turbans in almost the Namdhari Sikh style.

7.5 Kashmir School of Miniature Painting

It is for the first time in the history of Indian, or world, art that miniature paintings of the Kashmir school are being displayed in an exhibition. With the solitary exception of a recent work by a Russian art historian, no attempt has been made so far for a systematic study of this important school of art.

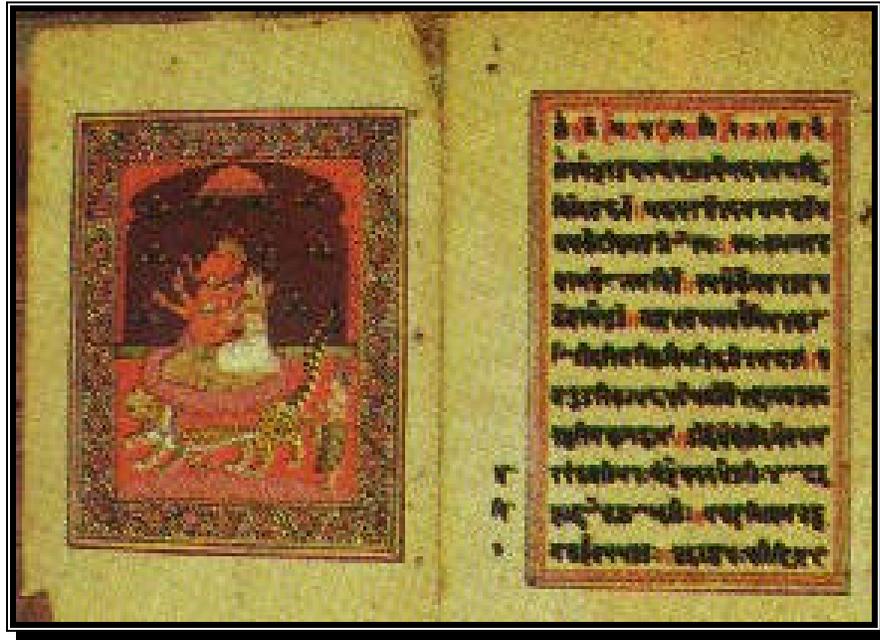


The story of art in Kashmir opens with a pre-historic rock drawing discovered at the neolithic site of Burzahom depicting a hunting scene. A subsequent stage of development is represented by masterpieces of art in the shape of Harwan tiles and Ushkar (Wushkar) stucco figures. The Nilamata Purana makes clear reference to the existence of painting in ancient Kashmir. From 7th-8th century onwards the school of Kashmir art acquired distinct features, even as it was absorbing Gandharan and Gupta influences, reaching its pinnacle of glory in the times of Lalitaditya. The movement sustained till the 10th-11th century when its fame spread throughout the Himalayan region.

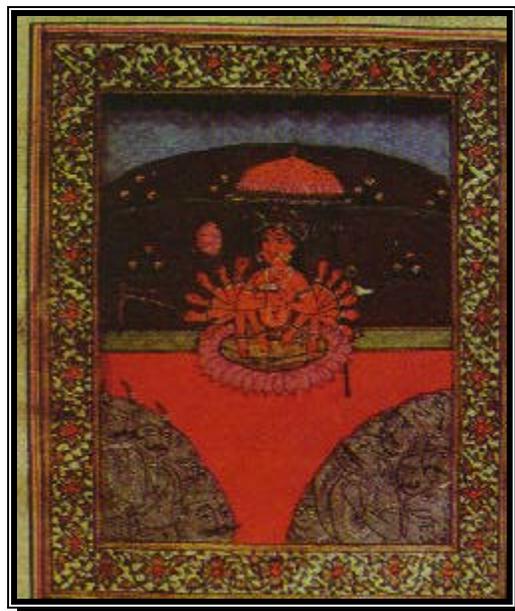
Although no direct example of Kashmir painting of this period has survived, the characteristic features of the Kashmiri style can be clearly seen in the Gilgit manuscript paintings assigned to the 9th century. The murals of the Buddhist monasteries of Alchi in Ladakh, Mang Nang in Western Tibet and Spiti in Himachal Pradesh present a successive stage of the development of the tradition of painting in Kashmir. These mural paintings appear to be a pictorial translation of the exquisite Kashmir bronzes dated to 9th to 11th century.

The Kashmir artistic tradition faced decay during the political and religious upheaval of Kashmir in the 14th century. Lack of patronage and fear of religious persecution forced master painters of

Kashmir to migrate to the neighbouring Himachal princedoms where the Kashmir style revived and flowered after being grafted into the Pahari-Kangra school.

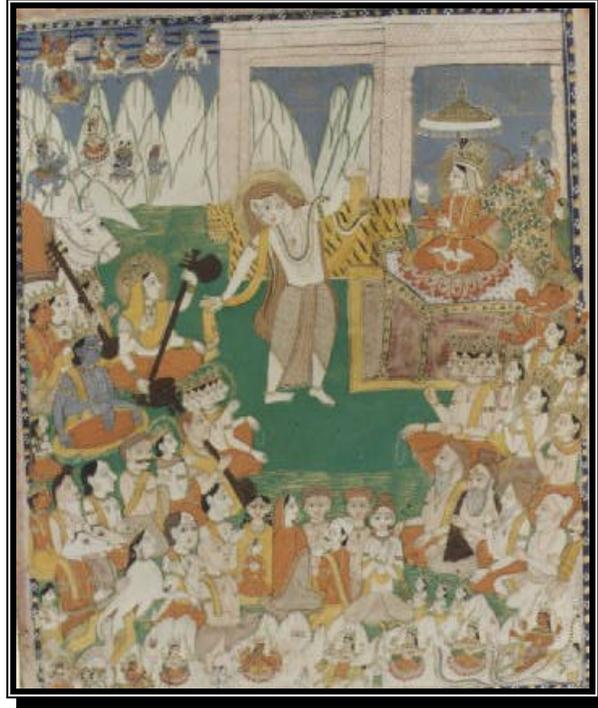


Despite large scale vandalism and destruction in the subsequent centuries, the traditional artistic propensities of the Kashmiris could not be entirely stifed though. The Kashmir school of miniature painting survived taking a new avtara during the late 18th century, continuing through the 19th century to the early decades of the twentieth. The Puja room (thokur kuth) of the Kashmiri Brahmins became a virtual museum of religious art which found expression in the illuminations of Sharada manuscripts, horoscopes, folk-art works like the krula pacch, nechipatra (almanac) etc. besides individual paintings. The themes were essentially religious with forms of Hindu deities and local gods and goddesses dominanting.



In fact miniature paintings became a family tradition, passing from generation to generation. It even became a collective act of creativity with one expert making the border, another executing the

drawing and a third one painting the colours. These Kashmir miniature paintings are characterized by the delicacy of line introduced to the massive and weighty proportions of form, the colour scheme being throughout soothing, soft and harmonious. The facial type, in the words of Dr. A.K. Singh, is "marked with ovaloid face, fleshy cheeks, double chin, aquiline nose and full lips, highly arched eyebrows and almond shaped eyes". The division of space has the unique characteristic of correlating the foreground and background. Ornamental border, with occasionally strong use of gold, is another striking feature of the school.



Shiva Dancing

Unfortunately, this rich treasure of miniature paintings has gone virtually unnoticed by art historians, making it difficult to reconstruct a chronological history of the Kashmir school. Unmeelan is an attempt to invite the attention and appreciation of art lovers and conneiseurs to this very important but neglected school of art.

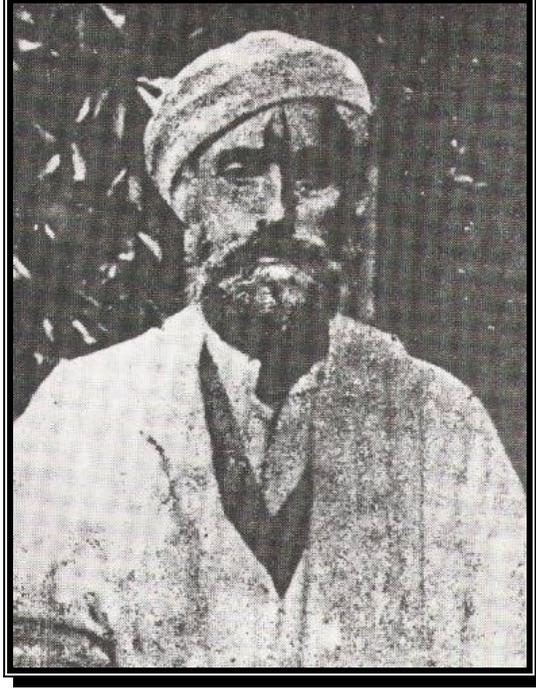
7.6 Pandit Harabhata Shastri

'The celebrated scholar of Shaiva lore'

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

It was an American scholar, Prof. David Brainered Spooner who came all the way from Harvard University to learn at the feet of Sanskrit scholars of Kashmir like HBS. We are giving below a brief biographical sketch of HBS who dazzled Dr. Spooner and came to be known as one of the greatest interpreters of Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir. Yet we acknowledge that a lot of light needs to be thrown on the celebrated scholar. Through these columns we request Kashmiri researchers and

scholars who may have had the good fortune of coming into contact with HBS to provide us with more details about his life and works.]



Pandit Harabhata Shastri

Born as Harabhata Zadoo in 1874 in a family that has produced some of the top most Sanskrit scholars of Kashmir, HBS had learning running in his veins. His father Pandit Keshav Bhatta Zadoo was the Royal Astrologer in the Court of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, the then ruler of Jammu and Kashmir who was a great patron of scholars and scholarship. His nephew, Prof Jagaddhar Zadoo, has the credit of editing the first edition of the Nilmata Purana with Prof Kanji Lal. The Zadoos originally belonged to Zadipur, a village near Bijbehara in South Kashmir, but later migrated to Srinagar, their surname being linked to the village of their origin thereafter.

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

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

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

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

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

In the meantime HBS engaged himself in scholarly pursuits which were to form the basis of his repute. He wrote his famous commentaries on Sanskrit texts from Kashmir which included the 'Panchastavi'-- a pentad of hymns to Mother Goddess. With his profound scholastic background and

his deep insight into Shaiva and Shakta traditions, HBS explained and elucidated Shakta concepts contained in the Panchastavi in his famous commentary, specially on the 'Laghustava' and the 'Charastava' which came to be known as "Harabhatti" after him. These hymns, held in high esteem from quite ancient times in Kashmir, have a special significance for the votaries of Trika philosophy. There was a debate for quite some time on the authorship of 'Panchastavi', some attributing it to Shankaracharya, some to Kalidasa and some to Abhinavagupta. It was HBS who proved it convincingly that it was actually composed by Dharmacharya. This view was shared by Swami Lakshman Joo, too.

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

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

7.7 NSKRI congratulates Moti Lal Kemmu for winning Sangeet Natak Akademi Award

Noted Kashmiri dramatist, Moti Lal Kemmu has bagged this year's Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his outstanding contribution to Kashmiri theatre. The award has come none too soon for the celebrated playwright, for all through his dramatic career spanning over four decades he has been constantly engaged in enriching Kashmiri drama and strengthening the theatre movement in Kashmir in a manner no one else has. Kemmu has already received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1982 for his collection of plays 'Natak Truchy'.

Born in 1933, Moti Lal Kemmu began his career as a dramatist in the late fifties with the publication of 'Darpan Antahpur Ka' -- an anthology of his three plays in Hindi. He created a stir in the still and stagnant waters of Kashmiri drama when he published three of his Kashmiri plays bristling with humour and satire, under the title 'Trinov' in 1966. Then came his full-length three-act play 'Lal Bo Drayas Lolare' which dealt with women's struggle for freedom in the tradition-ridden male dominated society. 'Tshay', an historical tragedy with existentialist overtones came next in 1972. The Sahitya Akademi Award winning 'Natak Truchy' was published in 1980 and 'Tota ta Aina', a full length experimental play based on a folk-theme, in 1974.

In 1994, he published 'Yeli Dakh Tsalan', a play about the response of Kashmiri folk-cultural tradition, with its roots deeply embedded in human values, to the challenges posed by terrorism in Kashmir. The play was translated by Dr. Shashi Shekhar Toshkhani into Hindi and produced by the National School of Drama as 'Bhand Duhai' recently under the directorship of the well-known theatre personality M. K. Raina. The production was a big draw with the theatre lovers of the capital, enthralled connoisseurs as well as lay audiences.

Kemmu's plays are known for their candid exposure of the absurdities and incongruities of life, using elements of the Kashmiri folk style, "Bhand Pather" as well as modern absurd theatre and Sanskrit drama with great effect. Besides being a playwright, he has also directed several plays at a number of theatre workshops. Presently on a fellowship from the HRD Ministry, he is engaged in writing a series of plays based on Kashmir history, the first of which, 'Nagar Udasy' has come out a few months back.

NSKRI congratulates Moti Lal Kemmu on his achievement and wishes him many more years of creative activity in his chosen field.

7.8 The Symbology of Shri Chakra

Dr C. L. Raina

In Upanishadic and Pauranic theology, natural forces were divinized to help man understand the Immutable -- the primal source of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. This provided a psychic opening for a vision of the unity of man, god and universe. The Vedic gods are cosmological in character and represent man's aspiration to be in tune with the divine. Agni, Vayu, Ashvinis, Surya, Mita, Varuna, Shri, Prithvi etc of the ancient Vedic texts are gods who represent various moods and modes of nature and play definite roles in the cosmic drama to keep the rhythm of the universe vibrant. And it is this rhythm that is represented by mandals and chakras referred to as 'zageshwar' in Kashmiri religious terminology.

Seers attributed names and forms to these cosmic forces, and gave them specific traits as aspects of divinity through concepts. They visualized them through the concepts of bindu or the dot, trikona or the triangle, vritta or the circle, bhupura or the doorway, linga-yoni or the procreative symbols representing Shiva-Shakti. The different devtas and devis, male and female deities, were allotted their vahanas or the vehicles in the form of animals and birds giving definite meanings to their symbology.

Thus Surya, the sun god, has his celestial chariot drawn by seven horses, each horse symbolising a definite ray. In the same manner dwadasha adityas are symbolic of the twelve months of the year. 'Aditya' means the son of Aditi -- the universal energy. She represents the prakriti aspect or the 'nature mother', while akash is termed as the 'father sky'. The surya mandal drawn and worshipped by Kashmiri Pandit ladies on Ashadha Shukla Saptami reminds of the hoary past when the Vedic deity was worshipped in the compounds and kitchens in Kashmiri homes and offerings of rice were placed on the mandal or the circular drawing representing it.

The Sapta Rishis: Vashistha, Kashyapa, Atri, Jamadagni, Gautama, Vishwamitra and Bhardwaja too are symbolic, each representing the cosmic principle in one or other form. While Kashyapa, the progenitor, represents temporal existence, Bhardwaja symbolises lustre and Kundalini symbolises the vital breath.

Shri Chakra is the most sacred symbol in the Kashmiri Shakta tradition. The mool trikona or the central triangle of the diagram is the yoni with lajjabija and hrim its symbol. The triangle is equilateral and its point of concurrence is bindu -- the absolute reality without any dimension. Its symbolic meaning is made explicit in the following shloka:

Shri Chakra priya bindu tarpana para Shri Rajrajeshwari

Shri Chakra is the priya bindu is the eternally pleasing Shiva absorbing in it Shri Rajrajeshwari, the supreme sovereign mother creatrix who is tarpana para as transcendental in pleasing native. Bindu represents the dot of our consciousness which gets materialised through saguna-sadhana of Shri Sharika manifest in the Chakreshwara. The lines of this are the 'wave beats' of the divine and every triangle, lotus petal and circle is the abode of varnamala (the alphabet) or matrikas. Matrikas are worshipped at the time of jatakarma, devaguna and Shakta rituals related to homas of Shri Jwala, Sharika, Rajnya, Bala, Bhadrakali and Tripura Sundari.

Shri Chakra is a diagram signifying hope and aspiration. According to those who practice Shakti puja, Shri Chakra symbolises the "One by whom all devatas live." Infinite rays of light emanating from the chakra are received by devotees who worship it with the kadi mantra of fifteen syllables where the 'bindu' represents the immortal face of Shri Sharika -- the Mother of all bija mantras.

A sound is heard. Timelessness is experienced. The spirit feels the pulsation of the Divine Mother's presence.

Kashmiri Pandits used to worship the Shri Chakra on meru made of crystal in their thakurdwaras or puja rooms which would be situated generally in the madhya koshta or the second storey of their homes in accordance with vastukala and Shakti Siddhanta or the principles of Shakti worship. Some used to worship it on a properly engraved copper plate and some on bhoj patra or the birch-bark leaf. Worshipping Shri Chakra is an essential religious practice of the Kashmiri Pandits.

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8.1 Kashmiri Pandits in USA take interest in NSKRI agenda

Kashmiri Pandits living in the United States appear to have started taking keen interest in the agenda drawn by N.S. Kashmir Research Institute for preservation, protection and projection of Kashmiri Pandit cultural identity. Realizing that the Kashmiri Pandit community, fighting a grim battle for its cultural survival in the aftermath years of its exodus from Kashmir, the emigre Kashmiris want to know more and more about their roots.

It is in this context that they seem to be impressed by the programmes and activities of the NSKRI and the initiative it has taken for creating a cultural awareness among Kashmiri Pandits wherever they be on the globe. Reports about the recent cultural heritage exhibition, 'Unmeelan' organised by NSKRI in New Delhi seem to have particularly enthused them. An increasing number of them have been enquiring about the programmes NSKRI proposes to organise in the near future and asking how they could help the Institute in furthering its objectives in their part of the world. Some young intellectuals like Sunil Fotedar and Lalit Wanchoo have already involved themselves in the process by projecting NSKRI activities on a special website.

It was in this connection that Mr A. K. Mandloo (Kak), an engineer now settled in America, held long discussions with members of the NSKRI core group during his recent visit to New Delhi. Among the matters discussed was the ways and means to be adopted to make the cooperation between NSKRI and Kashmiri Pandits settled in America effective and meaningful in the cultural context. Mr. Mandloo felt that Kashmiri Pandits in USA would be eager to sponsor some of the projects NSKRI intends to take up. He seemed to be greatly interested in the NSKRI taking 'Unmeelan' to American cities like New York and Washington. Such programmes, he was sure, would create quite a flutter in that country, and show the true cultural face of Kashmir to the world. He also wanted that the publications of NSKRI regarding history, culture and traditions of the Kashmiri Pandits should be circulated widely in the USA. While this would inspire the Pandits living in that country to feel proud of the past glories of their community of origin, it would also give an inkling to them of how great the contributions of their ancestors in the fields of art, culture, literature and philosophy have been, Mr. Mandloo pointed out.

