

Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, June, 1984

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1 Introduction

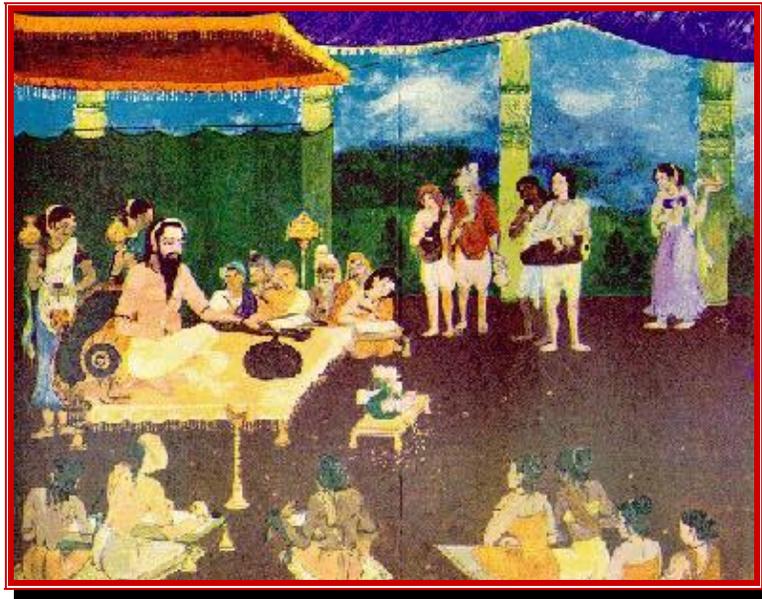
Culture maintains its uninterrupted flow dismantling the man-made barriers between past and present. Its sweet rhythm and ennobling dignity does not at all grow stale. Its self-assigned duty of guarding the sternal values does never become boring. It is a pleasure and an obligation at the same time.

Now the scene has undergone a veritable change - a natural phenomenon, to speak precisely. Sanskrit had become the language of the elite only, and Persian an administrative vehicle of the Sultans. Kashmiri culture had to seek a new medium for its expression, under these circumstances. Moreover, it elected to initiate a rapport with the general masses for which the home-spun idiom, enshrined in the Kashmiri language, offered the only choice for providing tongue to our cultural values. Hence, the form of expression did undergo a change from classical medium to modern vernacular, but the content remained the same. It was definitely a continuous projection of our tradition, built inch by inch by the denizens of this Valley, saturated by the prowess of their mind and spirit.

In the foregoing web pages, an attempt has been made to portray the universal truth that today is nothing but the rebirth of yesterday, with its heart-beats intact. Environs do change, irrepressible strains and stresses do haunt the body, yet the soul remains always unaffected and, consequently, unruffled.

2 Abhinavagupta - the Philosopher

Prof. K. N. Dhar



Acharya Abhinavagupta

Abhinavagupta has been extolled as "Mahamahesvara" by the subsequent Kashmiri authors, his disciples and admirers, which precisely means the "great devotee of Siva", or the "Supreme - Self" in Shaivistic parlance. Kashmiri tradition also is unequivocal in testifying to his versatility. He wrote on philosophy (Saiva-Darshan, commentary on Bhagvad Gita), commented upon Anandavardhan's "Dhvanayloka", Bharata's "Natya Shastra", thus epitomized in himself the diverse talents of a philosopher, rhetorician, and a critic on dramaturgy. Moreover on Ksemendra's testimony, we know that he himself studied literature (Sahitya) with such a learned Guru. His command over rhetorics was so enthralling that Mammatta- the reputed author of 'Kavya Prakash' out of veneration for his erudition in the subject refers to him as " Abhinavagupta Pada ". Pada is added to the names to show great respect. Vamana the propounder of Riti school in Indian Rhetorics and commentator of 'Kavya Prakasha' known as "Bala Bodhini" has alluded to Abhinavagupta as 'an intellectual giant and like a serpent (terror) to his young school - fellows.' This all goes to prove that Abhinavagupta deserves these compliments fully as given to him by the Kashmiri tradition and literary authors as will be shown later. However, in Indian literary tradition two such names have come down to us. The first Abhinavagupta belongs to Kamarupa (Assam) and is a Sakhta- a worshipper of Shakti or Devi. The solitary reference made to him is by one Madhva in his "Shankra Digvijaya," who also wrote a Shanker Bashya, presumably on Badrayan's Vedanta Sutras. He was a contemporary of Sankaracharya who lived according to accepted opinion from 788 to 820 A. D. Abhinavagupta of Assam was in the first instance antagonistic to the monistic theory as preached by Sankara, but having been defeated in the Shastrartha (interpretation of the sacred lore) became his disciple. The Indologist of Dr. Aufreeht's calibre should not have made such a glaring mistake as to include. "Shaktabhashya" among the works of Abhinavagupta of Kashmir. Perhaps the prefixes "Shakhta" and "Maheshwara" make all the difference between the two and this distinction has been made clear between the two even in very early times.

Abhinavagupta being a conscious artist was not averse to biography. He has given in the colophons of his various works his genealogy and also some dates. It definitely goes to his credit and does not leave us guessing. In his "Paratrimshika Vivarna" he explicitly pens down the name of his earliest ancestor as Atrigupta who was born in Antarvedi - the Doab between the Ganges and the Jamuna. Again in

'Tantraloka' he refers to his sterling qualities of head and heart and being captivated by these was brought to Kashmir- "The crest of Himalayas"- by King Lalitaditya The date of the reign of Lalitaditya is circa 725 - 761. He was also known as Mukhtapida and was eager for conquests.' He defeated the king of Kanauj Yasosvarman and along with the booty brought Atrigupta also to Kashmir. Abhinavagupta goes on to record "In that beautiful city (Srinagar) like that of Kubera's (Alka) in front of the temple of "Sheetanshumauli" (Siva having the moon as his crest) on the Vitasta, the king got built for him a spacious house and also granted a Jagir of land to him. There is a veritable gap of a century and a half between Atrigupta and Abhinavagupta's grand father Varahagupta. In between the two, the author has left the family tree blank for reasons best known to him. Coming direct to the Tantraloka commentary Abhinavagupta explicitly says that his father was Narasinhagupta, popularly known as Chukhulaka and his mother's name was Vimalakala.

Herein we have to refer to the observation made by late Madhusudan Kaul of the Kashmir RP search Department who in his introduction to "Ishvara Pratyabhijna" has erroneously taken Laksmana Gupta as his father. Swami Laksmana Ji also corroborates the other view that Narsimha Gupta was his father. Moreso, the direct confession of Abhinavagupta as regards his parents and their names leaves nothing to argue about. Laksmana Gupta was definitely one of the preceptors of Abhinavagupta who initiated him into the Pratyabhijna Shastra as acknowledged by him in his introduction to Ishvara Pratyabhijna Vivriti Vimarshini in the words:

<verses>

(Sri Laksamna Gupta showed me the path to Pratyabhijna theory (recognition).