The NSKRI plans to give a concrete shape in the near future to some of the conclusions reached during the discussions it held with Mr. A. K. Mandloo. The possibility of holding 'Unmeelan-II' in America sometime in March next year is being seriously considered by the Institute.

8.2 C.V. Gopinath and NSKRI to make a video documentary on Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra

Shri C.V.Gopinath, an eminent scholar from Karnataka, a top Government of India officer and a close associate of NSKRI core group has returned to New Delhi after his second consecutive Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra. Shri Gopinath, who is so enamoured of the Yatra that he may complete a hat-trick next year, has done a brilliant video coverage of the pilgrimage and intends to cull out a 90 or 100 minute documentary, with the help of NSKRI, from the 600 minute exciting and thrilling shooting he has done. The documentary will be laced by a narration of his challenging and exhilarating experiences by Gopinath himself.

It may be recalled that after his return from the Yatra last year he gave a beautiful slide show based on it in the premises of Bhagawaan Gopinathji Ashram at Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi. Some photographs of Mount Kailash resplendent in its glory and of the serene beauty of the Mansarovar Lake were so stunningly beautiful that they had cast a charm over the highly excited audience.

8.3 'Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship' set up in USA

An Institute named 'Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship' devoted to the propagation of Kashmir Shaivite philosophy in America, has been set-up at Los Angeles. Mr. John Hughes, the founder of the Institute has been a longtime disciple of Shaivacharya Swami Lakshman Joo, associated with him closely for almost two decades. He has also authored a brilliant book on Swami Lakshman Joo's life and teachings titled 'Self- Realization'.

Mr. Hughes has with him hundreds of tapes of Swami Lakshman Joo's lectures besides copious notes on his teachings and interpretations of different aspects of Kashmir Shaivite philosophy. These were recorded by him during his long stays at Ishwar Ashram, Ishber, Srinagar.

Kashmir Shaivism Fellowship is likely to emerge as a great centre of Shaivite thought in the West. Mrs. Denise Hughes, wife of Mr. John Hughes is currently in New Delhi, perhaps to renew her contacts with old associates of Ishwar Ashram and Swamiji's followers and admirers including Mr. P. N. Kachroo of NSKRI.

8.4 Commemorative Stamp On Bhagawan Gopinathji Released

"Bhagawaanji A Beacon Of Light For Humanity" - Sushma Swaraj

Union communications and information and Broadcasting Minister, Smt. Sushma Swaraj released a commemorative stamp on the revered Kashmiri saint Bhagawaan Gopinathji on 3rd July, 1998. For the Kashmiri devotees of Bhagawaanji it was a most memorable occasion filling them with a sense of pride and joy. Overwhelmed with emotion, they watched the solemn function at the FICCI auditorium with tears in their eyes, coming as it did as a befitting finale to Bhagawaanji's birth centenary celebrations.

Releasing the three rupee stamp with the simple and benign figure of Bhagawaan Gopinathji printed on it, the Union Communications Minister described the great Saint as a radiant personality who was a beacon of light for the entire humanity, working for its spiritual upliftment. "It is most unfortunate", she lamented "that today when Bhagawaan Gopinathji's birth centenary is being celebrated in different parts of the country and abroad, circumstances do not make it possible to celebrate it in his native land - Kashmir".

Referring to Kashmiri Pandits, the community in which Bhagawaan Gopinathji was born, Smt. Sushma Swaraj called for introspection to understand why they have been turned into refugees in their own country. She expressed the hope that it would be possible for Bhagawaanji's devotees to celebrate his next birth anniversary in Kashmir also with as much devotion and enthusiasm.

Speaking on the occasion the Guest of Honour, Shri Chaman Lal Gupta, M.P, also said that it greatly pained him that circumstances in Bhagawaan Gopinathji's own native place, Kashmir, were such that his birth centenary celebrations could not be observed there even though they were being held in the whole world. "Measures shall have to be taken to change this sorry state of affairs in Jammu and Kashmir to ensure that Kashmiri Pandits return to their homeland with honour and dignity". he said.

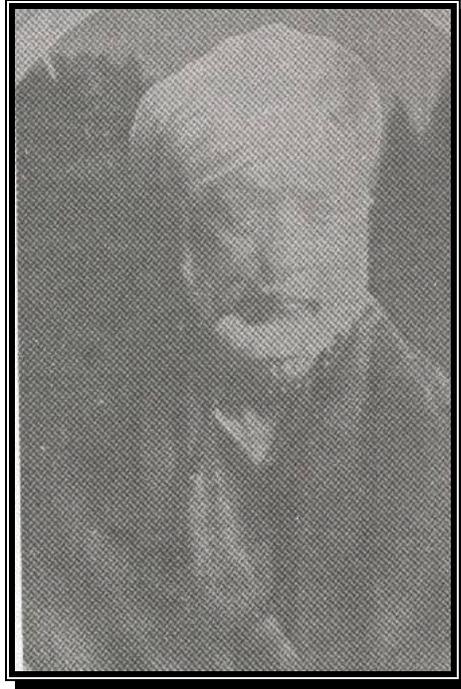
Presiding over the function, Shri Pushkar Nath Kaul, ex-Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir also paid homage to Bhagawaan Gopinathji, calling him "a bright star on the firmament of Kashmiri's tradition, culture and spirituality."

Earlier welcoming the guests, Secretary, Bhagawaan Gopinathji Trust, Shri Pran Nath Koul said that Bhagawaanji's concern was for "harmony and peace in the whole world." Trust President, M. L. Pandit, who is also a member of the Core Group of NSKRI, thanked the VIP guests, and devotees of Bhagawaan Gopinathji and others for coming to "share with us the pleasure we all feel on the occasion." Shri Pandit expressed his gratitude to the Department of Post, and its Secretary, Shri R.U.S. Prasad for the issuance of the postage stamp in Bhagawaan Gopinathji's memory.

The commemorative stamp is of the denomination of Rs.3 and has been issued in single colour in the overall size of 3.91x 2.90 cms. It bears Bhagawaan Gopinathji's likeness in his simple Kashmiri attire of turban and pheran with a tilak glowing on his forehead. The initial artwork for the postage stamp and the First Day Cover was prepared by Shri P.N. Kachru, eminent Kashmiri artist and also member Core Group NSKRI.

8.5 Pandit Keshav Bhatt Jyotishi

The Pandit who was also a pioneer printer



Pandit Keshav Bhatt Jyotishi

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

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

Born in Srinagar in 1873 in an erudite Brahmin family, KBJ, only emulated his grandfather Pandit Sat Ram, his father Pandit Prasad Bhatt and uncle Pandit Mukund Ram when he chose Sanskrit religious texts and astrology as his specialized field of study. Both the father and the uncle acquired proficiency

in these subjects under the tutelage of his grandfather, a well known scholar of his times. Uncle Mukund Ram, a Shaivite scholar, rose to be the Chief Astrologer at the court of Maharaja Pratap Singh, while father Prasad Bhatt also earned a name for his study of astrology. Surpassing both of them, KBJ acquired a mastery over the subject almost to the extent of becoming a legend in his lifetime.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.6 Ancient art treasures of Kashmir

The Disappearance Syndrome

If reports emanating from sources in Srinagar have any truth in them, a systematic pilferage of ancient art objects has been going on ever since terrorism was unleashed in the unhappy valley. A report appearing in a leading national daily recently appears to confirm this. According to it, Rajputana Rifles handed over 32 pieces of priceless artefacts to the National Museum on June 21st, 1996. These were recovered from the house of one Ghulam Mohammad Lone residing in a colony near Shalimar Gardens during a cordon and search operation as he was trying to smuggle out the artefacts for the international market. These date back to the 6th to 15th century. The important sculptures include Gajalaxmi, Vishnuchaturanana, Swayambhu Lingas, Kumbheshwara etc.

While these pieces of art were saved by a chance seizure by the security forces, there are hundreds which have disappeared over the years. What is intriguing is the silence maintained by the state custodians of art and culture over such losses. While the lackadaisical and even negligent attitude in preserving the art objects displayed by the government managed institutions like the Shri Pratap Museum, Center for Central Asian Studies Research and Publications Department is quite evident, the appalling indifference shown by the concerned officials cannot but give rise to apprehension of connivance.

The reason is not difficult to understand - these objects are relics from Kashmir's pre- Islamic past. The official attitude in this matter can be illustrated by the state in which these objects have been kept in the museum and other places. Not many years ago, in 1984 to be precise, a delegation of important academics from the then USSR Republic of Tadjkistan came to Kashmir for a visit. Their itinerary included a visit to the Shri Pratap Museum at Lal Mandi, Srinagar. According to Captain S. K. Tikoo, who accompanied the delegation along with veteran journalist Sh. P.N. Jalali, some members of the delegation got interested in some statues displayed at the museum while they were being shown round and made some queries about them. The members obviously bore Muslim names. Much to their surprise, the then Director of the State Department of Museums and Archives, Fida M. Hassnain, started talking in an apologetic tone about such statues being displayed at the Museum saying that display of such objects could not be helped even though it went against the writ of Islam which forbids idol worship. The leader of the delegation, Mr. Rasulov, a prominent historian and himself a Muslim, was taken aback. "It took us more than a decade in restoring the damage done to our ancient monuments by the Germans, but we did it as a matter of priority to maintain our links with the past. And you are apologetic about these ancient objects of art when you ought to be proud of them", he burst out, admonishing the official.

But such admonishment could hardly be expected to make any change in the attitude of the Muslim officialdom in Kashmir, which has not only been reluctant to come to terms with Kashmir's pre-

Islamic past, Hindu or Buddhist, but has deliberately tried to create the impression that such a past never existed.

Perhaps that is one of the reasons why masterpieces of Kashmir's glorious artistic traditions have disappeared from time to time from where they are supposed to be preserved while the art pieces mentioned above were luckily saved. The disappearance syndrome is now quite old. As far back as 1995, a gigantic terracotta pendant belonging to the necklace of a huge image of Boddhisttva suddenly disappeared from its shelf in the S.P.Museum, Srinagar. It was one of the finest examples of Buddhist baroque in Kashmir which came to light when excavations of the ancient Buddhist monastery of Shad-Arhat- Vana (modern Harvan) were first undertaken by Daya Ram Sahni, and later by Ram Chandra Kak in 1919. The attention of the well known archaeologist and art critic, Charles Fabri, was attracted towards this 'Gem of Kashmir', in 1933. The pendant, measuring 20 inches in height and 14 inches in width, was oval in shape and intricately beautiful reflecting on the exquisite craftsmanship of ancient Kashmiri jewellery. Immediately after its discovery it was kept for display in the S. P. Museum in 1925 where it attracted the notice of archaeologists, historians and scholars from the whole world till it disappeared.

What is more amusing is that the Museum authorities first gave out that the teracotta masterpiece had been removed to a safer place within the Museum itself. People were made to believe that it had been broken to pieces due to the carelessness of some Museum official. The pieces were, however, not restored to their original shape despite the presence of a qualified museologist at the Museum. And then came the stunning news - the pendant had been smuggled out of the Museum ! And such games continued to be played even afterwards.

Surely, money can not be the sole motive behind such acts of disappearance of invaluable art objects. A more sinister design appears to be at work - to deplete the rich treasures of Hindu and Buddhist art in Kashmir. It will not be totally surprising if one morning we wake up to find that Kashmir has been swept clean of most of the relics that would remind one of the glories of its pre- Islamic past!

[*Inputs: P.N. Kachru, Captain S.K Tikoo*]

8.7 Legend

Hiuen Tsang and his treasure

When Hiuen Tsang came to India in the 7th century; he also visited Kashmir where he stayed for two years and studied Buddhist and Hindu texts at the feet of Kashmir scholars. He was very happy to find the Buddhist faith flourishing there with hundreds of viharas scattered all over the valley offering obeisance to lord Buddha. He gives a detailed account of the land and the people of 'Ka-shi-mi-lu', as he calls Kashmir, praising the Kashmir scholars for their learning and calibre and considering them as incomparable.

Hiuen Tsang also describes in detail the proceedings of the fourth great Buddhist council called by the Kushana King Kanishka at Harwan in Kashmir. Over five hundred delegates attended the council to review and redetine the Buddhist canon, including renowned scholars and thinkers like Nagarjuna, Ashwaghosha, Vasubandhu, Sanghmitra and Jinamitra, with the Kashmir scholar Vasumifra presiding over its deliberations.

Hiuen Tsang had every reason to be happy with the treatment accorded to him in Kashmir, with the King (Durlabhavaardhana) himself leading his people to give him a royal reception. The King gave him five assistants and twenty scribes to copy the sacred books written in Kashmir.

All this is history. And now the legend which is more interesting than history. It is said that when Hiuen Tsang decided to leave the country after a long and rewarding stay, he took a huge treasure of books he had collected during his stay here, particularly from Kashmir, with him to China. The Emperor of India himself accorded him a warm send off and provided him with a huge vessel along

with twenty five well trained and dedicated sailors for his journey back to his country. The sailors were asked to guard the treasures that the great Chinese traveller was carrying with him.

In the beginning the journey went on smoothly, but after a few days storm clouds gathered menacingly on the horizon and a sinister wind began to blow. Soon the wind changed into a ferocious 'chandamarut ' or cyclone, sending up huge waves in the river and threatening to wreck the ship and sink it. As the vessel was tossing and turning on the turbulent river, its captain felt that the only way to save it was to throw away some of the dispensable cargo into the river politely hinting at the huge weight of books it was carrying. All the twenty five sailors sent by the Indian Emperor got alerted. They were there to safeguard the valuable works and if the ship had to be unloaded, then it was they who could be dispensed with. The treasures it was carrying from Kashmir was immensely more valuable than the lives of all of them put together, they told the captain and saying this the sailors jumped one by one into the raging river, giving their supreme sacrifice to save the wisdom of Kashmir from being lost.

But the story does not end here. The great sacrifice of the sailors did not seem to pacify the fury of the storm which continued to rage unabated. The captain of the vessel felt that there was no alternative to off loading some of the books, however valuable they were. The suggestion was unbearable to Hiuen Tsang. He jumped to his feet and said " if the situation demands more load to be thrown out, then let it be me. Let me drown, but let the invaluable wisdom enshrined in the books be saved at all costs and reach its destination.

The ship, however reached the shores of China safely with the books and with the great Chinese traveller himself. The treasure trove of wisdom from Kashmir was saved!

[*Based on a legend narrated by Shri Balkrishna of Sanskrit Bharati during the course of a lecture.*]

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9.1 Work Starts on Encyclopaedia of Kashmiri Culture

International Seminar on Kashmir Shaivism also on the anvil

Work has been initiated on compilation of an encyclopaedia of Kashmiri culture - an ambitious and top priority project on NSKRI agenda. The process was set into motion with the Institute calling a meeting of Kashmiri Pandit scholars, authors, intellectuals and connoisseurs of art and culture on August 9, 1998 at India International Centre, New Delhi to elicit their views and suggestions on the methodology, format and feasibility of the project. The meeting was chaired by Mr R. N. Kaul, a well known author and a reputed scholar of Kashmir history and culture.

Placing the perceptions of NSKRI about the proposed encyclopaedia before the august gathering, Dr. S. S. Toshkhani, member of the Institute's core group, said that it was very necessary to define precisely the concepts of Kashmir's indigenous culture at a time when Kashmiri Pandits had been uprooted and forcibly exiled. "There is an appalling ignorance about these concepts and about the fact that our cultural traditions date back to 5000 years and not to the 14th century as is being orchestrated in an attempt to identify it totally with West Asian Islamic culture. Ask anyone about Kashmir and he will go ga ga over the so-called Sufi foundation of its ethos without having the least idea of what the actual facts of history are or caring for what Kashmir has really contributed to Indian thought and culture.

The proposed encyclopaedia will seek to dispel this ignorance and set right the distortions, in order to present the original cultural face of Kashmir instead of a deliberately constructed one."

"Culture", Dr. Toshkhani said, "has something to do with the concepts, values and ideals that shape our mind and influence and inspire our behaviour and thought giving meaning to our life." Continuity is of the essence, he said, lamenting that the Pandits "did not care to know about their cultural traditions and their origin while in Kashmir. And now when they have been thrown out, they are stung by a feeling of loss without being aware of what they have actually lost."

He, however, felt that there was no need for despair "Displaced communities have given birth to great cultural movements", he pointed out. "It were the artists and thinkers hounded out of Byzantium during the crusades in the Middle Ages and forced to settle in Italy and other European countries who inspired the great European renaissance. The displaced Kashmiri Pandits should at least try to know who they are before their cultural traditions are wiped away altogether from their collective memory and they become the forgotten people of history.

Dr. Toshkhani, however, made it clear that the proposed encyclopaedia was not to be compiled as an emotional reaction to the present state of things, but as a serious inquiry of facts. It will be precise, authoritative and have absolute regard for truth seeking to come up to international standards in the field. He referred to Huntington's recent thesis of clash of civilizations, and said "This is exactly what is happening over Kashmir. We have to see that we do not lose out on this front," he cautioned.

Dr. Toshkhani then proceeded to outline NSKRI's approach to the structural aspect of the encyclopaedia, stating that a subjectwise compilation was preferable to a general listing of concepts in an alphabetical order. The Institute has envisaged a five-volume encyclopaedia, as it would be more convenient, more specific and less time consuming with the subjects arranged in the following manner: Volume I could deal with art, architecture, sculpture, artifacts and allied areas; Volume II could include philosophy, religion, ethics, rituals, beliefs and traditions; Volume III could be about ethnicity, social life and social history, customs etc; Volume IV would comprise language, literature, aesthetics and folklore and Volume V could focus on the performing arts like music, dance, drama, folk-theatre, artistic sports and so on. It was only a preliminary plan and details had to be worked out, he clarified, inviting suggestions and ideas from the participants in this regard.