The silence of Kalhana about Abhinavagupta as such is intriguing - he mentions three "Abhinavas" in his Raja-Tarangini and the suffix "Gupta" he has not appended with any of these. The first 'Abhinava' is a "Divira" or a scribe,' the second foster - brother of Kayyamantaka in the reign of Samgramaraja and the third a Damaraj a landed - aristocrat. No where the name of Abhinavagupta appears as a scholar of repute or a Saiva; whereas he has at times referred to such names as Muktakana, Shivasvamin, Anandavardhana and Ratnakara etc. It may be argued that our author was more after learning than after the favour of kings, hence was not attached to any court. Consequently Kalhana, whose forte being the description of kings, skips over him. However, the fame which Abhinavagupta acquired during his life time and even after could not have eluded the chronicler Kalhana. He could not ignore the powerful Kashmiri tradition. While mentioning Ananda Vardhana the name of Abhinavagupta would have been a natural corollary being his commentator. Subsequent research in this behalf might throw some light on this omission. About his date or probable years in which he lived, he has bequeathed to us some keys which if properly used, can unlock this bane of Indian date - keeping most easily. In the last verse of "Brhati Vimarsini" he states that he finished this assignment in the 90th year when 4 1 15 years of Kaliyuga had elapsed; by deducting 25 years from the Kali era. the local or Saptarsi era can be found. It works at 4090th year of the Saptarsi Calendar, and the word "Navatitame" used by him in that verse corresponds to 90th year of 4000 Kali era. Even, we at present write down only 74 when actually it is 1974 - seventy fourth year of 1900 Christian era.

Again in one of his Stotras which is called "Bhairavastava" in the last verse he gives the date and his name also:

<verses>

"Abhinavagupta composed this Stava (eulogy) on the 10th of dark fortnight in the month of Pausha in the year Vasu (8) Rasa (6)."

(In Sanskrit the digits are read from the left), hence it comes to 68. It is definitely the 68th year of the Saptarsi Samvat 4000 as shown above. Moreover, in his Kramastotra he again refers to date as:

<verses>

"In the 66th year, on the ninth day of dark fortnight, I, Abhinavagugta, in the month of Maghar, praised Lord Siva".

So it can safely be inferred that Abhinavagupta's literary period extended from 4066 to 4090 laukika or Saptarsi era corresponding to 990-1015 A. D. Even though we have tried to locate the period, but at the same time we are not sure that Kramastotra is his first work. It is to be remembered in this context that Abhinavagupta having written a host of books, the chronological order of his works cannot be arranged without any effort, but those which have no date or have not been referred to by the subsequent authors will defeat any such solution. In this way we can safely say that "Kramastotra" might not be his first composition, it might be pushed back to two decades at least, as in the chronological order fixed by Dr. K. C Pandey this Stotra stands at No. 13. Hence we might safely assume that his literary career commenced from 970 A. D. According to his own testimony he adopted many Gurus for pursuing knowledge in different fields and even went outside Kashmir, presumably to Jalandhar to find a Guru "Shambo Nath" there. The years of initiation after which maturity dawned on him might be taken not less than 30 years, after which, confidence was gained by him to write independently. Hence we might place his birth near about 940- A. D. He might have lived even beyond 1015 A. D. and the varacity of the tradition prevalent in Kashmir to this day, that he entered a cave while reciting the Bhairavastava alongwith 1200 disciples, and was never seen again cannot be doubted. This cave, alleged to have received the mortal frame of Abhinavagupta, is situated at "Birwa" village some five miles from Maghar on the Gulmarg range.

The thirst for knowledge in our author was insatiable. A bevy of Gurus was adopted by him for this purpose. According to his own statement he read at the feet of :

	Subject
1. Narasimha Gupta (His father).	Grammar.
2. Vainanatha.	Dvaitadvaita Tantras.
3. Bhuti Rajatanaya.	Daulistic Saivism
4. Bhuti Raja.	Brahma- Vidya.
5. Laksmanagupta.	Pratyabhijna.
6. Indu Raja.	Dhvani.
7. Bhatta Tota.	Dramaturgy

He had other Gurus also but the subjects have not been specified in their cases. From all his compositions at least 19 such preceptors can be gleaned.

As will be said later, the 10th and 11th centuries in Kashmiri literary lore have been a landmark. The influence of religion has been pronounced. A climate of religions renaissance was ushered in and many stalwarts like Anandavardhana, Vamana, Ksemendra, Bilhana, Kalhana and last but not the least Abhinavagupta contributed himself in making the sanskrit literary tradition richer and all the more diverse, in as much as, the subjects like rhetories, dramaturgy, poetry, history and philosophy, were treated in an admirable way. So, it can be of value to learn that the whole family of Abhinavagupta was renowned for its unique literary bent of mind. His uncle Vamana Gupta was an expert in poetics and he initiated our author into this field. In the Abhinava Bharati Abhinavagupta quotes him and is also included in the list of his teachers. His younger brother Manoratha was admitted to the discipleship of his brother-Abhinava gupta-perhaps he was first in that order. His five cousins Ksema, Utpala, Abhinava, Chakra and Padamgupta were also very well-read. If Ksema be identified with Ksema Raja the Author of Spanda-Nirnaya and other treatises on Shaivism, then the scholarship of his cousin is beyond doubt. It need not be reiterated that his father Narasimhagupta possessed intellectual calibre of highest order and was proficient in all the Shastras and a great devotee of Shiva. In this atmosphere of devotion and learning par excellence, Abhinava Gupta was mentally groomed to undertake the stupendous task awaiting him.

So, it is not surprising to find that "Jayaratha" alludes to his being 'Yoginibhu', that his parents while uniting for his birth rose above all worldly desires and identified themselves with Shiva and Shakti. The offspring thus born called Yoginibhu, is looked upon as a fit vehicle for propounding and propagating Shaivistic Monism.

Not only this, Abhinavagupta has been called a Bhairava incarnate by the commentator of Parmartha-Sara; "Yoga - Raja," while commenting on the last line of this treatise:

<verses>

has explained this epithet at length. So the traditional belief amongst the Kashmiri Pandits that Abhinavagupta was a living Bhairava in human form is not without basis.

Now we come to the place of his mental activity. From his own authority we learn that Lalitaditya had got built a palatial house for Atrigupta when he carried him along from Antarvedi to Kashmir (quoted earlier). The house was built on the banks of Vitasta. However, in one of the MSS of Tantraloka belonging to Late Pt. Maheshwar Razdan there is a different reading as <sanskrit> meaning "at the head of Vitasta" i.e. the source. However, in the quotation is used the pronoun <sanskrit> (in) agreeing with <sanskrit> (Srinagar) hence this <sanskrit> seems to be an interpolation.

In the first verse on the Vartika on "Malini Vijaya" it has been specifically laid down:

<verses>

"The Kashmirian Abhinavagupta is the East of the city known as Pravarapura (Srinagar) composed the Vartika on the very first verse of "Malinivijaya".

From this it is clear that Srinagar was divided into several zones then - East, West etc. and in the East Zone our author lived; but nothing can be said whether this was his ancestral home or an acquired house. However, there is a rift-rence in the Tantraloka of his having shifted to another city at the request of one of his disciples Mandra:

<verses>

"Mandra in order to save him (Abhinavagupta) from distraction requested him to shift to his beautiful city."

It is also clear from this, that this earlier house must have been located in a very busy centre of the city, so was not suitable for his calm composure and undivided attention, so necessary for the delineation of such a terse and delicate subject as philosophy.

On the authority of Kalhana we know that Lalitaditya had built three more cities in the outskirts of Pravarapura Srinagar. The one Parihasapura and the other Lali'pura and the third Lokapunya However, the former was meant as a respite for the war-worn king and all the amenities of Parihasa (enjoyment) were provided there: Hence it could not be a quiet city. The latter was not taken kindly to by the king as it was built by his architect in his absence, hence it must have been comparatively deserted and all the same calmer. It might be surmised that Mandra lived there and invited his Guru to that very city for being quieter and far from the madding crowds, so that his "distraction could be averted". The third city along with a cluster of villages was given in offering to Vishnu.