Dr. Toshkhani also referred to the second item on the agenda and said that NSKRI intended to hold an international seminar-cum-exhibition on Kashmir Shaivism sometime in March, 1999 in which nationally and internationally known scholars would be requested to participate. The papers read out at the seminar would be compiled in the form of a book which would be published later. Display material at the exhibition would include miniature paintings, artefacts, ritual objects, manuscripts, and books, he said.

Earlier Mr. S. N. Pandita, member NSKRI core group, welcomed the participants and gave a brief background of the formation of NSKRI, the objectives it was wedded to and some of its recent activities. He referred to the "horrendous changes brought about in the Kashmiri Pandit community by the difficult situation created by the ten years of exodus and the sense of loss it was suffering from. "There were innumerable tangible and intangible losses, but more than anything else it was the loss of that distinct identity, that definite ethnicity that defines what it is to be a Kashmiri Pandit that has suffered devastating damage," he observed. "Our culture is in total neglect, our heritage is in shambles," he lamented, "and it is to generate a sense of resurgence in the community, and to retrieve what can be retrieved in the realm of culture that the NSKRI is taking steps. We want the younger generation to know about the glory of our scholarship, of our rich contribution to literature, to art, to philosophy."

Expressing his views on the subject, eminent Kashmiri poet and scholar Mr. Motilal Saqi said that at the outset we have to be clear about the scope of the proposed encyclopaedia. "You have to define whether Burzahom, Gophakral, Kraljag, Symthan is your legacy or not? And where are you to place the architecture of Jama Masjid which is simply of blockhouse type or pagoda type ? You will have to address yourself to these and other questions before you set out to work on the encyclopaedia."

"The other important thing", Mr. Saqi said, "is to have a blueprint of the work prepared to be clear about how you are going to go about it.

Another thing to be determined, he said, was the wordage for different entries. "You cannot afford to have a 5000 word entry on one topic and a ten- word entry on another. You will have to fix the word-limit before hand, otherwise the whole exercise can get out of control."

Prof. Harikrishna Kaul, eminent Kashmiri short story writer, suggested that an editorial board be formed before assignment of topics to different experts. Such a board, he said, could go into all the aspects of brining out the encyclopaedia, including selecting names of the contributors and preparing a list of the topics. Final details could come only later.

Regarding organising a seminar-cum-exhibition on Kashmir Shaivism, Prof. Kaul said that a sub-committee should be set up to recommend what preparatory steps could be taken for the purpose.

Scholar and publisher Utpal Kaul said that historians think of writing history only in times of crisis. Kalhana wrote his Rajatarangini when there was crisis in Kashmir. In the last 100 to 150 years nothing much was done by the Kashmiri Pandits in this field, he regretted. "It is the non- Kashmiris rather who have been engaged in significant work on Kashmir". To illustrate his point, Mr. Kaul cited the example of Dr. Goswami's book on Kashmiri miniatures depicting the goddess Chamundi which, he said, he came across recently when he was in Europe. "As for Kashmiri Pandits, they seem to have lost their historical sense", he lamented.

However, Mr. Utpal Kaul said, he was happy to note that "the crisis of the last ten years has aroused that sense in them again, especially the youth who appear to be very keen to know about their historical past." During these ten years, he said, he had been able to sell more than 500 copies of the Rajatarangini to Kashmiri Pandits, young and old, inquisitive about their history.

Hailing the decision of NSKRI to bring out an encyclopaedia of Kashmiri culture, Mr. Kaul expressed the hope that the Institute would set up the highest standards before it for completing the task.

Referring to the issue of architecture of Jama Masjid in Srinagar, raised by Mr. Motilal Saqi, Mr. Utpal Kaul said that it was high time that the truth, whatever it be, should be told. "History is truth, only truth and full truth," He said quoting Von Ronkin.

Expressing his views, Dr. K. Warikoo, Associate Professor, JNU and General Secretary, Himalayan Cultural Foundation, recalled earlier exoduses of the Kashmiri Pandits that took place in the 17th, 18th and 19th century "in similar or even more difficult circumstances." These Pandits, he said, settled in place like Sita Ram Bazar in Delhi, Lucknow and Oudh where they subsumed themselves in the Persian and Urdu culture that surrounded them. "They found themselves, consciously or unconsciously, more comfortable in company of Muslim nobility and princely class or cultural elite. This gave rise to a new socio-cultural ethos among the emigre' Kashmiri Pandits - a culture that overlapped with the Urdu culture of the local Muslim elite which had several political factors behind it. This resulted in the development of faulty perceptions among the Kashmiri Pandit political elite of the times."

Viewing the present situation in Kashmir in the perspective of what was happening in the newly independent states of Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan - formed after breaking up of the Soviet Union, Dr. Warikoo said. "Each of these republics had a fairly large population of non-Muslims, that is Russians, Christians, Jews and others, when they were formed in December 1990. None of these states declared secularism as of basic principle of their constitutions, but they spelt out in clear detail that they are going to move towards ethnic homogenization, that is, easing out non-Central Asians."

Compared to Nazarbayev or Karimov, Dr Warikoo observed "I found Nehru on shaky sand considering how he charted the course of India's destiny after 1947.

Nazarbayev, on the other hand, moved his capital to the Russian majority area of North Kazkhistan along with 200,000 Muslim families to dilute the demand of secession. Dr Warikoo felt that the present socio-political situation in Kashmir being similar "we have to be deeply conscious of what we have passed through while drawing cultural historiography of contemporary Kashmir or writing its linguistic history."

Dr. Warikoo wanted the NSKRI to be "clear about the ideological parameters" while preparing an encyclopaedia of Kashmiri culture. "While focussing on the indigenous ethno-cultural traits, we must also recall our glorious contribution to Indianness and keeping in view the lessons of our recent history, identifying with the broad mainstream of Indian Hindu culture", he urged.

Mr. D.N.Munshi, ex-President, All India Kashmiri Samaj, said that we must let the truth to prevail rather than be influenced by our emotions and our present state of mind. "We should also keep in mind that culture is not a hard boiled thing, it keeps on changing with the moods of the time and influences of history", he said.

Mr. Munshi wanted food habits of the Kashmiris to be included in the list of subjects for the encyclopaedia, showing how these "are governed by our religious practices and climatic conditions". A general direction should be given to the contributors about wordage etc. but in no case should their thoughts be cramped by any pre-conceived ideas, he said.

Mr Munshi expressed the community's "gratitude, deep gratitude for what the NS Kashmir Institute is set to do", adding that " the first steps it has already taken has delighted most of us."

Mr. C. V. Gopinath, a prominent scholar from Karnataka and a well known friend of NSKRI emphasized that the cultural traits of Kashmiri Pandits and of Brahmins elsewhere in the country are the same except some local variations here and there in things like food and dress habits. "Your mantras are the same, your religious practices and ceremonies like marriage, upnayana or shraadh, are the same." The slight differences that are there are due to factors like distance and climate, he said. "If you are suffering, it is because you are Brahmins, had you been anything else, you would have got a better treatment."

He advised the NSKRI to "identify with, and seek the support of the mainstream Hindus in preparing the cultural encyclopaedia. Scholars of the Institute should go to the Oriental Research Institute, Mysore, to Palghat, to Thiruvananthapuram from where the great Shankaracharya hailed, to Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh and to Pune in Maharashtra, a great seat of learning, for access to resource material, he suggested, as these five places in the South have deep cultural and religious links with Kashmir."

"We all want to have the encyclopaedia, but I am worried about the execution part of it," said Dr. Sudhir Sopori, also of the JNU. Some kind of advisory board should be set up, he suggested, preferably at the international level, which could prepare a blue-print for the project and also select the "right kind of editorial board."

As everybody was today going for the internet, people would like to see an encyclopaedia of Kashmiri culture on CD-ROMs, apart from print, he suggested. "It would also be useful if you could have web a page for the Institute," Dr Sopori said, "for then you could get a wider and better response from the whole international community."

Dr. Advaitvadini Kaul of the IGNCA wanted more meetings of specialists, experienced in the field, to take place to chalk out a clear plan for preparing the encyclopaedia. She wanted the cream of scholars to work for the encyclopaedia, including non-Kashmiris.

Dr. Bachchan Kumar, also of the IGNCA felt that a comprehensive bibliography on Kashmir should be prepared as it would come handy for compiling the encyclopaedia.

Mr. B. L. Kaul Chaman and Mr. L. C. Kaul also expressed their views. Prominent among others who attended the meeting were Mr. Gopi Nath Raina, Col. R. K. Kachru, Mr. Manohar Lal Pandit, Mr. Virendra-Qazi, Mr. Rajendra Premi, Mr. Balkrishna Bhat, Mr. B. K. Raina and Ms. Sabita Pandita.

Regarding the other items on the agenda, that is, seminar-cum-exhibition on Kashmir Shaivism, it was largely felt that it should not be limited to monistic Shavism alone but should also cover other Shaivite schools. Mr. P. N. Kachru, member NSKRI core group, said that he had prepared a list of topics and scholars, in consultation with Prof. M. L. Kokiloo, who would be requested to read their papers.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. M. L. Kokiloo expressed his happiness at the activities and programmes of NSKRI. Prof. Kokiloo is a noted scholar of Kashmir Shaivism.

While summing up the discussions, from the chair, Mr. R.N. Kaul, at the outset, associated himself with the remarks made by Mr. D. N. Munshi, expressing gratitude to the NSKRI and in particular their core group for the onerous tasks they have decided to undertake, in fulfillment of their objectives.

With reference to the preparation of an encyclopedia of Kashmiri Pandit culture, Mr. Kaul thanked the many participants warmly, who by their "commendable contribution and suggestions" had made the discussions, a heartening and fruitful experience. He said that the perspective, the dimensions, the outline, ways and means, focussed upon comprehensively by Dr. Toshkhani and clarifications elicited covering the points made, not only offered much food for thought and action, but also cautioned against pitfalls. Mr. Kaul then tendered a prospect of expectations, generally based on the interchange of ideas, round the table. He said that in order to be acceptable to the academics, the students and the general public, an encyclopaedia has to be authoritative and reliable, should aptly reflect knowledge and deep learning, be written in precise language and idiom, and without any obscure and confusing words. Non-English words and expressions must be accurately translated, listed with phonetic spellings. The readers' access to information had to be easy, through a familiar and universally understood system and framework. He felt that the Encyclopaedia Britannica offered a practical and well standardised model.

As regards the contents, the compilers would have to be a select group of scholars, specialising in the topics responsible for, recognised as authorities, and of the highest calibre, he said. The compilers must be identified, listed and mobilised, under the auspices of an editorial board (led by a chief

editor), whose recommendations on the selection, form and content, of an entry would be paramount and facilitate compilation through clear-cut guidelines.

Mr. Kaul suggested the creation of a project group for the preparation of a feasibility study, regarding the organisational set up, the mechanics of operation and financial implications of the proposed project.

As regards the proposal for holding an international seminar on Kashmir Shaivism in Delhi, Mr R. N. Kaul said that the outlined programme, the subjects chosen, together with names of speakers should be accepted as the basis. He recommended the appropriate inclusion of pre-9th century state of Shaivism in Kashmir. Also for a comparative study it would be necessary to devolve on other schools of Shaivism, practised in India.

9.2 Pandit Saheb Ram Kaul

A Great Sanskrit Scholar of Kashmir

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

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

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

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

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

By this time SRK had acquired mastery over grammar, poetry, drama and Shaiva philosophy. Soon he found that there was no scope for higher academic excellence in Kashmir, as there was no one there to satisfy his deeper quest of knowledge. He quietly decided to leave Kashmir and go to

Varanasi, the greatest centre of Sanskrit studies in the country. He left Srinagar on foot and after completing the long, and often hazardous, journey reached Varanasi in quest of higher knowledge. After staying at Varanasi for about a year, exploring the Shastras in greater depth, SRK returned to his home town. He participated in several scholarly debates there, often leaving the Pandits of Kashi stunned by his exceptional learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Inputs by **Dr. Dhani Ram Shastri**]

9.3 Dividing a Family Heirloom

When Pandit Keshav Ram, grandson of Pandit Shiva Ram of Mattan (Kashmir) died, his three sons divided his worldly possessions equally amongst themselves. Everything went on smoothly, but one bone of contention remained - a family heirloom that had passed down from generation to generation. It was a manuscript. Not an ordinary manuscript though, for it was the codex archetypus of Kalhana's Rajatarangini which Aurel Stein used for his translation of the chronicle published in 1892.

The three brothers started fighting for its possession, rejecting the idea of retaining the manuscript jointly as a piece of valuable inheritance. Preposterous, thought each of them! How could the other two claim the entire manuscript when it belonged equally to all the three. After all it was a very precious item of heritage. Possessing it was a matter of pride. Eventually the brothers reached a settlement - the manuscript should be divided into three equal parts so that each of them could share the pride. And acting swiftly, they did divide the whole manuscript between themselves, but in the process some of its folios got torn and were lost.

Keen to see his translation through, Stein approached each of the three brothers separately and clandestinely for making his copy, without letting any two of them get a whiff of what was happening.

Almost the same thing happened to the Nilamata Purana. An authentic version of it belonged to one Pandit Raja Ram Shastri and Stein wanted K. Dee Vereese to use it for brining out a critical edition and translation of its text. Vereese, however, could not lay his hand on the manuscript in one piece. Raja Ram Shastri's sons - this time they were two - saw to that. They were keen to possess respective portions of their valuable heritage and decided to divide it into two. Poor Vereese. He had to contend with that!

(Input by **S. N. Pandita**)

9.4 Legend

Did Shankaracharya come to Kashmir ?

Did the Adi Shankaracharya, in whose name the Shankaracharya hill stands in the heart of Srinagar, ever set his foot on the soil of Kashmir ? No, say some scholars who believe that there is no evidence to confirm this. Yet a strong tradition persists among Kashmiri Pandits that the great Advaita philosopher did indeed come to the Valley and had discussions there with the followers of Shakti. There was no need for him to do so after having established his matha at Badrinath in the North, say scholars holding the contrary view.

But there is evidence, not so tangible yet quite strong to corroborate the Pandits' belief, in the form of a legend about the great seer's commentary on 'Vishnusahasranama' which is given in Southern editions of its text. According to this legend, when the Adi Shankaracharya went to Kashmir, he asked one of his disciples to obtain a copy of the Brahma Sutras from the nearby library. Shankaracharya wanted to write a commentary on the Sutras. To his great surprise the disciple came back not with a copy of the Brahma Sutras as he was asked to do, but with a copy of Vishnusahasranama.

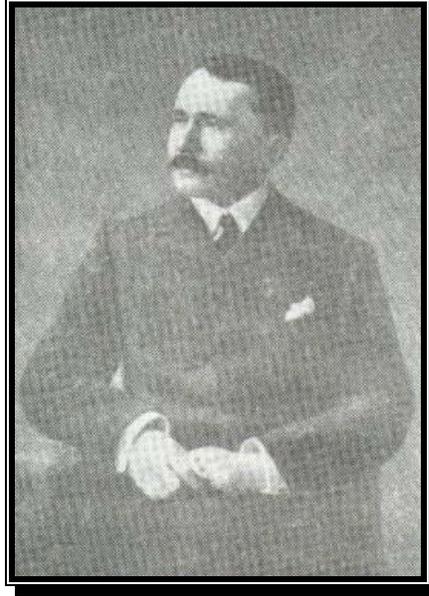
Shankara returned it to the library and sent another disciple to get the Brahmasutras from there. Strangely, this disciple too came back with a copy of Vishnusahasranama. When yet another disciple returned with the same, Shankara began to ponder over this strange happening. Just then Sharda Devi appeared before him and asked him to write a commentary on the Sahasranama. There was no way for the sage but to do as the goddess bade him.

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10.1 'Remembering Sir Aurel Stein' Seminar, exhibition organised jointly by NSKRI and Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre

Rich tributes paid to the great Hungarian scholar

Sir Marc Aurel Stein, the great Hungarian scholar who translated the Rajatarangini and explored Central Asia, was adoringly remembered at a seminar held on November 16, 1998 at 1-A, Janpath, New Delhi. The seminar as well as an exhibition titled 'Remembering Sir Aurel Stein', was organised jointly by NSKRI and the Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre. Eminent Indian scholar Dr. Lokesh Chandra presided. The main focus in the seminar was on Aurel Stein's long association with Kashmiri scholarship.



Sir Aurel Stein

Opening the seminar, Dr. Lokesh Chandra described Aurel Stein in his inaugural address titled 'Flow of Culture Across the Sands' as a "great pilgrim, great scholar and great adventurer who opened for us a great vision". "Stein", said Dr. Lokesh Chandra, belonged to a long tradition of European scholarship particularly of Germanic dimension." At a time when everybody in Europe was thrilled by the discovery of Sanskrit, Stein represented the European consciousness, he explained. When he arrived in India, his "great master" Prof. Buhler, had already explored and catalogued "the Sanskrit manuscript wealth of India". Coming from Hellenic tradition, Stein, who was in search of the track of Alexander the Great, was fascinated in particular by one manuscript in which Buhler had provoked his interest - the Rajatarangini. Dr. Lokesh Chandra said that the Rajatarangini was an important text from many points of view. It helps us understand, he explained, how just before Islam secured a strong foothold in the north, things were shaping in India. It (the Rajatarangini) projected the Indian, and the Hindu, point view. "It is a traffic which has never been really studied in depth. The Hindu Shahis (of Afghanistan) had very close connections with Kashmir. The languages of Kashmir happen to share very richly with the languages of Kafiristan and other parts of north and united India." But even as Stein was investigating the Rajatarangini, Dr. Lokesh Chandra observed, his mind was set on the track of Alexander. As the Afghans did not encourage him, and with Dr. Buhler provoking him to study Rajatarangini, Stein came into contact with a Sanskrit Pandit to help him, he undertook the entire work of editing and translating and interpreting the Rajatarangini -- his edition of the work ultimately appearing in 1900." Ever since, it is the only edito princep or the main edition of the

Rajatarangini. Dr. Lokesh Chandra felt that the Sharada text of Kalhana's chronicle "has been preserved somewhere, and should be published in fascimile; because I always do not find the reading in Rajatarangini very clearly understandable". Dr. Lokesh Chandra further said that (Kshemendra's) Lokprakasha also deserves to be re-edited as it is "very crucial to the understanding of Rajatarangini."