Even though Abhinavagupta lived during the span of 940 - 1015 A. D. but no city worth the name was founded by the kings during this period. Although he saw the reigns of Yashaskara, Samgrama Deva, Ksema Gupta, Didda and Samgrama Raja, yet the cities founded by Lalitaditya still found favour with the people. Even though one century and a half had elapsed, the twin cities of Parihasapura and Lalitpura had not fallen into oblivion. In the reign of Samgrama Raja (1003 - 1028 A. D.) the Brahmins of Parihasapura started a fast to bring down the fall of Tunga his Prime Minister. This allusion to the city nearly two hundred years after it was founded, testifies to its being very important at that time and might have been the royal capital even.

Before an attempt is made to pen down the contribution of Abhinavagupta to Shaivism, it will be more appropriate to trace the origin of Siva worship in Kashmir. Perhaps as a corollary to this, we shall have to furnish at least the rough contours on which the earliest religion of Kashmiris was based.

The most ancient book on Kashmir History 'Nilamata Purana' specifically lays down that Shiva and His Shakti were propitiated at that time, but other deities such as Ganesha, Puranic gods, Vedic pantheon and even Buddha (as an Avatara) were not ignored. This fact without any doubt proves that earliest Kashmiri religion was polytheistic in content and character, but the worship of Shiva and His consort Parvati had an edge over all other gods. Not only this, the aboriginal deities like Nikumbha etc. were also owned. On the same subject S. C. Ray observes, "that the earliest inhabitants of Kashmir probably cherished some aboriginal beliefs. In the third century B. C. Buddhism seems to have made some headway in Kashmir. Among Hindu gods Shiva either originated or entered the valley some time before the faith of the Shakya prince.

In this connection the word "Naga used to describe the people of Kashmir, did drop a hint as to its being related to Snake - worship. But word "Naga" in Sanskrit does not mean snake only, it is synonymous with a semi-divine being a cruel person, an elephant or a cloud also. However, Shiva's association with the religion of Kashmir did provide a context for translating "Naga" as a serpent, as it is worn by the Lord around His neck. In this connection H. H. Wilson remarks, "originally, no doubt, it (the religion of Kashmir) was opulente or snake- worship, but this is a part of the Hindu ritual and the Nagas are included in the orthodox pantheon" So it is abundantly clear that the ancient religion of Kashmir was an amalgam of the "new" as preached by Kashyapa and the old - that of the aboriginals whose king was Nikumbha. Even though other gods were also worshiped, the emphasis on Shiva and His Shakti was pronounced. The influence of Buddhism as such in those times was not worth mentioning, since it was only being adopted by the land then, and after some time did give a fillip to the philosophical remblings which reigned supreme for nearabout two centuries in Kashmir.

Kalhana has copiously furnished us the proof that Buddhism and orthodox creeds of Shiva and Visnu co-existed in a most tolerant manner here. Whenever any endowment is made for religious purposes, or a Stupa or a Vihara is constructed, the individual or the king, or his members of the family or his Minister with equal zeal and faith constructed shrines of Shiva and Vishnu also.

However, this climate of accomodation between the two faiths - Hinduism and Buddhism was disturbed by the advent of Nagarjuna on the Kashmir scene. He lived at Shadarhatvana (modern Harwan) and took preaching of Buddhism in right earnest. This provoked the "orthodoxy". Insult was added to the injury by King Kanishka (125-60 A.D) who encouraged the propagation of the Buddhistic teachings and gave it royal patronage. Kalhana while recording all this has to say: "After defeating in disputations all learned opponents (Nagarjuna), these enemies of tradition brought to an end etc. the observance of the rites prescribed in the Nilamata." This was a veritable revolt against the established faith of the land and the astute Brahmin lost no opportunity in providing a more palatable alternative to Buddhistic tenets - which may well be called the seeds of Shaivism which sprouted forth in full bloom later.