In Dr. Lokesh Chandra's view, however, more than the Rajatarangini, Stein's greatest contribution is in "unravelling the sands of Central Asia", and his first expedition to Khotan was a "tremendous revelation. "He brought for the first time to the Western world the idea that we need not only to look at Kashmir for the earliest catch but to Central Asia," Dr. Lokesh Chandra said. The earliest Indian manuscripts, he revealed, were from Central Asia, all predating the Japanese manuscripts. The Kharosthi Dhammapada also came from this very region, belonging to even earlier than the 2nd century B.C. This was provoked by the accidental discovery of a Sanskrit manuscript in Kucha by Lt. Col. Bower "where they had gone to find out the criminal who had assassinated a British army official". While they were trying to locate the criminal, they located an ancient temple. There was a cow standing there and just as they opened the door, the cow crumbled to dust and from the stomach of this cow came out the Sanskrit manuscript which was later known as the Bower manuscript. It was the first proof to the fact that Sanskrit manuscripts are very ancient and these could exist in Central Asia. According to Dr. Lokesh Chandra, "it was one of the major inspirations for Sir Aurel Stein to reach Central Asia and find out these. So Sir Aurel Stein extended the history of Sanskrit, and the cultural interflow of the ancient world".

Sir Aurel Stein's "major achievement", said Dr. Lokesh Chandra, is discovery of manuscript of Tun-Huang. "These manuscripts are being studied to this very day. They give an insight into the evolution of the Chinese political strategies in Central Asia", Dr. Chandra added. "So the work of Sir Aurel Stein gave us the very temperature of Central Asia, the topography of Central Asia. Too many things have been revealed by him which are as relevant today, and will be as relevant in the coming century as they were when they were sighted", he pointed out.

Stein's discoveries Dr. Chandra observed, "are going to condition the life of our country at least for a century. His basic findings deserve to be put in a more modern context. Not only within the context of history, but within the context of Sanskrit studies."

Making a personal reference, Dr. Lokesh Chandra said that Stein was a great Sanskrit scholar and one of the very few Europeans who wrote Sanskrit. "As a great friend of my father (Dr. Raghuvira), he wrote to my father when he was going to Afghanistan. My father went to see him in Lahore at the station. He went to Afghanistan where he died." Dr. Lokesh Chandra concluded his speech with glowing tributes to Sir Aurel Stein. He said: "Stein was the bedrock of India's archaeology, India's history, India's strategic interest in Central Asia."

Agreeing with Dr. Lokesh Chandra on the influence of Germanic scholarship on Sir Aurel Stein, Prof. Geza Bethlenfalvy, Director, Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre, said that the whole of Hungarian research and oriental studies were motivated by the desire to go back to roots of the Hungarian race, and Stein's scholarship was part of this quest. "In this of course we have taken help from German scholarship", he added. Prof. Geza spoke mainly on "Aurel Stein's Relation to the Hungarian Scholarly World" and said that Stein carried on the tradition of Cosma de Koros whose name is "the motif and life behind all Hungarian oriental studies". Prof. Geza dwelt on the Hungarian background and connections of Sir Aurel Stein, illustrating his view mainly by referring to two letters Stein wrote to his Hungarian friends. Other Indian (mostly Kashmiri) and Hungarian scholars who presented their papers in the seminar were Mr. S. N. Pandita of NSKRI, Prof. P. Bhatia of Delhi University, Dr. Margaret Kovic of HICC, Mr. Peter Hajto of Hungary and Dr. S. S. Toshkhani and Mr. P. N. Kachru both of NSKRI.

Mr. S. N. Pandita's paper titled "Sir Aurel Stein and Kashmiri scholars -- a Tribute to Scholarship" gave intimate and interesting glimpses of Aurel Stein's "long and lasting association" with Kashmiri scholars. The paper revealed several unknown facts about five decades of close friendship between

Stein and his own grandfather Prof Nityanand Shastri, who in Stein's words was "the crest jewel of Kashmiri scholars". It also revealed the high esteem that Stein had for other scholars like Pandit Govind Kaul, Pandit Damodar and Mahamahopadhaya Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri for the valuable guidance and assistance they provided him in translating Rajatarangini.

Prof P. Bhatia's "Stein's contribution to Numismatics" was a well researched paper which explored the numismatic history of Kashmir as presented by Stein in his notes on the Rajatarangini.

In his paper titled "Ancient Geography of Kashmir as Established by Stein", Dr. S. S. Toshkhani discussed some interesting details of the way Stein addressed difficult topographical and antiquarian questions related to Rajatarangini. A large number of old localities and historical sites stand convincingly identified today, thanks to Stein, Dr. Toshkhani said, citing the identification of the castle of Lohar and the ancient Shrine of Sharada, as well as the rediscovery of the long-forgotten temple of Bheda Devi as his major achievements. Dr. Toshkhani's paper also analysed Stein's etymology of Kashmiri place names which "is convincing enough to set at rest the meaningless controversies brought to be raised by some people today".

Mr. P. N. Kachru, in his paper titled "Stein's Search for Codex Archetypus" presented the exciting drama about the discovery of the codex archetypus of Rajatarangini and Stein's endeavour to secure it for his edition.

Dr. Margit Kovic's paper on "Stein in Lahore" was full of interesting details and provided a peep into some hitherto unknown facts.

Dr. Peter Hajto, Counsellor, Ministry of Education, Budapest illustrated his interesting lecture on Stein with slides.

Dr. Utpal Kaul, who had to rush back from a business tour to participate in the seminar, could not find time to pen down his views on the subject he had chosen for his paper, "Stein's contribution to Kashmir Histriography with special Reference to Rajatarangini", but he spoke on it eloquently and passionately.

Mr. Virendra Bangroo, however, was unable to present his paper titled "Ancient Shrines of Kashmir-Stein's Historical Overview."

10.2 Hungarian Ambassador Opens 'Remembering Sir Aurel Stein' Exhibition

The Hungarian Ambassador to India, H. E. Andras Dallos, opened the exhibition "Remembering Sir Aurel Stein", jointly set up by NSKRI and the Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre in the evening of November 16, 1998 at HICC hall, New Delhi. The week-long exhibition had on display rare photographs, documents and original letters addressed by Aurel Stein to the Kashmiri scholars like Prof. Nityanand Shastri. The exhibition mainly sought to highlight the long and fruitful association between Stein and Kashmiri scholars of the time. Letters written by the great scholar to his Hungarian friends also formed part of the display together with some photographs.

Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Andras Dallos said that he was delighted to open the exhibition as it would help to create a better understanding of Sir Aurel Stein's achievements and endeavours. Thanking Prof. Bethlenfalvy and "our friends from the Nityanand Shastri Kashmir Research Institute with whom we had lots of interactions a few months back", the Ambassador described the exhibition as "something of a discovery, because these manuscripts and photographs and this correspondence have not been known before". "Whoever will come to watch it will have a rich experience", he observed. Ambassador Andras Dollos felt particularly delighted because the exhibition coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Hungary and India and marked the twentieth year of the establishment of the Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre in New Delhi. He introduced to the large audience of intellectuals and cultural enthusiasts who had come to visit the exhibition Mr. Szilard Sasvari, Leader of the Parliamentary Group of Fidesz

(Hungarian Parliament) and Mr. Sandor Sara, President of "Duna TV" Sky Channel and famous film director of Hungary, expressing the hope that the HICC would "create and sustain the intellectual exchange and interaction between the peoples of India and Hungary." "No Hungarian, who is worth his salt, can be indifferent to Sir Aurel Stein and his achievements", H.E. Andras Dollos added. The Ambassador said that he felt "proud to be part of such an experience", and was hopeful that "this interaction with our friends from Kashmir will open a new chapter in studying, analysing and learning more about our common past."

Earlier welcoming the Hungarian Ambassador H.E. Andras Dallos on behalf of NSKRI, Mr. S.N. Pandita said that the exhibition took shape after the Nityanand Shastri Kashmir Research Institute talked to Prof Geza Bethlenfalvy, Director Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre, New Delhi about the need to commemorate the valuable contributions of Sir Aurel Stein to Oriental studies particularly his work in Kashmir. "Stein spent more than five decades in Kashmir where he met several Kashmiri scholars, most important of whom was Prof. Nityanand Shastri, who happened to be my own grandfather", Mr. Pandita said, profusely thanking Prof. Geza Bethlenfalvy. "This exhibition is predominantly a glimpse of that scholarly association and interaction", he added.

Describing some salient features of the exhibition, Mr. Pandita said that the Nityanand Shastri Kashmir Research Institute has a collection in original of the letters Sir Stein exchanged with his Kashmiri scholar friends over a span of four decades and also rare photographs of his as well as of the Kashmiri scholars he associated with. "These letters have all along remained a private collection, but now these are well preserved by the Nityanand Shastri Kashmir Research Institute, an institution named after one of the greatest of Kashmiri friends of Sir Aurel Stein. The letters in original are for the first time being put on a world view". Mr. Pandita hoped that the exhibition "would strengthen the cultural bonds between Hungary and India, including Kashmir".

Titled 'Remembering Sir Aurel Stein', the exhibition drew an enthusiastic and appreciative crowd of Indians, mostly Kashmiris, and Hungarians, who evinced a keen interest in the exhibits on display. These included letters written by Sir Aurel Stein to Prof. Nityanand Shastri, some of them in Sanskrit. Some of the important photographs on display included those showing Sir Aurel Stein in Hungary as well as in his camp at Mohand Marg, Kashmir. One rare photograph showed Stein being knighted at Srinagar, Kashmir wearing the ceremonial dress. Photographs of the family members of Sir Aurel Stein and those of Prof. Nityanand Shastri were also an interesting input. Photographs and sketches of the Kashmiri scholars with whom he was associated too were prominently displayed with Stein's impressions about them. These impressions were included to give a glimpse of his intimacy with them and the great bonds that attracted him to their land.

Another feature of the exhibition was display of some important jottings from Stein's diary collected from the memoirs, papers and documents lying in the British Academy, London.

10.3 *Stein's Kashmir Diary: Excerpts*

Still Kashmir, Vangath. Last night at Peer Bakhsh's suggestions the tribal people who in the summer months pasture their flocks in the high valleys gave me a real serenade. Some of the Kashmirian songs were very melodic and reminded me of Hungarian songs.

- August 25, 1891.

On the Dudh Kuth Pass. Twelve thousand feet high. Cooler than Srinagar. I am taking advantages of the opportunity to learn Kashmiri and regularly take lessons both on the march and at camp from Pandit Kashi Ram. Though not a scholar like Govind Koul, he is more reasonable and a fine person.

- August 15, 1894.

In the night ride across the Wular lake a small storm made me worry for the safety of my Rajatarangini manuscript. It seemed as if the Goddess of Wisdom Sharda represented by the waters of Kashmir, was unwilling to let me abduct the manuscript. This is what happened 1200 years ago to

Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang who had to leave his Sanskrit manuscripts in the angry Indus river.
- October 17, 1894.

Camped on Mohand Marg. I enjoy the freedom and work eleven hours a day. After dinner I along with Govind Koul take down Kashmiri tales from the mouth of the peasant bard Hatim, the storyteller and am thus collecting valuable material which I will put to good use in Europe.

- June 19, 1896.

Jammu: I visited again after 50 years the Raghunath temple library. Its six thousand old Sanskrit manuscripts had been catalogued by me with the help of Pandit Govind Koul and another excellent scholar friend Sahaz Bhat in what seems now like a previous birth. It had been a dreary task but it saved the collection from being lost. I had a very attentive reception, had to talk Sanskrit again for an hour or so thus purifying my tongue by use of the sacred languages after all my peregrinations in the barbarian North and West. It was a quaint experience to find myself in the end garlanded in the traditional Kashmir Hindu fashion for the first time in life.

- December 12, 1940.

Along the Kishan Ganga river: Towards the end of 12 marches I was glad to find myself back in Kashmir after all the barrenness past, the kingdom looked more verdant and fertile than ever. How grateful I must feel to the kind fate which allowed me to do so much of my work in Kashmir for the last 55 years.

- September, 1943.

10.4 Pandit Anand Koul

Kashmir's pioneer historical and cultural researcher

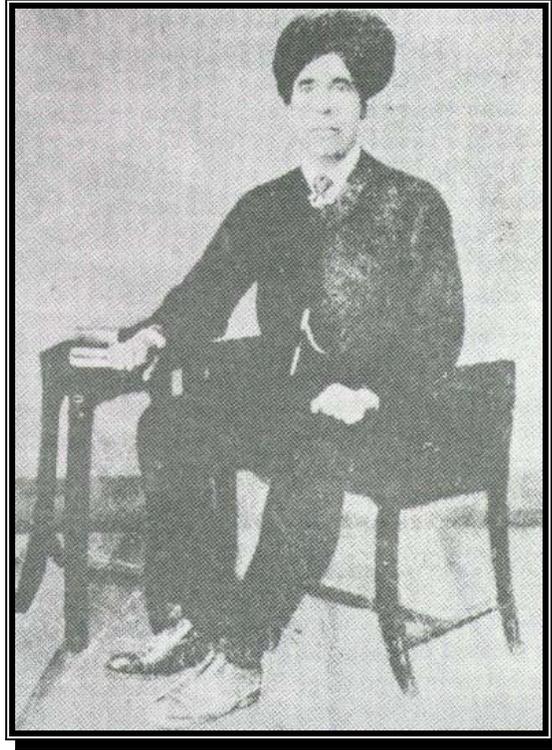
[When Pandit Anand Koul published his first book, 'The Kashmiri Pandit' in 1924, a pioneering work on the history and ethnography of the Kashmiri Pandits, he created history. For the first time someone was writing about a people who had contributed greatly to Indians culture, art, literature and philosophy,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

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

His modern scientific outlook, his English education, his felicity with words, his grounding in traditional Sanskrit and Persian learning made him ideally suited for the task of a writer on various aspects of his native land and its history, culture and traditions. As an eminent historian and writer V. N. Mehta, the illustrious father of Mrs. Pupul Jayakar, has put it, AK was every bit "a learned antiquarian and writer who loved to search things in Kashmir."

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

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



Pandit Anand Koul

Photo Courtesy: Utpal Publications

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

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

Had AK remained content with just his reputation as an administrator, he could have been forgotten with the passage of time. His fame, however, solely rests today on his achievements as a research

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pandit Legacy: Victim of Choice in History

Kashmir abounds in remains of antiquity, though alas ! repeated devastations were done and havoc was wrought to them by cruel unplaceable Muhammadan Zealots and vandals from time to time. It is pity that formerly these most important and precious relics of past glory of Kashmir were allowed to remain in neglected condition. Unprotected from the destructive and disintegrating influences of the weather not to say of earth quakes the ancient moments gradually crumbled to ruins.

The European Sanskrit scholars and others interested in ancient oriental lore came and delved in the Kashmir soil and extracting, at only a trifling cost ancient trophies consisting of old birch bark manuscripts, old coins and other most valuable objects carried them away.

It is, however, gratifying to note that though these treasures have gone out of Kashmir never to return they have not been actually lost as were those, plundered by Muhammdan Zealots who foolishly cut them to pieces, burnt them in fire or flung them in to the river for which, in the harsh pages of historian anger, will rightly ever remain and live on.

--- Anand Kaul

10.5 Islam Akhoon - the Master Forgerer

P. N. Kachru

Once Islam Akhoon, always Islam Akhoon -- Aurel Stein

He befooled world scholars, orientalist and authorities. But Aurel Stein found him out, made him confess and got him convicted publicly in Khotan, his home town. He was Islam Akhoon, a master forgerer of manuscripts, the like of whom world had never known before.

Islam Akhoon was one of the informers through whom the well known scholar Dr.Hornle of Asiatic Society of Bengal, had got fifteen sites around Khotan in Central Asia marked for explorations of ancient manuscripts. Soon he became master of the scandalous game which trapped not only Hornle but many others in is net. Akhoon's "collections" during the period 1895 to 1898, and his supposed forays in Taklamakan later, came to be scandalously exposed. This enterprising native treasure - hunter enmeshed a network of international agencies in his so-called discovery of old Brahmi manuscripts, his "discoveries" finding their way into the collections in London, Paris and St. Petersburg where scholars continued for long scratching their heads over what they called the "unknown characters."

One orientalist, Backhund, however, started suspecting the genuineness of the Akhoon manuscripts from the beginning. In course of his inquiries from local sources, he had already gathered the information that Akhoon and his agents were using wooden blocks procured from a local cloth-print maker for their forgeries. After purchasing three supposedly old manuscripts from Akhoon, Backhund made local investigation and came to know through his servant how these "manuscripts" were being made. Backhund's critical inspection of the manuscripts drew his attention to several points which gave rise to suspicion in his mind. For instance, the manuscripts, acquired by him from Akhoon, "had a certain crispness or freshness and bore none of the signs of wear and tear normally associated with everyday use". Further, Backhund observed, the paper of the manuscripts was "exactly of the same kind as prepared in Khotan in the present day," and "though very ill-treated (burnt and smoky) is still strong, almost as if it were new." Backlund further observed that the corners of the manuscripts "were quite square (not round as usually they are in old books) and the edges recently cut, though in such a manner as to make them look old". But, inspite of these observations by Backlund, Dr. Hoernle stuck to his opinion about the genuineness of the manuscripts. It was in the late summer of 1900 that Sir Aurel Stein, after leaving the house of his host Macartney who was the representative of the British government in Kashgar, went to Khotan. This was the place from where Islam Akhoon was supposed to make his forays into the desert, and was supposed to have supplied his manuscript finds to the

collection of British and St. Petersburg museums. One of the purposes of Stein's visit was to find out the truth about Akhoon's treasure hunting forays, he had told Hornle.

Perhaps suspecting Stein's intelligent move Islam Akhoon did not venture to see him personally, but managed to offer an old manuscript to him that had passed through his hands. Subjecting the manuscript to "water test", the mere touch of wet fingers was enough to wipe away the so-called 'unknown characters.' Peter Hopkirk the famous travel-writer of Central Asia writes that "to Stein's highly trained eye, it (the manuscript) looked suspiciously like certain of the books in Hoernle's collection in Calcutta."