Perhaps this pre-supposes the give and take which must have preceded before Buddhism went into oblivion in Kashmir. The most potent cause for its decline was that the Shaivism fought on its own ground and assimilated such tenets which were finding favour with the people. Thus the Shaivas on account of their exceptional erudition did provide such a faith to people which though new, was not at all alien. It respected orthodoxy but at the same time did not abhor the "new". A compromise between the two did the trick and Buddhism had to eat the humble pie.

Moreover, the versatile Brahmin of Kashmir did not stop to lick his wounds inflicted by Buddhist propagation, but like a seasoned general attacked its weakest point i. e. the silence about God. Indians at large and a Kashmiri especially, are a God-fearing nation, hence the Shaivite knowing full well this credulity of a Kashmiri, transplanted God again in their faith by naming it Paramshiva or Sadashiva with its antecedent - the Para Shakti. In all the treatises on Shaivism hair-splitting arguments are laid down in proving the existence of the "Supreme Soul". Hence the Buddhists had to take up to their heels in the

absence of any powerful counter-argument on this subject. Perhaps the people in general, also became sceptic about their faith, because their belief in God is skin-deep. This has actually permeated their marrow even. They could consequently not reconcile themselves with more or less "Godless" faith. The adage "Had there been no God, Man would have invented one" was proved to the hilt in Kashmir. Herein it will be of interest to mention that Shankaracharya's visit to Kashmir acted as the last nail in the Buddhist coffin.

Shankara after his unparalleled victory over the Buddhists in plains came to Kashmir sometime about the second decade of the 9th century. Even though no other reference regarding his visit to Kashmir has been traced as yet, the popular tradition corroborates its authenticity. This cannot be dismissed cheaply, in as much as, that on the perusal of Shankara's treatises it becomes patently clear that his compositions did influence the Kashmiri Saiva literature; more so his imprint on Pratyabhijna (theory of recognition) is obviously discerned. In his "Dakshina Murti Stotra" commented upon by his pupil Sureshvaracharya the conception of ultimate reality as preached by him and known as Tantric philosophy and that expounded in Pratyabhijna seems to be the same. Not only this, even some technical terms as used in Pratyabhijna have been earlier used by him in the same sense:

(1)

<verses>

(Dakshina Murti Stotra Commentary (2), 13)

(2)

<verses>

(Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini- 1, 39)

Translation: (i) " The universe has been created out of knowledge and action and seems also possessed of consciousness."

Translation (ii) " Knowledge and action are considered the source of all living beings."

(1)

<verses>

(Dakshina Murti Stotra Commentary (2), 13)

(2)

<verses>

(Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini 1, 207)

Translation (i) "Therefore, that shining spirit follows everywhere the opposite direction (beyond time and space)."

Translation (ii) " The shining supreme spirit is not bound by space and time."

Such examples can be multiplied and so the internal evidence culled from the compositions of Shankara regarding his coming to Kashmir and subsequently not only the thought but even the expressions being found common in both (as above), it may be safely inferred that he did come to Kashmir and had presumably discussions with the propounders of Shaiva faith here. On a profound perusal of his "Saundarya Lahari" it becomes lucid that he got influenced also by Kashmirian Shaiva Acharyas and did concede the existence of monistic Tantras and also their number:

<verses>

(Saundarya Lahari)

Translation: (O Devi), You having built the whole universe with sixty four Tantras.....

Hence we come to the stage when Buddhism being banished, the vacuum thus created began to be filled by the Acharayas of Saivism who had the blessings of Shankaracharya also.

However, the Buddhists definitely earn credit for initiating the modus operandi of discussions, symposia and religious congregations for propagating their philosophy and projecting this to the masses. We have references of Buddhist councils being held here in Ashoka's and Kanishka's time. In this connection Dr. R. K. Kaw has to say "It will be observed that Buddhists initiated a critical view in matters which were so far believed only as gospel truths." Hence as a reaction to this, the Brahmin votaries of Shiva and Shakti also inducted into their cult the method of philosophical reasoning and persuasive argumentation. "Shaiva Literature" is fully replete with these two ingredients.