Before leaving for London along with his treasure caravan, Stein was determined to unravel the truth behind Islam Akhoon's adventures of manuscript trade. Stein had collected sufficient evidence to expose Akhoon as a liar. Through his own explorations also he did not find any trace of the writings with Islam Akhoon's "unknown characters". Stein was determined to confront this forger who had managed to dupe learned scholars of entire Europe and England by engaging their attention. He put the responsibility of bringing the forger to book before he could manage to escape, on the Chief Mandarin (bureaucrat) of Khotan. It was on 25th April 1901 that the local Amkan's party caught Islam Akhoon in his home along with "a motley collection of papers" and produced him before Sir Aurel Stein. These were quite familiar to Stein as similar block-printed papers could be found in Calcutta also. But even two days' protracted probing could not bring Akhoon to accept the forgeries done by him. Pleading to the contrary he said that he had simply procured the manuscripts from persons "since dead or absconding". Commenting on this, Stein himself relates: "It was a cleverly devised line of defence, and Islam Akhoon clung to it with great consistency and with the wariness of a man who has had unpleasant experience of the ways of the law." In fact he already had to suffer at the hands of the law a couple of times before. According to Hopkirk, Islam Akhoon had been previously punished "for posing once as Macartney's agent and blackmailing villagers. Akhoon had been flogged and imprisoned.

Again, for forging another Sahib's handwriting to obtain money he had been forced to wear the huge and dreaded Chinese punishment collar of heavy wood, designed to prevent a prisoner from feeding himself. "Akhoon repeatedly denied of ever having visited the sites of origin of the manuscripts supplied to Macartney; insisting that he had procured them through his agents. Stein thought further investigations under the Chinese law would lead to the barbaric torture, which Stein, with his human nature, would never have liked. So, to debunk Akhoon's pronouncements Stein restored to Dr. Hornle's report itself. Finally Akhoon's defence crumbled and gave way on production of a copy of Dr. Hornle's report in which Akhoon's statements given to Macartney had verbatim details and graphic descriptions of his personal visits to the sites of the origin of the manuscripts.

Akhoon's first line of retreat was to admit having seen the old books being manufactured; but finally he admitted, that "he hit upon the idea of writing his own ancient manuscripts." For a long time Islam Akhoon and his close partner Ibrahim Mullah were producing, from their small factory, a steady supply of forged manuscripts. Their best customers were the two rivals, Macartney, the British representative, and Petrovsky, the Russian Counsel, both of whom were eager buyers. Akhoon admitted before Sir Aurel Stein that his first forged manuscripts were produced and sold in 1895. Initially, he imitated the cursive Brahmi characters, and these productions successfully found their way into the leading museum collections of Europe. "Thus Akhoon's factory gained confidence and prosperity", writes Stein, "in sand-buried Ruins of Khotan." As Islam Akhoon quickly perceived, that his "books" were readily paid for, though none of the Europeans who bought them could read their characters or distinguish them from ancient scripts, it became unnecessary to trouble about imitating the characters of genuine fragments.

While there was a constantly rising demand for such manuscripts, Islam Akhoon could not keep the pace with it. He decided to engage the block-makers to produce blocks for quick impressions to meet the demand and make a fortune as quickly as possible. The first consignment of these block-printed

manuscripts was successfully produced and sold in 1895. Forty-five of these were fully described, and illustrated by Dr. Hoernle in his scholarly report of 1899.

Once the defence of Islam Akhoon collapsed, he told Stein everything he (Stein) wanted to know about the operations of the strange little factory that duped and deceived Hoernle and other scholars. The paper they used, Akhoon told Stein, was bought locally in Khotan. Then this was yellowed or stained light brown with Toghurga, a dye obtained from a local tree. After adding the writing by hand or by block-printing, the pages were hung over a fire so as to receive by smoke a proper hue of antiquity. Finally, before being taken to Kashgar and offered to their unsuspecting purchasers, the forgeries were thoroughly besmeared with the fine sand of the desert as they would have been had they come from a sand-buried site. "I well remember" Stein recounts, "how in the spring of 1898 I had to apply a cloth brush before I could examine one of these forged 'block priests' that had reached a collector in Kashmir."

With all this happening, Stein felt to blame squarely and every bit those who had unwittingly encouraged Akhoon and his gang by slapping up their forgeries so eagerly and so indiscriminately. Stein clearly indicted his friend Macartney and the Russian Petrovsky, but also reflected gravely on the valuable time wasted by Dr. Hoernle and other scholars on these worthless works.

Back in Kashgar, he again joined the Macartneys, but kept his feelings to himself. After two weeks of stay, he left for London, along with twelve crates of treasures, on May 29, 1901. In England, his task was almost delicate -- to go to Oxford to meet Dr. Hoernle and break to him the embarrassing news that he had been made a fool of by a semi-literate villager named Islam Akhoon. Stein feared that the shock could be too devastating for Hornle after having professed and publicised too much on these forgeries. But to Stein's great relief Hornle survived the shock. Reports Stein about the meeting: "He is deeply disappointed by Islam Akhoon's forgeries, but to my satisfaction he has recovered". Thus the responsibility to declare that all the "block prints" and the manuscripts in "unknown characters" procured from Khotan since 1895 were in fact modern fabrications of Islam Akhoon and his team. To save themselves from embarrassment, the leading oriental scholars who had been enthusiastic about these "treasures" were anxious to shelve the affair and clear hastily the traces of these "old books" from the British Museum when Islam Akhoon, the treasure seeker from Khotan confessed to forging them.

Yet these extraordinary forgeries found their place in the British Museum where they were in two wooden chests labelled "Central Asian Forgeries". Islam Akhoon, the Devil, too, has got his share. The wily forgerer, who completely outwitted giants in the field of scholarship, is described as something of a genius. He too has his modest memorial -- that small corner of the British Library's oriental department near the Tun-Huang manuscripts where his once venerated "old books" are preserved for posterity.

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11.1 The Significance of Navreh

A Shakta Interpretation

Dr C. L. Raina

Kashmiri Pandits celebrate their New Year's Day, Navreh, on Chaitra Shukla Pratipada or the first day of the bright fortnight of the month of Chaitra. The word 'Navreh' is derived from Sanskrit 'Nava Varsha' meaning the New Year. On the eve of Navreh, which falls on Amavasya or the last night of the dark fortnight, they keep a thali filled with rice, a cup of curds, a bread, cooked rice, some walnuts, an inkpot and a pen, a silver coin and the Panchanga of the New Year, as the first thing to be seen at the Brahma Muhurta or the wee hours. The Panchanga popularly known as Nechi Patri (Nakshatra Patri) is an almanac giving important astrological configurations and auspicious tithis or dates and other useful religious information for the coming year. Keeping the Nechi Patri handy for consultation is a tradition followed in every Kashmiri Pandit household where religious and even social obligations are performed according to the tithis, mathematically calculated in it.

This Navreh, the Saptarishi era followed by the Kashmiri Pandits is entering its 5075th year (falling on 18th March of the Christian calendar). Imagine for a while the perfection with which such a span of time had been calculated by their ancestors to the minutest of minute unit of time pala, vipala etc. with the help of their knowledge of jyotishya and phalit shastra. The Navreh Mavas, or the concluding day of the year is to be succeeded by the Pratipada or the first Navaratra. In mathematics 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 are natural numbers. Then there is zero or shunya. Shunya is nothingness, but it is also the param bindu of the Nava Durga, meditated upon at the sandhi or conduction of Amavasya and Pratipada. Symbolically, the Nava Durgas are the nine fold projections of the supreme-self, which can be observed in the Shrichakra or Shri Yantram at the Sharika Parvat in Kashmir.

On the sacred Pratipada day the ishta devi is invoked with the dhyana mantra and the bija mantra while having the first look at the Nakshatra Patri or Panchanga. That is why the Kashmiri Pandits used to go the Sharika Parvat (Hari Parvat) and pay their obeisance at the Chakreshwara, reciting the Bhavani

Sahasranama, Indrakshi and other Devi Stotras and praying for prosperity for the new year in an auspiciousness suffused with karma, jnana and bhakti. That is what the primary triangle of the Chakreshwara stands for. The Primary triangle according to the Saptashati Hridayam denotes the interaction between the nada and the hindu. It is the eternal seed filled with the primal vibration of Aum or Aim. It sports, gets multiplied, assumes names and forms and sustains for kalpas or aeons together, then reverts back to the moola bindu or the original bindu, which is nirakara or formless.

This is what the yogis mystically experience on the sacred first day of the Navaratri, and is summed up in:

<verse>

It is a nine-fold Mantra, just as the Shri Chandi Mantra is, and is read as

<verse>

The Shakti worshipers of Kashmir see all the facets of Shri Chandi in Shri Sharika whose divine presence fills every syllable of the sixteen-syllabled bija mantra at Chakreshwara.

They find in it eternal vibrations of Shiva and Shakti presented by geometrical configuration. The dots, angle, triangle, straight line, intersection of curves forming petals and outer squares are but concepts denoting manifestation of Shakti in the external Universe. To realise Shakti within oneself, the Kashmir Shaktas pray to the matrikas - the phonemes of the mantras -- to vibrate and re-vibrate from Pratipada to mahanavmi. The Navdurgas or the nine facets of Durga are visualised as Shailaputri Brahmakumari, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandamata, Katyayani, Kalaratri,

Mahagauri and Siddhidhatri put in an ascending order. This order symbolises the journey through consciousness or chaitanya.

So when the first ray of the sun descends on the earth on Chaitra Shukla Pratipada, the Kashmiri Pandits celebrate the presence of Durga, the Supreme Mother among them as Navreh, the New Year's Day.

11.2 *The body is the sacrificial offering*

OR TWO YEARS OF NSKRI

'SHARIRAM HAVIH!'

It is a little over two years when the NSKRI came into existence. Two years is not a long period in the life of an institution, particularly one that is engaged in a stupendous task like keeping the heart of a culture ticking at a time when it is assailed by hostile forces intent upon sniffing the life out of it. That the NSKRI has come up with a well-thought out agenda that could well provide the necessary oxygen to ensure the survival of Kashmiri Pandit culture and its rejuvenation is no mean an achievement. NSKRI's perception of what constitutes a cultural emergency for the Pandits is not the product of an agitated imagination but an assessment based on chilling facts about the possibility of their extinction as a distinct socio-cultural entity.

The horrors that have driven the Institute to a commitment to preserving the Kashmiri Pandit heritage and cultural identity are too overwhelming to be ignored or considered imaginary. If steps are not taken immediately to ward them off, the whole community is likely to suffer a shock more severe than anyone can imagine even as it is struggling to come to terms with the trauma of its uprootment. Already time is flying too fast for retrieval of whatever is left of its shattered and scattered heritage -- its lore and legends, its literature, its art and artifacts, its horde of books and manuscripts, its philosophical attainments, and even the values and ideals that have been cherished by it for centuries.

Things already appear to be going out of hands for the stunned and stupefied members of this hapless community. The cultural onslaught, some would like even to call it cultural genocide, that was set into motion particularly after independence, seems to have almost succeeded in disrupting the Kashmiri Pandit way of life. The well-orchestrated distortion and falsification of facts has been so powerful that it has already resulted in creating an impression that Kashmir is but a colony of West Asian and Islamic cultural empire with 5000 years of its Hindu-Buddhist traditions having been just an illusion. Mahayana Buddhism, Shaiva renaissance, marvels of art and architecture, glorious contributions to Indian aesthetical and philosophical traditions, and to learning and scholarship, masterpieces of Sanskrit literature, the indigenous Sharada script branching out into Gurumukhi and Bodhi, all add up to nothing! All that matters is what happened after the advent of Islam in the 14th century.

But why complain of those who are led to accepting the spurious and rejecting the real? The real threat comes from the enemy within. There are people in the Kashmiri Pandit community itself who are interested in perpetuating lies and falsehoods about the true journey of culture in Kashmir. Those whose perception of the whole situation is spoon-deep. Then there are those who have opened political shops to peddle their solutions to the Kashmir issue, considering culture to be only of peripheral importance. Why, there are even demagogues and their sidekicks who taunt those concerned about preserving the community's cultural identity, mocking them for pleading for culture. Yet another kind are those who belong to corrupt organizations which won't do anything and won't like others to do anything.

It is pathetic that such people are afraid of asking even the basic cultural questions and seeking solutions to them, their phobias arising mostly from their personal ambitions. For the NSKRI, the whole thing is clear -- if you lose your identity, you lose the meaning of your existence!

Fortunately, however, for the community, the scenario is not altogether dismal. There are genuine scholars and cultural experts who belong to the community and are making valuable contributions in different fields. Some of them are quite young, but have acquired a maturity of perception and seriousness of attitude at once refreshing and reassuring. Then there are those who have devoted long decades of their lives to research and scholarly pursuits and are still active in their work. NSKRI is happy that a good number of these genuine scholars and researchers are with it or are appreciative of its efforts.

During the little over last two years of its existence, the NSKRI has been able to create a space for itself even if there are some who are trying to nibble at that space. It has organised several exhibitions, seminars, symposia and discussions to preserve and promote Kashmiri Pandit culture, having made its mark with ventures like "Unmeelan", the first ever exhibition on Kashmiri Pandit cultural heritage held in April 1998. A real eye-opener. While work on encyclopaedia of Kashmiri culture has already begun, a basic book on the history and culture of the Kashmiri Pandits is under preparation. Critical editions of Kashmiri classics and introductory books on Kashmir Shaivism and Shakta philosophy are also part of the Institute's ambitious publications programme. Other projects which have been accorded top priority include search and documentation of Sharada manuscripts and production of video films on cultural subjects. The Institute will also try to set up a heritage centre in Delhi for the benefit of those interested in Kashmir studies.

Shariram havih -- the body is the sacrificial food -- say the Shiva Sutras. And we at NSKRI have decided to dedicate both body and soul to the cause we stand for.

11.3 *"Kashmir is not only the crown but the brain of India"-- Jagmohan* *Communication Minister Releases video-cassette of NSKRI Documentary* *on Kailash-Manasarovar Yatra*



**Shri Jagmohan delivering his speech at the premiere of
'A Pilgrimage to Kailash and mansarovar'**

Communication Minister Shri Jagmohan released the video cassette of NSKRI's 90- minute documentary film, 'A Pilgrimage to Kailash and Manasarovar' at a glittering ceremony at Mavlankar Auditorium, New Delhi on February 28, 1999. Lighting the ceremonial lamp to launch the film and inaugurate its premiere, Shri Jagmohan described it as "a great effort, a great work of art". "It is a reminder of Kashmir's great cultural links with the rest of India", he said. "Kashmir's relationship

with India is deep and not superficial. It is a relationship of mind and soul. It did not start in 1947 but goes back to more than 5,000 years."

"The so-called intellectuals of the country, the newsmen, the writers", he said " have failed to project the essential features of this relationship, and have instead been harping on peripheral things like accession and Article 370. Kashmiri's have provided the best philosophies that the Indian mind could think of and Kashmir Shaivism is the best example of it."

The documentary film has been produced by Smt. Radhika Gopinath, while the concept, camera work and direction is that of Shri C.V. Gopinath. It has been scripted by Shri S.N. Pandita and Shri Gopinath. The NSKRI has lent institutional support to the production.

Complementing Shri C.V. Gopinath for being inspired by real spirituality in making the documentary, Shri Jagmohan said that pilgrimages elevate the mind and bring out the divinity within man. "They stress the essential unity of Indian

culture", he observed, adding that 'Kashmir to Kanyakumari' is not just as empty phrase, but a reality of which every place, every stone in Kashmir is a reminder.

Shri Jagmohan concluded his brief but much applauded speech by stressing that, "Indian culture is very strong." The cultural ties that bind Kashmir and the rest of India, he emphasized, "will be further strengthened." "The Shakti that lies within the Kashmiri mind will go up and up", he said. " Kashmir is not just the Crown of India as is often said, but the brain of India", he concluded amidst thunderous applause, referring to the intellectual capabilities of the uprooted Kashmiri Pandits.

Earlier welcoming Shri Jagmohan and other distinguished guests, Dr. S. S. Toshakhani, Chairman NSKRI, said that, 'A pilgrimage to Kailash and Manasarover ' was a tribute to India's age old spirituality. "It seeks to project the Himalayan heritage, the promotion of which is one of the primary objectives of our Institute", he said, giving a brief introduction of the work done by the NSKRI during the last little over two years.

Shri S.N. Pandita, Secretary NSKRI, spoke about the production and concept of the documentary film, and the vision that drove Shri C.V. Gopinath to make it. He described Shri Gopinath as a profound scholar of the Vedas and Upanishads and a great friend of the Kashmiri Pandit community.

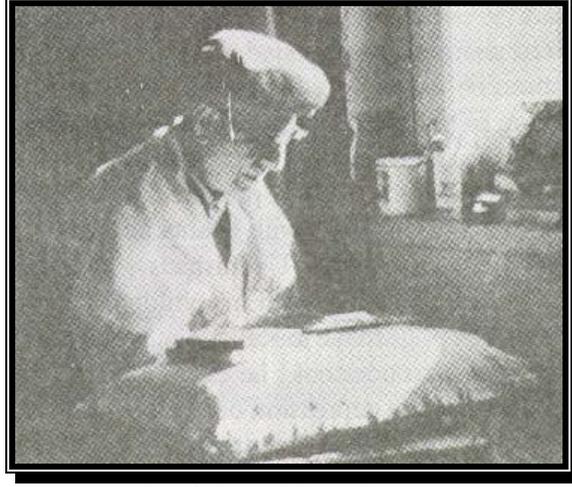
The ceremony started with the young Apeksha Pandita reciting the famous invocation to Goddess Sharada Devi. Shri C.V. Gopinath, who conceived and shot the film, talked about his background and the sources of his inspiration as well as the process that went into making of the film. It was a film shot not from the angle of tourism or natural beauty but for the ultimate spiritual experience that it provided, he said. That is why it was suffused with chants and recitations from the Vedas and the Upanishads -- something that had inspired him from his childhood days, he added. The pilgrimage to Kailash and Manasarovar, (that he twice undertook) he explained, take away the blues and the depression one gets while living a mechanical life and provides a deep spiritual solace. " We have to go back to our cultural roots", he stressed, talking of the religious inspiration being his effort.

Dr. S.S. Toshkhani presented one cassette of the video-film to Shri Jagmohan on behalf of NSKRI. Later the film was screened for showing to the distinguished audience who felt captivated by the shots of the breathtaking Himalayan scenery and bewitched by the unforgettable glory of Mount Kailash and Manasarovar that it presented. The 90minute film was punctuated throughout with the narration of myths and legends surrounding the various holy places enroute, with their spiritual ambience accentuated by chants and recitations from the Vedas, Upanishads, and other holy texts set to soul enthralling Karanataka music.