The whole of Shaiva literature comes under the name of Trika, Trikashastra or Trikaśhasana. The derivation of the epithet "Trika" among other things can be ascribed to triple principle with which this system deals e. g. Shiva, Shakti, Anu; Pati, Pasha and Pashu; Nara, Shakti and Shiva; Para and Aparā. and Parapara and finally Bheda, Abheda; Bheda, and Abehda; or it may have been called as such, "For the reason that its chief authority is the the triad consisting of three chief Agamas - Siddha, Namaka, and Malini. This literature falls into three categories:

The Agama - Shastra.

The Spanda - Shastra.

Pratyabhijna - Shastra.

"The Agamas are believed to be revelations, having come down through ages." These emphasize the doctrine of Jnana (knowledge) and Kriya (action) for becoming one with the superself.

The most important composition of this branch are the "Shiva Sutras." Their authorship is attributed to Lord Shiva and were in course of time revealed to Sage Vasugupta. On the authority of Raja Tarangini we know that Bhatta Kallata, the pupil of Vasugupta lived in the reign of Avanti Varman (855- 883 A. D.)

Hence it is clear that Vasugupta whose reputation was established as a Shaiva teacher must have preceded him at least by 30 years if not more i.e. 825 A. D. The purpose of writing this thesis (or communicating it as the tradition goes) was to counteract the dualistic teachings in vogue at that time. In Shivasutra Vimarshini by Kshema Raja, it is clearly laid down:

<verses>

" The occult school (of Saiva) may not get into oblivion by the preaching of duality amongst the people - with this purpose."

So the Agamas taught the pure non-dualistic Monism.

The Spandashastra actually amplifies the main principles of Shaivism in greater detail than the Shiva-Sutras. The main treatise on this Shastra is Spanda Sutras or Karikas which have been commented upon by Kallata, Ramakantha, Utpalavaishnava (Not of Shaiva School) and Kshema Raja. The content of philosophical reasoning is missing in the main treatise, while the commentators have tried to supply it with meaningful success. Kshema Raja in his commentary ascribes to Vasugupta the authorship of this Shastra also. But Utpala (Vaishnava) uses the unambiguous phrase while commenting on the very first Sutra in his Pradipika. He gives it as "Sangraha- granthakrta" meaning "a work which gathers together the meaning of Shiva Sutras." In one of his verses he attributes its authorship to Bhatta Kallata via Vasu Gupta. But this verse is not found in the recension of Kshema Raja. However, it is to make clear that contents being the same in Shiva-Sutras and Spanda Sutras the authorship could not be different. As the Shiva-Sutras have been revealed to Vasu Gupta, hence Spanda Shastra may also be his acquisition.

The word "Spanda" as prefixed with this branch of Trika means "a throb", "quivering" or "movement." The quivering of the mind receives the beatitude of the "Super soul" and hence attains ~he "Nishkampa Pradipa" < unquivering flame of the lamp as given in Bhagvad Gita, or the name to this treatise may be explained as the "throbs of Lord Shiva" clothed in words by later Yogis and Siddhas such as Vasugupta etc.

The third and the most important school of Shaivadarshan is the Pratyabhijna cult with which our author is directly concerned. Somananda is said to be the originator of this branch and has been called as "Tarkasya Karta" meaning the founder of reasoning". He was a pioneer in grafting the element of argument reasoning, support and refutations on rational lines into this system. The first book of this system is "Shiva Drishti" whose authorship is attributed to Soma Nanda. Unfortunately this masterly treatise is now extant upto four Ahnikas (Chapters) only; atleast it had seven as is clearly quoted by Abhinavagupta in Para- Trimsika. Perhaps this is the main reason as to why his erudite commentator Utpaladeva does not go beyond 74th verse of the IV Ahnika. Subsequently the three chapters were salvaged and the number made seven; but it seems that these form a part of the Vrtti (gloss) compiled by Somananda himself and not the original one. Tho "Forte" of Somananda's teaching is:

<verses>

"Shiva" the auspicious and Supreme soul, is the giver and he is the enjoyer. This whole universe is (permeated by) Shiva."