Swami Gokalananda, Secretary, Sri Ramakrishana Mission, Delhi graced the occasion for a brief while to give his blessings.

11.4 Prof. Jagaddhar Zadoo

One of the Last Titans



Prof. Jagaddhar Zadoo

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

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

The Zadoos originally belonged to Zadipur, a village near Brijbehara, Kashmir from where they migrated to Srinagar in the beginning of the 18th century. JDZ's grandfather Pandit Keshav Bhatt, was chosen by Maharaja Ranbir Singh as his Raja Jyotishi and was consulted by George Buhler for his work on the Pippalada Shakha of Atharvaveda. Young JD took his first examination in Sanskrit, Pragya, from the Punjab University, Lahore, in 1904 when he was just 14. In 1915 he obtained the degree of Shastri from the same university following it with M.A. in Sanskrit in 1920 and MOL (Master of Oriental Languages) in 1921. It was in 1921 that he joined the Jammu and Kashmir Research Department as Head Pandit and worked on that post till 1924. From 1924 to 1927, JDZ taught Sanskrit at the Prince of Wales College, Jammu in place of the legendary Dr. Siddheshwar

Verma, who had gone to Oxford for his D. Litt. Eventually JDZ became Professor of Sanskrit at Sri Pratap College, Srinagar in 1931 after completing his second stint as Head Pandit in the Research Department from 1928 to 1931, a post he held till 1946. He taught Sanskrit again at the Government College for Women, Srinagar from 1951 to 1953. In 1953 he became the founder Principal of the Mahila Mahavidyalaya at Srinagar and worked there till 1975 when he retired from active life.

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

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

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

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

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to Sanskrit scholarship, His Holiness Jagadguru Shankarcharya of Dwarkapitha conferred upon him the title of Vidya Martand in 1955. He was honoured with the title of Mahamahopadhyaya by the Prayag Vidvat Parishad in 1973, the last of Kashmiri scholars on which this honour was conferred. The Sharadapitha Research Institute, Srinagar, chose to recognise his outstanding work in the field of Indology by awarding the honorary degree of Doctor of Indology to him in 1974, while in 1976 the Pradeshik Snaskrit Parishad of Jammu honoured him for his profound Sanskrit scholarship.

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

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

11.5 *Twenty two Sanskrit Libraries existed in the heart of Srinagar*

Well-known Indologist George Buhler came to Kashmir in the late seventies of the last century in search of Sanskrit manuscripts and published his famous Report in 1878. As he found out, it was a time when Sanskrit learning was still thriving among the Kashmiri Pandits who prided themselves for possessing large collections of works on different subjects in the language. As many as twenty two Sanskrit libraries existed during the time of Buhler's visit, some of them virtually large store houses of Sanskrit manuscripts, carefully and systematically preserved. Of these eleven existed in the very heart of Srinagar - Habba Kadal !

"Who were the possessors of these most considerable collection of manuscripts?" It would be natural to ask using Buhler's own words ? Extensive research and exploration of different references in this regard has yielded fruit. NSKRI has been able to identify by the names of these twenty-two Kashmiri Pandits who possessed the well-kept libraries that came handy for Buhler and others to use. The names of these Kashmiri Sanskrit scholars, along with the addresses where they lived are seven below:

1. Dayaram - Resident of Habba Kadal
2. Keshavram - do -
3. Suraj Kak - do -
4. Bida Sahib - do -
5. Ram Koul Sahib - do -
6. Mahtab Joo - do -
7. Sahaj Kaul - do -
8. Raj Kak - do -
9. Kaval Ramdan - do -
10. Chand Ram - do -
11. Mahanand Joo - do -
12. Lal Pandit - Resident of Kani Kadal
13. Kamal Raidan - do -
14. Gopal Kokilu - Resident of bana Mohalla
15. Prakash Chand - Resident of Ganesh Ghat
16. Janardan - do -
17. Prakash Mekh - Residence not identified
18. Mukund Jotshi - do -
19. Hari Ram Jotshi - do -
20. Daya Ram Jotshi - Resident of Sathoo Barbar Shah
21. Tota Ram Jotshi - Resident of Rainawari
22. Balakak - Resident of Safakadal

Forgotten names ? May be. But NSKRI is happy at having at last found them out and reviving their memory even though their rich collections no longer exist.

(Input: S. N. Pandita)

11.6 Ballet on Lalleshwari

A Cultural Shock

People who had come to the Kamani Auditorium, New Delhi on February 21, to watch the "colourful presentation" of the "ballet" "Paramyogini Lalleshwari", were mostly driven by reverence for the great 14th century saint poetess whose name has become synonymous with Kashmiri ethos. (Many of them had the impression that it was a NSKRI show.) What they expected was to have the pleasure of watching an enthralling spiritual musical bringing out various dimensions of Lalleshwari's personality and poetry. Little did they know that they were in for a rude cultural shock. The "ballet" showed Lalleshwari; the great Shaiva Yogini, most revered icon of Kashmiri Pandit wisdom and culture, dressed from head to toes in Muslim attire -- embroidered Pheran, Qasaba and all !

In one stroke the organizers of the show had done what all the fundamentalists from G. M. D. Sofi down to his present-day versions persistently wanted to do -- appropriating Lalleshwari to Islam !

You could see her dressed as a Muslim girl moving up and down the stage, giving one the impression that she was either born Muslim or was converted to Islam. And why only she, her whole milieu was shown like that -- the males wearing the Khan dress (which incidentally is the national dress in Pakistan) and Muslim prayer caps, and females the Qasabas, Salwars and embroidered Pherans (perhaps purchased straight from a Kashmir Government Arts Emporium showroom). They sang songs in Qawali style (alien to Kashmir) and danced Muslim dances set to the strains of a music imposed by the Pathans. Were it not -for the "vyapta charachara" hymn of Abhinavgupta -- the only redeeming feature of the show -- one would naturally think that the Kashmiri society in Lalleshwari's time had adopted Islamic ways en masse. And if that was not enough, a quaint looking figure-- something of a cross between the sauda makkaar and the kuly fakir wearing the overflowing robes of a dancing dervish, would occasionally appear on the stage to mumble interjections linking the various sequences.

So that was how Lalleshwari and her times were presented in the what was termed as a "ballet" by its organizers, making quite a number of people in the audience gnash their teeth at the abominations. To the organizers -- the one-man Lalleshwari International Trust and the Abhinav Educational and Cultural Society -- it seemed to matter little if they made history to stand on its head. For one there was money in the "mega event" and for the other the satisfaction of becoming a cultural czar overnight. And if in the process Kashmiri culture, which Lalleshwari had such an important hand in shaping, got wildly distorted, well it was none of their concern.

The one-man Lalleshwari International Trust (one wonders who are its other members and what is 'international' about it) had been creating a hype through leaflets and ads for over one year about "a humble effort to present a mega effort to the people and humanity at large"(whatever that may mean) about the life and teachings of "Mirabai of Kashmir" and "second Rabia of Basra".

But what does history say about the saint-poetess and the age in which she lived? At the time when she was born, Kashmir had seen only three years of Muslim rule when Rinchan (1320-23) became the Sultan after converting to Islam. After Rinchan's death Hindu rule was restored in Kashmir till Shahmir finally established the rule of his dynasty in 1339 after snatching the throne from Kota Rani by perfidy. Yet, for quite sometime Hindus remained in a majority and it was difficult to distinguish the minority Muslims from them so far as social customs and living style were concerned. According to Mohib-ul Hassan, the ordinary people and even the king, till at least Qutub-ud-din's reign, wore largely what was the Hindu dress of the times. It was Syed Ali Hamdani who exhorted Qutub-ud-Din

and his Muslim subjects to wear Muslim attire -- an advice that was more followed in its breach till Sikandar Butshikan came on the scene.

How people dressed exactly in Lalleshwari's age, especially the Hindus, needs much research to find out. And that requires deep study and research -- something that didn't look to be the organisers' cup of tea.

At the end of the show some people who know a little about Lalleshwari as a poet and a saint were heard complaining, "But where was Lalleshwari in all this?" Her spiritual anguish, her intense quest for Shiva, the powerful rhythm of her thought vibrating in her soul-elevating yaks, her defiant spirit and revolutionary personality -- nothing seemed to emerge from it, they felt.

There is much more that can be asked about the content as well as the form of the "ballet" 'Paramyogini Lalleshwari'. For instance, which spiritual movements were taking place in West Asia at the time Lal Ded was composing her yaks in Kashmir? And what is the point sought to be made by referring to them? Also, what has Bulle Shah to do with her being "Paramyogini", or for that matter Kabir or Nanak? What was the purpose in juxtaposing them together as referral points to understand Lal Ded when they were so far removed in time from her?

Authentic or not, the organizers had to put up a show and that they did with everything that is supposed to go with the notion of Kashmiriat -- the colourfully embroidered pherans, the salwars, the Muslim skullcaps, the Rov dance and of course, that blah-blah-blah about universal love and brotherhood and Sufism -- the new buzz-word.

"Was Lalleshwari a Sufi?" some were seen asking. The organisers, of course, had their own compulsions. If Kashmir had to be shown, Sufism has got to be there. And if Lalleshwari was not exactly a Sufi, well, she did attempt some sort of a synthesis between Sufism and Shaivism -- they seemed to think. But where, pray, in which of her verses precisely? Had Sufism really reached Kashmir in her time? These questions do not seem to have bothered them. The fact, however, is that her imagined meeting with Syed Ali Hamadani actually never took place, as proved so convincingly by Prof Jai Lal Kaul in his excellent book on Lal Ded. (The story seems to have been fabricated to suggest Islam's superiority over Shaiva philosophy.) Even if she did, Syed Hamadani was no Sufi. He was a missionary preaching Sunni Islam, and for the Sunnis Sufism is said to be an anathema. But why such extra emphasis on Lalleshwari having blended Sufism with Shaiva thought, one would like to ask.

As for as form is concerned, "Paramyogini Lalleshwari" can be hardly called a ballet or even a dance drama for that matter, for it had virtually no storyline. The prose narration was neither here nor there. The so-called "colourful presentation" was puerile and very mediocre. So was music. There was nothing, in fact, that evoked the ambience of Lal Ded's time and her verses.

Yet the two organizers were seen patting each other's back, snug and satisfied. The cake, of course, went to Delhi's Education Minister Narendra Nath, the VIP guest who was invited to speak at the end and could not even pronounce Lalleshwari's name. "Laaleeshwari", he revealed, "wrote poetry in the 14th century and also worshipped Shiva!"

While everyone is free to put up "mega shows" and "colourful presentations", it must be said that the ballet outraged the sensibilities of many, particularly those who regard Lalleshwar as an icon of Shaiva faith and the most revered symbol of Kashmiri culture. She was a poet who touched such great heights that no other Kashmiri poet has so far been able to scale. The questions that such shows are bound to raise are: Does anyone with some cash to spare have the liberty to distort cultural facts? And can anyone be allowed to trivialise Lalleshwari in such a frivolous manner?

-- S. S. T.

11.7 *The Saptarishi Samvatsara*

Time is eternal. It is the rhythm of divine pulsation. However, it is only linear or chronological time in which life unfolds itself on this universe. So when we talk of the Saptarishi Samvatsara followed by Kashmiri Pandits we have to travel back in time to the people of Satisar, the ancestors of the present day Kashmiri Pandits.

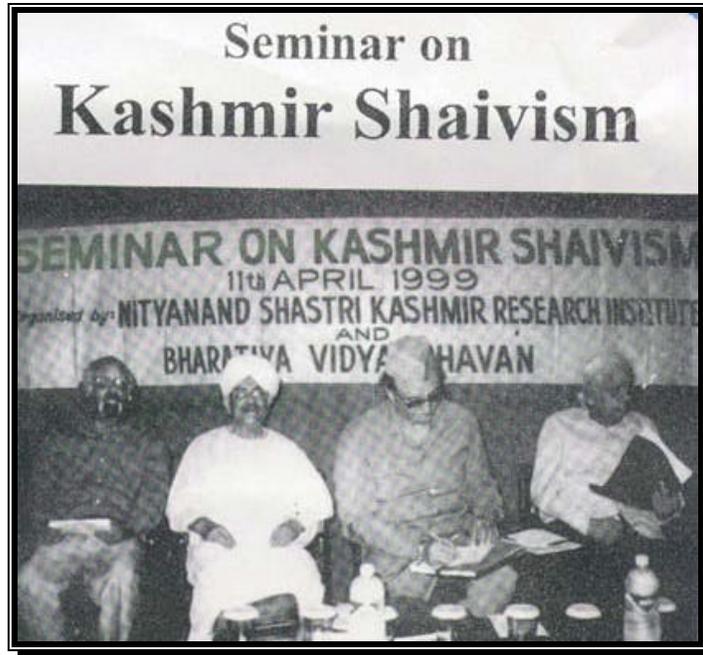
Why is the name of the Saphrishis associated with this era? Legend goes that some 5074 years ago Saphrishis, the seven great sages of the Hindus, came to Sharika Parvat, the abode of goddess Sharika at the auspicious moment when the first ray of sun fell on Chakreshwara, and paid obeisance to her. The place where they are said to have assembled is still called Sata Peshy. It is a rock where devotees of the goddess go to ask for a boon and meditate upon Mahakali to attain siddhi. Astrologers made this auspicious moment the starting point for their calculation of the Nova Varsha Pratipada.

- Dr. C. L. Raina

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12.1 *Seminar on Kashmir Shaivism*

Reactivating the gene of Kashmiri Pandit culture



On panel: (From left) Dr. S. S. Toshkhani, Dr. B. N. Pandit, Dr. Karan Singh and Shri J. Veeraghavan

"Kashmir Shaivism teaches that monistic thought can be practised by anyone, man or woman, without the restriction of caste, creed or colour. Kashmir Shaivism, therefore, is a universal system, pure, real and substantial in every respect".

- Swami Lakshman Joo

Kashmir Shaivism is a philosophy positive and realistic in its approach to life. Rejecting negativism and escapism of every kind, it regards consciousness to be one and indivisible. Unlike Vedanta, it does not look upon the world as unreal but as a screen of radiance on which

the Supreme unfolds itself with the help of its unlimited energy from which it is inseparable. This energy, which stirred in the first stirring, vibrates everywhere at every moment, "blooming in ranges of consciousness." Kashmir Shaivism, therefore, urges man not to give up the world but to see reality in its totality, recognizing his own true nature to be identical with that of the Divine. For it 'moksha' is nothing but an extension of one's own self to include the whole universe. The goal that it sets before man is attainment of 'sarva-svatantrya' or the absolute freedom of will and action. It is this vision of complete harmony in the relationship of man, universe and God that makes Kashmir Shaivism relevant in the present day world in which man, torn by inner and outer conflicts and is facing a civilizational crisis of the gravest magnitude, is groping for real peace. What Shaivism offers to him is an assurance of resolution of his unending dilemmas and confusion of mind.

Perhaps that is why Kashmir Shaivite theory and psychoanalytical practices are evoking intense interest in countries like the USA, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, England and Japan where they are

being taken up for serious research in academic circles. It may be of interest to note that in the recent years, the 'Vigyan Bhairava' has become a most sought after Shaiva text in America for the psychosomatic techniques it suggests to bring about "the face to face recognition of the unconscious by the conscious mind".

For Kashmiri Pandits, the people displaced from the land where this unique school of philosophy evolved and spread from the 8th century to the 14th, its importance lies in determining the parameters in which their identity can be defined and understood. It can surely be of great help to them in constructing their self-image after the devastation they have suffered at the hands of forces unleashed by fundamentalist Islam. For those masquerading as champions of 'Kashmiriat', a term invented to camouflage the present reality in Kashmir, it poses the question: Is there anything greater that Kashmir has contributed to world thought than Kashmir Shaivism? Why is it that those who are not tired of parroting the politically convenient term day in and day out are disinclined to include Kashmir Shaivism in the connotation that they seek to give to it "?

While the reasons for it are obvious -- Kashmir is to be identified solely with West-Asian Islamic culture of which Sufism too is but a milder projection -- it makes one feel sad to note that even among the Kashmiri Pandits, who count themselves as inheritors of the great Shaivite legacy, only a few remain who know what Kashmir Shaivism really means. It is another thing that among these few there are outstanding scholars like Prof B. N. Pandit who is regarded as the greatest living authority on the subject. There are also devotees of Ishwar Swaroop Swami Lakshman Joo, that beacon light of monistic Shaivite thought who transmitted its radiance far and wide. And they are doing excellent work to spread awareness about his teachings. Yet the fact remains that there is much that needs to be done to acquaint intellectuals in general with the basic concepts and doctrines of Kashmir Shaivism, the efforts of some brilliant scholars in this direction not having much impact beyond the groves of the academe. The task that lies before them is to translate and bring out annotated editions of some of the core texts of the philosophy for the benefit of the layman. Translation and annotation of the 8 volumes of Abhinavagupta's Tantralok, in particular poses a really formidable challenge for them.

It was with all this in mind that the N. S. Kashmir Research Institute decided to hold a Seminar on Kashmir Shaivism in the Capital jointly with the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, inviting prominent scholars to present their papers on its various aspects. Not all of them could make it to the seminar held on April 11, 1999, but those who participated found themselves sharing their views and insights with a packed audience eager to absorb every word they uttered. The lively discussion that followed showed that far from being a mere academic exercise, the seminar was a thought provoking event, with intellectuals like Dr. Karan Singh, the Chief Guest himself, asking questions about the social relevance of Kashmir Shaivism at a time when Kashmiri Pandits were facing disaster upon disaster.

Encouraged by the tremendous response that the Seminar evoked, NSKRI is now thinking of organising an international seminar on the subject even as preparations for organising an exhibition titled "Shiva Drishti", the Shaiva Way of Life in December '99 on the manifestations of Shiva in Kashmir's art, literature and life, are to be started.

The Seminar on Shaivism has set into motion a process that envisages the launching of many more joint programmes with the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan in the ensuing months. An agenda for this is being drawn in consultation with the worthy director of the Bhavan, Shri J. Veeraraghvan who is showing a keen interest in such ventures. These programmes could well mean the beginning of an effort to reactivate the gene of Kashmiri Pandit culture which was forced by circumstances to remain dormant for long.

12.2 *Prominent scholars take part in Seminar on Kashmir Shaivism*

"It is a unique philosophy and a great tradition", says Dr. Karan Singh in his inaugural speech

Reputed scholars from different parts of the country participated in a seminar on Kashmir Shaivism organised jointly by the N.S. Kashmir Research Institute and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in New Delhi on April 11, 1999. The Seminar, which was the first: of its kind to be held in the Capital, was inaugurated by the well known intellectual and scholar Dr. Karan Singh.

Enlightening a receptive and appreciative audience in the packed Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan hall about different aspects of Kashmir Shaivism, the participants, who included Dr. B. N. Pandit, Dr. Navjivan Rastogi, Prof. Lakshmeshwar Jha, Dr. Kaushalya Wali, Dr. C. L. Raina and Dr. Ashutosh Angras, stressed on its relevance and importance in the present day world.

The Seminar began with hymns invoking the blessings of the Mother Goddess sung by Smt. Radhika Gopinath in her inimitably sonorous and sweet voice.

Welcoming the participants and the distinguished audience, Dr. S. S. Toshkhani, Chairman NSKRI said that the Seminar was part of the Institute's efforts to explore the history of the seminal ideas, concepts and thought processes that have evolved in Kashmir but have crossed its mountain barriers to contribute in shaping the Indian mind.

Lighting the ceremonial lamp Dr. Karan Singh, who was the Chief Guest, inaugurated the Seminars describing Kashmir Shaivism as a unique system of philosophical thought and a distinct way of life that integrates the physical, spiritual and metaphysical dimensions of a human being. "It is not Mayavadi at all and does not negate life", he said.

Dr. Karan Singh referred to the link between the Shiva Siddhanta of South and Shaivism of Kashmir and said that it is a great tradition, aspects of which need to be studied in depth. He, however, lamented that not much was being done in this direction in the country while in several Western universities ambitious research work in Kashmir Shaivism had been undertaken in the recent years.

Dr. Karan Singh recalled his association with some of the leading scholars of Kashmir Shaivism like Gopinath Kaviraj, Swami Lakshman Joo and Dr. B. N. Pandit and paid them his respects. He described Swami Lakshman Joo as "all knowing" and a towering master of Shaiva Darshan with "great insight and spiritual vision". He also recalled how Pandit Parmanand, a well known Kashmiri scholar, helped him learn Sanskrit, beginning his lessons with Shaiva texts like the Shiva Sutras and Ishwar Pratyabhijna.

Referring to the outburst of militancy in Kashmir, Dr Karan Singh said that "disaster after disaster had befallen on Kashmir", but the Kashmiri Pandits had withstood them and hoped that they shall be able to save their precious legacy.

The first session was chaired by Shri J. Veeraraghavan, Director, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and former Secretary Culture, Government of India. It started with the presentation by Dr. B.N. Pandit of his paper 'Kashmir Shaivism: Fundamental Principles of Philosophy' in which he said: "Kashmir Shaivism accepts the eternal existence of only one reality and that is Paramashiva - absolute and pure consciousness lying beyond all the regions of mental and material existence, but pervading and governing all of them. This infinite and pure consciousness possesses infinite powers to will, to know and to do and has unlimited blissfulness as its character. It presents outwardly its playful nature, because play is an outward manifestation of inward bliss."

"The whole phenomena exists within this pure and infinite consciousness in the manner in which a plant lies within a seed. A seed is never independent in its nature and has to depend on several other entities like soil, moisture, warmth, etc. for its outward growth The absolute I-consciousness is, on the other hand, cent per cent independent in each and every action and everything. It may project

outwardly the phenomena lying in it inwardly in the form of its potency, or may not do so, or may do it this way or that way in accordance with its free will.

"The phenomena lie in infinite consciousness in the form of its divine powers, which become reflected outwardly and appear as the wonderfully complex phenomena. Such theory of creation, based on the principles of reflection and manifestation, is the basic cosmogonical principle of Kashmir Shaivism" There is no restriction of caste, creed or sex, and anyone with devotion for Lord Shiva is free to study and practice Kashmir Shaivism, Dr. Pandit explained.

Dr. Navjeevan Rastogi, a leading scholar of Kashmir Shaivism and former Director, Abhinavagupta Institute of Aesthetics and Shaiva Philosophy, spoke next, focussing on the state of studies in the field during the last 50 years. Distinguishing Kashmir Shaivism from other schools of Indian philosophical thought, Dr Rastogi said that it is not rooted in sorrow, nor does it look to liberation or moksha as a way out. "It is a philosophy that celebrates life", he asserted, "while other schools of Indian philosophy are deterministic in their character". Kashmir Shaivism accepts life in its totality and does not seek to categorise it like other philosophical systems of the country which separate dharma, artha, kama and moksha, the four goals of life, he pointed out. On the other hand it integrates all the four. "Kashmir Shaivism is integral in its approach and takes life in its totality", he noted.

Referring to the state of Shaiva studies in the country, Dr Rastogi lamented that all leading lights like Kaviraj Gopinath, K.C. Panday, Thakur Jaidev Singh, Rameshwar Jha..Kalidas Chattopadhyay have departed from the world, "leaving scholarship in the field in jeopardy and danger". "Only Dr. B. N. Pandit is still with us", he said with an air of sadness. Dr. Rastogi divided the history of studies in Kashmir Shaivism into four parts - the first part stretching from 1968 to 1910, the second from 1911 to 1937, the third from 1937 to 1966 and the fourth from 1966 onwards. The fourth part started with the work of stalwarts like Dr. K.C. Pandey and signified a period when the studies in this branch of Indian philosophy spread throughout the country and even beyond to the Western countries.

Dr. Rastogi regretted that in this matter Indian scholarship was lagging far behind researchers in Europe, USA and Canada, who were evincing increased interest in Kashmir's Shaiva philosophy. He said that there was need to define parameters of this study and to determine its essential identity. He felt pained to note that "Abhinavaguptan thought was dying in the land of Abhinavagupta's birth", and suggested that a standard bibliography on the subject be compiled and brought out and annotated editions of core text books of Kashmir Shaivism like the 'Tantraloka' be published as many of them had gone out of print. Dr. Rastogi also agreed with the suggestion made by a distinguished member of the audience, Shri T. N. Ganjoo, that there was need to publish a standard book on Kashmir Shaivism which would explain its basic concepts and doctrines in a manner that it would be easy for the layman to understand.

Prof. Lakshmishwar Jha, Professor of Sanskrit at the Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth had 'Vedamulak Shaivagamokta Shiva-Shakti ki Aitihāsika' (Historicity of the Concept of Shiva-Shakti as propounded in the Shaiva Texts and its Vedic Roots) as the topic of his Hindi paper, but he chose to speak, putting the written text aside though adhering to the points made in it. In his vigorous speech Prof. Jha asserted that Vedic philosophy is the original source of all branches of Indian philosophical thought, including Shaivism. "Every term, every feature of this school has been defined and discussed in the Vedas", he said, "everything related to the concept of Shiva and Shakti has been clearly explained. You can't claim to understand what the Agamas say unless you understand what has been said in Nigamas."

Rounding up the discussion in the first session, Shri J. Veeraraghvan related the anecdote of a man who was searching for his lost key under a lamp post because there was light there, although he had lost his key somewhere else. "That is what we are also doing here", he said, pointing to the plight of modern day researchers.

Shri J. Veeraraghavan said that despite all the progress in science and technology during the last two hundred years or so, man has yet to move from 'Apara Vidya' or the lower form of knowledge to 'Para Vidya' or the highest form of knowledge.

Referring to Kashmir's contribution in the field of learning and literature, Shri J. Veerarghvan said that Abhinavgupta's wonderful commentary on Bharata's Natya Shastra still provided guidance and inspiration to some of the finest classical dancers in the country today. "We should go deeper and deeper into such great traditions", he said, expressing his gratitude to NSKRI for bringing facts about it to light. He assured that the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan would extend its fullest cooperation to the Institute in creating an awareness about "this great culture".

The post-lunch session began with Dr. B.N. Pandit in the chair. Presenting the first paper of the session, well-known Sanskrit scholar Dr Kaushalya Walli spoke on 'Spanda Shastra and its Utility in the Present Era'.

"Today's man", she said, "finds himself in a state of great restlessness despite all the material progress he has made with the help of science and technology. The world today may have become a global village but man is in search of peace. This he can achieve only through self-awareness, for which he needs to understand the Spanda principle propounded by masters of Kashmir Shaivism like Vasugupta and Bhatta Kallatta, she said. According to the Spanda Shastra, kshobha or the agitation caused by primal ignorance makes the individual consider the self as non-self and forgetfulness gives place to self-recollection, completing man's evolution". "Spanda", Dr. Wali said means spiritual dynamism. The infinite, perfect, divine consciousness is complete self-awareness or vimarsha. It does not move yet causes all movement.

"The Divine", she went on to say, "is called Maheshwara on account of this self-awareness. The Spanda Karika aims at divinising human nature'. It is not a philosophy for mere intellectual satisfaction of man, but one that enables him to identify himself with the essential nature of the Supreme Being, she explained.

The next speaker, Dr. C.L. Raina, examined the philosophy of Shaktivada in relation to Kashmir Shaivism. He started with the declaration that "we are all the children of Shakti and expansion of the universe takes place from the prithvi-tattva, or the earth element to shakti-tattva or the highest principle. Shakti is the dynamic principle that reflects itself in every stirring thing and makes everything move, he said. "In Bhavani Sahasranama", he went on to say, "Nandikeshwara asks Shiva what is it on which he meditates despite being the Lord of the Universe." "It is Shakti" (cosmic energy), replies Shiva. The duality between 'aham' (I) and 'idam' (this, the phenomenal world) is the cause of man's delusion and therefore misery. It is only when we realize that the whole universe is the manifestation of Shakti and nothing but Shakti exists, we can free ourselves from this delusion. This is what is called 'shakti sanchara' or the transmission of energy, and we see that it is this alone that works. We go beyond the duality and reach the transcendental stages. We find that Shakti is everything - tantra, mantra and yantra. We understand the mysteries of the 45 bijaksharas, like Shree Krishna Joo Kar did, who knew no Sanskrit but was a great devotee of Mother Sharika.

The concluding paper, 'Trika Darshan Evam Saundarya Chetana' (Trika Philosophy and Aesthetic Sensibility) was presented by Dr. Ashutosh Angiras in which he brilliantly expounded on the Shaiva conception of the relationship between aesthetic creativity and spiritual experience.

"The Shaiva philosophers", he said, "regarded beauty as a kind of self-expression and with the aid of their aesthetic sensibility explored transcendentalness in the mundane world while discovering the transcendental manifest itself in mundane forms in every sphere and at every moment". "What could be considered as very important is that the masters of Trika philosophy have not associated Shiva with poetry, drama, dance or music alone but have seen him as a painter and a sculptor too, looking at the world as a painting painted by Him. It can be said that while their positive attitude towards life surrounded the dancer's feet with the tinkling of bells, it filled their inner hearts with the vibration of the spanda energy."

According to Dr. Angiras, the aesthetic sensibility of the Shaiva masters is based on two things. One of them is 'svatantrya' or absolute free will, the state in which the Being resides in his own nature. The second basis is the concept of aabhaasa or manifestation. There is possibly a third dimension also - that found in the principle of spanda or the first stirring of energy of consciousness. It is a kind of subtle movement or activity or sound which is at the root of all creation and which frees everything from a state of inertness giving it the vibration of life.

Summing up the discussion, Dr. B.N. Pandit further explained the Shaivite conception of beauty and characteristics of their aesthetic world view. He said, "Kashmir Shaivism is not based on rational thinking and argumentation alone. Its finer principles are based on direct revelation of the exactly correct truth regarding the nature and character of the real self of a person and the world around. Such a realization was the result of practice of a kind of Shivayoga known as the shambhavi mudra. This practice has been prevalent in the country right from the age of the Indus Valley civilization. The sage Yajnavalkya too has described the method of practicing the shambhavi mudra which has been referred to in the Gita as well. He said that the sage Durvasa was one of the original masters of this practice, whose disciple, Tryambakaditya was succeeded by a line of teachers of Kashmir Shaivism. Dr. Pandit expressed confidence that despite the present political turmoil in Kashmir, the tradition of the Trika system of philosophy shall continue unbroken in the future also.

The interesting aspect of the Seminar was the lively discussion that followed the presentation of papers. Dr Badri Nath Kalla, Dr Ashutosh Angiras, Prof. Lakshmishwar Jha, Shri T.N. Ganjoo, (Mrs.) Ranjana Gupta and others took part in the discussion.

12.3 Damodar

A true Kashmirian scholar

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

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

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

The second son, Damodar, was a brilliant scholar, profoundly knowledgeable and master of repartee, who succeeded his father on his death in 1872, as the Head of the Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, in

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

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

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

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

Meanwhile many Westerners interested in Indian culture studied Sanskrit in Europe (particularly Germany, England and France) and were appointed by the British Government of India, to specially created posts in Sanskrit institutions in India, to explore and exploit the Indian Sanskrit heritage. They were encouraged to collect, examine, translate edit and arrange distribution of select Sanskrit works of which the government organised allotment among British universities and collections, as well as some Indian societies and institutes. Apparently it was their policy to rescue and secure ancient manuscripts, dealing with India's (including Kashmir's) heritage, not only from a mere academic interest and present the Indian civilization to the world, perhaps with a colonial angle attached to it. The political department of the Government of India was deeply involved in this.

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

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

By the 18th of August, work progressed fast and he arranged with the two brothers, copies of nearly seventy works in the Residency list. He made visits to many places, did minor excavations and compared the locations of certain places described in Sahib Ram's 'Kashmir Tirtha Sangrah'. From his

contact with the other scholars in Kashmir, and in commenting upon the scholastic eminence of others Buhler's remarks on Pt. Damodar are particularly noteworthy as follows:

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

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

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

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

12.4 *Moti Lal Saqi is no more*

12.4.1 *Community loses a veteran warrior on the cultural front*

Poet, writer, folk-lorist, researcher Moti Lal Saqi passed away in the wee hours of May 21, 1999 in New Delhi after a massive heart attack. Earlier in March he had undergone surgery for a heart ailment at Jammu, and was now recuperating at his eldest son, Vijay Saqi's residence at Sarojini Nagar. The tragic news of his death was received with great shock by his numerous friends and admirers in Delhi who rushed to bid him a tearful farewell. With his demise the Kashmiri Pandit community has lost yet another warrior who was in the vanguard of the struggle to save and sustain its culture in exile.

Born in 1936 at Bijbehara, Kashmir, Moti Lal Saqi enriched Kashmiri language and literature in several ways, and emerged as a major poet and critic in the language while still in his youth. From the lyrical romanticism of 'Modury Khwab' (Sweet Dreams), his first collection of poems, to the spiritual restlessness and an inward quest for higher values based on faith reflected in 'Mansar', for which he won the Sahitya Academi award, and 'Mrigyan', Saqi underwent a significant change in his sensibility as a poet and established an idiom distinctly his own. The traumatic experience of uprootment from his native soil in 1990 found a poignant expression in many of his poems, his long poem 'Marsi' (Elegy) being a most disturbing document of the tragedy of the Pandits' displacement. His latest collection 'Niry Nagma' (Songs of the Green Meadows) shows his intense nostalgia for Kashmir and points to the torture of having to live in a forced exile away from the Valley's myriad charms and attractions.

Saqi's contribution as a literary critic is equally impressive, his work on Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, popularly known as Nund Rishi, and the Sufi poets like Samad Mir is regarded as monumental. As a folk-lorist, Saqi compiled five volumes of Kashmiri folk-songs with a valuable introduction and

annotation. His numerous articles on Kashmiri literature, art and culture were published in several prestigious magazines and journals of the country.



Moti Lal Saqi

Moti Lal Saqi was a lexicographer as well, having worked as an editor of the Kashmiri-Kashmiri and Urdu-Kashmiri dictionaries brought out by the J&K Cultural Academy under the Chief Editorship of Prof. S. K. Toshkhani. He also edited the three volumes of Kashmiri Encyclopedia published by the Academy, showing his great acumen as a researcher.

His latest book 'Aagar Neb' reflects his deep research and study regarding various aspects of Kashmiri culture. Surprisingly enough, Saqi was awarded Padmashri for his services to Urdu literature.

Moti Lal Saqi was also associated with the activities of the N. S. Kashmir Research Institute and had agreed to work for the compilation of the encyclopaedia of Kashmiri culture which the Institute is going to bring out. We at NSKRI deeply mourn his loss which we feel is immeasurably great for a community that values learning and literature above everything else.

12.4.2 A tribute to Saqi

Shyam Kaul

Poet, writer, dramatist, scholar, researcher, encyclopaedist, specialist in Kashmir's cultural and literary heritage, authority on the Valley's Rishi tradition - all rolled into one - Moti Lal Saqi.

A simple villager, who never shed off his pastoral homeliness, humility and open-heartedness, who never allowed even a grain of false ego enter his head, inspite of recognition, both at state and national levels, and who always lived the lily of an honest and eager learner till his last breath. That was Saqi - ever lively, ever communicative, ever cheerful.

When I think of Saqi the words of the great French philosopher Voltaire, come to my mind. He had said, "not to be occupied, and not to exist, amount to the same thing".

Saqi kept himself perennially occupied with finer pursuits in life. Put your finger anywhere on the literary and cultural canvas of Kashmir, and you will find Saqi's name there, as a contributor, a researcher, an elucidator, a commentator or a scholar. All that kept him occupied were his creative

endeavours and his pen seemed to reach everywhere. In these days of pin-pointed specialization, one hardly finds any equal to this man of multifarious brilliance.

When the physical and physiological makeup of his person, especially his heart? prevented him from keeping himself actively occupied, as he had done all his life? Saqi ceased to exist. He died.

Like all displaced Kashmiris, Saqi's soul had been deeply lacerated when circumstances drove him out of Kashmir, the land of his ancestors. Everyone loves his land of birth, but Saqi had done so, sometimes with the passion of a lover, sometimes with the care of a doting mother, and sometimes with the dedication of an ardent admirer. His only possession, only asset and only wealth, was his pen, which he used all his life in praise of Kashmir.

Some years back I once told him that since our displacement, he had gone a little slow with his pen. He responded with a deep sigh and recited a couplet of Nadim:

***Mye khoon-e-dil az syatha chhu chyon kyut
Tsu thav pagah kyut sharaab Shaqi***

Then, after a pause, he added, with yearning in his eyes, "because our pagah' (tomorrow) will be in Kashmir". He did not live to see the 'pagah' of his dreams. Many of us won't, either.

12.5 *Book Review*

KASHMIR: UNKNOWN DIMENSIONS OF A TRAGIC STORY 'The Wail of Kashmir - A Quest for Peace' by R. N. Kaul. Pp 310; price Rs. 350. Sterling Publishers Pvt Ltd.

A phenomenon that has emerged since the outbreak of insurgency in Kashmir is the mushrooming of a new breed of self-proclaimed Kashmir experts always itching to say something about what went wrong in the trouble-torn Valley and why. This has resulted in a spate of books on the subject that have served only to drown the truth in a cacophony of catch-words and cliches. Despite this deluge, the common man in the country today is in no better position to understand why a region that was being touted as the show-window of Indian secularism for about half a century turned into a breeding ground of fundamentalism and secessionism.

While the tendency to hug illusions and perpetuate myths is still strong among those who are supposed to provide answers to questions pertaining to the reality in Kashmir, there are fortunately some people still around who are endowed with a clarity of perception and ability to sift fact from fiction to give a coherent and correct analysis of the state of things prevailing there. One such political analyst of great ability is R. N. Kaul whose latest book 'The Wail of Kashmir -- a Quest for Peace' throws significant light on the factors and forces that have led the Valley to the present turmoil. Armed with an insight that enables one to delve into depths, R. N. Kaul has tried to clear the fog that surrounds many an issue and turn of events in Kashmir.

Born in Srinagar, R. N. Kaul has been personally close to a number of persona who have played important political roles in his native state before and after its accession to India. This gives Kaul an advantage that lends an authentic ring to his account of things. In 'The Wail of Kashmir' he has tried to lift the veil on several developments that have influenced the course of political history in the state.

But what distinguishes it from the tonnes of paper that have been balckened in the name of reporting the truth about Kashmir, is that its author has not followed the beaten track but chosen an entirely different area for his analysis. Pulling a coup de theatre of sorts he has brought to the centre-stage a people who have been "founders of Kashmir", but have been marginalised, treated cruelly by history which they have had a crucial hand in shaping. 'The Wail of Kashmir' presents the story of Kashmir in the context of the suffering of these people as well as their contribution in various fields. "The

tragic story of Kashmiri Pandit", Kaul writes in his preface to the book, "call for a benevolent exposition in the right perspective - a task that is difficult but has been well accomplished by the writer.

The first chapter of the book provides an insight into the "origin, history and characteristics" of the Pandits, highlighting their past glories and present ethos. This makes a fascinating though somewhat sad reading. However, the writer's view, borrowed from Sheikh Abdullah's 'Aatash-e-Chinar', that the term 'Kashmir) Pandit' is some two hundred years old and was first used by the Moghul king Mohammed Shah is not quite convincing and needs further investigation. For, as early as in the 13th century we find saint-poetess Laileshwari using the word 'Pandit' in the sense of the 'Divine Lover' in one of her verses. Perhaps Shah Jehan has also applied the term for some of his Kashmiri of finials.

The author has quoted George Buhler in detail to describe the character, traditions, customs and social mores of the Pandits. It would have certainly enhanced the value of the book if the author had given his own appraisal in addition to what Buhler has written in this regard.

Three more chapters, the 9th, 10th and 11th, carrying the thrust of the book, have been exclusively devoted to the plight and predicament of the Pandits. The author is candid in his observations about the impact of communalization and criminalisation of politics in the state started by none other than Sheikh Abdullah himself on the marginalisation and humiliation of the Pandit minority. This trend acquired dangerous and genocidal proportions with the increase in communal violence against them in 1986 and 1990 leading to their ultimate exile, and uprootment even as the central and the state governments failed to protect their life, property and other constitutional and human rights. The author has movingly described the hell through which Pandit refugees have had to pass after being hounded out of their homes. He seems to be deeply concerned about the future of this dispossessed, deprived and forsaken community and has called for urgent "stopgap arrangements" to help them till they are eventually able to return to the Valley.

In Chapter 10, aptly titled 'The Sheikh and the Pandit', the author has discussed what he calls the "sweet and sour" relationship between Sheikh Abdullah and the Kashmiri Pandits. He has lambasted the Sheikh for his antipathy towards the Pandits and his malicious pronouncements against them in his so-called autobiography 'Aatash-e-Chinar'. Even though Kaul has not presented full facts about the organised assault against the Pandits instigated by the Sheikh in 1931, he has correctly called him "the true godfather" of the "firmly institutionalized religio-political linkage in Kashmir". There is no doubt that the Sheikh has been gravely unjust to the Pandits, making them pawns in his political games and hostages of secularism to secure personal ends.

In the 3rd and 4th chapters, foreign invasions of Kashmir and other parts of India have been rightly linked and described as attempts at subjugation and colonization. Kaul has also very realistically described the sequence of events that formed the background to the invasion of Kashmir by Pakistani raiders in 1947. He has blamed the Maharaja of prevarication in signing the Instrument of Accession to India - a blunder for which the country had to pay a very heavy price. While the writer has presented an in-depth analysis of the forces at play at different levels during that crucial period, he appears to have allowed, for once, his reverence for Nehru to have coloured his objectivity and has glossed over some of his monumental and by now well-known blunders in handling the Kashmir issue. These blunders have, indeed, been responsible to a large extent for internationalizing the issue and allowing Kashmir to become the hotbed of ISI intrigues.

Kaul also appears to have taken a too narrow legalistic view of the Article 370 of the Constitution, almost pleading for its retention. Without going into any discussion about his arguments, one can say that the controversial Article was introduced to please Abdullah and ensure the Muslim-majority character of the Jammu & Kashmir State. The fact is that Article 370 has acted as a wall of suspicion between Kashmir and the rest of the country and has served only to foster separatist sentiments among Kashmiri Muslims.

In Chapters 8 and 9 the anatomy of autonomy has been thoroughly examined only to reach the conclusion that the demand for it is nothing but a facade for de-accession. The people in the Indian administered Kashmir enjoy fullest degree of autonomy, the writer points out, blasting Pakistan for comparative lack of basic constitutional rights for the people of Pak-occupied Kashmir.

The Epilogue at the end effectively shatters a number of myths about Pakistan's role in the on-going proxy war in Kashmir. The Post-script that follows it updates the book to cover some of the latest developments till the Lahore Declaration.

The main thrust in the book is, however, on the fate of the Kashmiri Pandits, who are suffering for holding aloft the tricolour in Kashmir for fifty years - a grim and tragic fact of post-independence India towards which very few have shown the courage to point. Indeed any attempt to present an analysis without referring to their plight is like playing Hamlet without the Prince. Viewed in this context, the book 'The Wail of Kashmir - a Quest for Peace' truly "lays bare the soul of Kashmir and the Kashmiri Pandits" as claimed in the blurb. This makes it a must-be-read book for all those who are interested in knowing unknown dimensions of the tragedy in Kashmir.

13 Quotable Quotes

"Kashmiri Pandits are linked with history full of the misty past, infinitely remote, whose traditions run back to gods and the divine origin of things."

"There (Kashmir) the goddess Saraswati herself is seen in the form of a swan on a lake situated on the summit of the Bheda hill which is sanctified by Ganga source."

- **Rajatarangini**

"The traditional Sanskrit learning has given to Brahman community of Kashmir, small as it has been always, a distinguished place in the history of Sanskrit literature since early times."

- **Aurel Stein**

"The labours I devoted between 1888 to 1900 to the critical edition, translation and commentary of Kalhana's Rajatarangini, the only true historical text of Sanskrit literature, afforded me ample opportunities of gaining close contact with Sanskrit savants of Kashmir, the land where traditional learning of Hindu India had flourished in old times greatly and survived until recent years."

- **Aurel Stein**

"It has always been a great pleasure to deal with a Pandit. This is due not only to his great learning and keen intellect but also to his general education and refined manners, which always make you feel that you are face to face with a real gentleman."

- **Sten Konow**

[Dr. Sten Konow Ph.D, University of Oslo, Sweden, was a world renowned linguist and worked as Chief Epigraphist, Govt. of India during 1908.]

"On the whole it is probably impossible to find anything whatever in Kashmiri without the assistance of a local Pandit."

- **David B. Spooner**

[Dr. David Brainerd Spooner was an eminent archaeologist and Sanskrit scholar from Harvard University, USA and worked as Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Frontier Circle, India during 1908.]

"It seems certain that, though Kashmir was in bygone times, a stronghold of Buddhism, yet the cult of the populace was Brahminical. There were Buddhist monasteries as well as Brahman temples everywhere. The people had a religious past having deep rooted conviction and notions of religion based on ancient traditions and sacred mandates. Even if present finds ruined temples the fact remains that their lofty arches and massive blocks of masonry were quarried and erected bit by bit by people who expended their best on buildings which were to be set aside for nothing but noble purpose of worship.

"It has often been noticed that the decay of religion marks the decay of the country and the Kashmiris owing to persistent cataclysm of bigoted invaders lost their religious moorings and consequently lost their place in the race of human prosperity. The ebullition of atrocities of the Mohammedan rulers, their fury and orgies of outrages, wrecked the foundation of peace and humanity. They persecuted the Hindus and forced them to embrace Islam. They pillaged, plundered and destroyed their temples with

ruthless and relentless vigour born of bigotry and fanaticism converting them into ziarats and mosques."

-- **Anand Kaul**

"As a stick and another stick come together in an ocean and depart afterwards, the beings meet and depart. I shall never forget those wonderful days in Kashmir when I studied along with you the poems and dramas in Sanskrit in the shade of row of trees in the garden near by the pond beautified by fully opened lotuses. When shall I come back to the holy land Bharata by the force of my luck, when shall I see Kashmir, the girdle of the Himalayas, the abode of Devi Sharada in Kashmir (Srinagar), your auspicious face in that city? This thinking I have hope every day. What to write more. It is to be arranged by the Creator."

- **J. Ph. Vogel**

"Now one year has elapsed. Hereafter the city Srinagar appears to my eyes as Sri in a form. I eagerly await the moment when I behold Kashmir and its great scholars and become blessed again."

- **J. Ph. Vogel** [*Excerpts of letters from Prof. J. Ph. Vogel, University of Leiden, Holland to Pt. NS: 1917*]

"In addition it is a return to the past. My old clerk Ram Chand Bali, now well up the state's official ladder, arranged for me to get through all my tasks. I visited again after 50 years the Raghunath temple library. The six thousand Sanskrit manuscripts had been catalogued by me with the help of Pandit Govind Koul and another excellent scholar friend Sahaz Bhatta in what seems now like previous birth. It had been a dreary task but it saved the collection from being lost. I had a very attentive reception, had to talk Sanskrit again for an hour or so, thus purifying my tongue by use of the Sacred Language after all my peregrination in the barbarian north and west. It was a quaint experience to find myself in the end garlanded in the traditional Kashmiri Hindu fashion for the first time in my life."

- **Aurel Stein** [*Excerpts of Aurel Stein's letter dated 18.12.40 from Jammu to Mrs. Henery Allen (Madam), a close friend in Vienna, Austria.*]

"The freedom of the spirit makes India the last civilization that is still existing. If this civilized spirit has to be preserved then I think all of us should leave no stone unturned in making Kashmir as a corner stone of the Indian Culture."

- **Nirmal Verma, Eminent Hindi writer**

"In the night ride across the Wular lake a small storm made me worry for the safety of my manuscript (Rajatarangini). It seemed as if the goddess of wisdom - Sharada, represented by waters of Kashmir, was unwilling to let me abduct the manuscript. This is what happened 1200 years ago to the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang, who had to leave his Sanskrit manuscript in the angry Indus River."

- **Aurel Stein**

"But perhaps the greatest advantage I derived from Kashmirian Pandit association with my labours was the chance it gave me to study in close contact those peculiarities of traditional Indian thought, belief and conduct which separate Hindu Civilization so deeply both from the West and the East and which no amount of book knowledge could ever fully reveal to a maleecha."

- **Aurel Stein**

"Kashmir Shaivism teaches that monistic thought can be practised by anyone, man or woman, without the restriction of caste, creed or colour. Kashmir Shaivism, therefore, is a universal system, pure, real and substantial in every respect".

- Swami Lakshman Joo

The Shaiva philosophy does not conceive of the Supreme as a logomachist but as an Artist. Just as an artist cannot contain his delight within himself but pours it out into a song, a picture or a poem, even so the Supreme Artist pours out the delightful wonder of this splendour into manifestation of creation?

- Jasdev Singh

Kashmir Shaivism is not based on rational thinking and augmentation alone. The basic source of its finer principles has been direct revelation of the exactly correct truth regarding the nature and the character of the real self of a person and the essence of the world around him. Such a realization was the result of the practice of a superior kind of Shivayoga of the Trika system known as the Shambhavi Mudra. A Yogin practising the mudra recognized himself to be none else than Shiva Himself.

- Dr. B.N. Pandit

The Kashmiri Pandit

"He has survived the most ruthless, barbarous and savage rule which he was subjected to in the past. Given the same destructive and fatal circumstances to live and work under, can there be found a people, other than the Kashmiri, who could endure this inhuman rule for six odd centuries and survive it? The sons of Avantivarma and Lalitaditya, and the progeny of the blessed Rishis struggled hard, and that in a peculiar way, against the brutal activity of the religiously fanatic administrators. It was neck or nothing with them in order to save their own religion. Hundreds were put to sword, thousands were flung into the rivers and lakes or killed in their homes. Is it not then the tenacity, the adaptability and elasticity of the Kashmiri that has helped him to survive atrocffles and has it not again been foolishly termed cowardice. Free from bigotry, the Pandit deals impartially with all the other communities. He is essentially a man of peace."

- Anand Koul

Pandit Legacy: Victim of Choice in History

Kashmir abounds in remains of antiquity, though alas ! repeated devastations were done and havoc was wrought to them by cruel unplaceable Muhammadan Zealots and vandals from time to time. It is pity that formerly these most important and precious relics of past glory of Kashmir were allowed to remain in neglected condition. Unprotected from the destructive and disintegrating influences of the weather not to say of earth quakes the ancient moments gradually crumbled to ruins.

The European Sanskrit scholars and others interested in ancient oriental lore came and delved in the Kashmir soil and extracting, at only a trifling cost ancient trophies consisting of old birch bark manuscripts, old coins and other most valuable objects carried them away.

It is, however, gratifying to note that though these treasures have gone out of Kashmir never to return they have not been actually lost as were those, plundered by Muhammdan Zealots who foolishly cut them to pieces, burnt them in fire or flung them in to the river for which, in the harsh pages of historian anger, will rightly ever remain and live on.

- Anand Koul

Let us wake to the Prophecy

"Old Kashmir festivals mentioned in the Nilmata, you will understand how difficult it must be for an European scholar to learn about these rites, also how great the risk is now a days of such old festivals and other ceremonies being lost for good under the sad changes which are taking place in Kashmir".

- Aurel Stein

The Three Traditions

In Sanskrit there are three major traditions of manuscript editions. One is the Central Indian tradition, represented by the Devanagari script, supported, more or less, by Bengali manuscripts. Then there is the South Indian tradition, and then the third tradition is shared by Kashmir and, strangely enough, by Kerala. And, for example, when I was working on the text of Katha Saritsagara of Someadeva, the printed version and the Kashmiri version in the Sharada script (when I speak Kashmiri version I speak of the Sharada script), the Sharada version was at least seventy to eighty percent different than the Devanagari version. Because in Kashmir things have just frozen in time, let us say the thirteenth-fteenth century, the texts in Kashmir really deserve to be published as such, except a few rare works like Ashtadhyayi in which there is no change in Kashmiri version and Devanagari version.

- Dr. Lokesh Chandra

The Saptarishi Samvatsara

Time is eternal. It is the rhythm of divine pulsation. However, it is only linear or chronological time in which life unfolds itself on this universe. So when we talk of the Saptarishi Samvatsara followed by Kashmiri Pandits we have to travel back in time to the people of Satisar, the ancestors of the present day Kashmiri Pandits.

Why is the name of the Saphrishis associated with this era? Legend goes that some 5074 years ago Saphrishis, the seven great sages of the Hindus, came to Sharika Parvat, the abode of goddess Sharika at the auspicious moment when the first ray of sun fell on Chakreshwara, and paid obeisance to her. The place where they are said to have assembled is still called Sata Peshy. It is a rock where devotees of the goddess go to ask for a boon and meditate upon Mahakali to attain *siddhi*. Astrologers made this auspicious moment the sorting point for their calculation of the Nova Varsha Pratipada.

- Dr. C. L. Raina

Penolympics

There was no Guinness Book of Records then. Had there been something like that, the names of these Pandits would surely have found place in it for their astonishing feats of penmanship. They are Pandit Ratnakanth Razdan, Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri and Pandit Sahaz Bhatt. For once their quantitative output pushed the qualitative aspect of their work to the backseat.

- Pandit Ratnakantha Razdan

Popularly known as Ratta Razdan, he would repeat in a single day what his teacher would teach him in a fortnight. Writing down six hundred Sanskrit shlokas every day was a routine with him. So fast did he write that he once wrote down the entire Bhagwad Gita during the time his companions were busying themselves with a meal.

- Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri

This outstanding scholar translated 1,50,000 verses of a Buddhist text -- "Kangur Tangur" from Tibetan into Sanskrit at a stretch. A mind boggling feat, indeed!

- Pandit Sahaz Bhat

A physician by profession, he prepared a descriptive catalogue of 6000 Sanskrit manuscripts on different subjects which were lying in the Maharaja's Raghunath Temple Library, Jammu, working with Stein and Govind Kaul and writing brief notes on each.

(Inputs S.N. Pandita)

Predicament of the Pandits

Though Kashmiri Pandits are a small community, we have been forced by the events of history to look outwards and seek new frontiers. But the last 8 years have witnessed our forced exodus leading to diaspora and dispersal of huge dimensions. The one thing that can yet keep us together is the historical sense of our glorious cultural heritage. NSKRI and similar institutions can play a pivotal role in creating that sense of history and in the preservation and promotion of our culture. Three things that can bind us are: our language, our unique identity and the desire to seek our roots, and all these have to emanate from a sense of pride and a feeling of self esteem which have been snatched from the community over the last six centuries, more so during the last five decades. We have to rediscover that pride and set forth on march to a political and cultural resurgence.

- Dr. K. L. Chowdhury

Medical Specialist, Jammu

Unmesh

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