His disciple and at times taken to be his son also. Utpaladeva commented in a most scholastic manner on the "Shiva Drishti" of Soma Nanda, and for the first time introduced the element of Pratyabhijna in Shaiva literature. He named his treatise, though based on the doctrine taught by Somananda as "Ishwara Prtayabhijna-Karikas" in Sutra form consisting of four Adhikaras (cantos), further sub-divided into a number of Ahnikas or sections. He also propounded "Svatantriya" theory of his own, independent of his Guru Somananda. By Svatantriya he means the "self dependent power of the lord". His exposition of the "Recognition Doctrine" has the sanctity and the authority what it should have deserved, and was even equated with Somananda the originator as:

<verses>

"Reflection of the wisdom of Somananda" (Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini - 2, introduction)

Perhaps being very much enamoured by the wisdom of Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta composed the shorter and longer versions of his commentary on the Ishwara Pratyabhijna of Utpala; who discarding all other names for this system annointed it with Pratyabhijna - recognition. This name alone has stood the test of time and is perhaps synonymous with Trika as a whole; while in, essence this is not the case.

The order of Gurus (Guru Parampara) as given in Shaiva Darshani's as follows:

<verses>

"I bow to Lord Shiva, Vasugupta, Somananda, and Utpalacharaya, Lakshmana (Gupta), Abhinavagupta and Kshema Raja."

A faint echo of teacher-taught relation can also be heard into it. Vasugupta pupil of Lord Shiva, Somananda pupil of Vasugupta, Utpala pupil of Soma Nanda, Abhinavagupta pupil of Lakshmanagupta and Kshemaraja the pupil of Abhinavagupta. Had both Vasugupta and Somananda been the pupils of Lord, then the insertion of "Cha" would have made it clear.

From this it is clear that Vasugupta and Somananda represent the originators through the good offices of Lord Shiva while Utpala, Lakshmanagupta, Abhinavagupta and Kshemaraja constitute the heirs to this system, who in their own way interpreted, supplemented and enriched the word sent to the humanity by Lord Shiva through the first two Gurus.

Out of a host of such interpreters Abhinavagupta is not only the best but also possessed of multifaced genius. Not confining himself to the ramifications of "Saiva Darshan" he also strayed into the domain of Rhetorics by subscribing to Rasa theory in his commentary on Bharata Natya Shastra, and also into poetics when elucidating the "Dhvani" as enunciated by Ananda Vardhana. However, we have to delimit his versatility and shall describe him only as a religious philosopher.

However, before embarking upon this, it will not be out of place to give roughly the main characteristics of this "Darshan" so that in light of these, we might determine the place of Abhinavagupta as a philosopher; as to how he explained these and for sooth, even improved upon these.

The "Saiva Shasana" starts with the assumption that Atman is the real and innermost self in everything. It does not undergo any change and is a vehicle to experience the "Parameshwara" or the Chaitanayam. This "Parameshwara" or Param Shiva" is not bound by time, space and form, so is omnipotent and omnipresent. However, He has a dual role - the one which pervades whole of the universe and the other transcendental in which he defeats all mainfestations. His power of pervading the universe is called Shakti, but coming out of His fountain-head is only an aspect of His and not in any way different from Him. Even though these Energies or powers have been called numerous, yet only five are the most notable. The Chita Shakti (the power of resplendence), Ananda Shakti (the power of bliss), Ichha Shakti (the power of desire), Jnana Shakti (the power of knowledge), and the Kriya Shakti (the power of action), with the help of these, the "Paramshiva" manifests itself which in Saiva language is called Udaya, Unmesha, Abhasa or Srishti.

However, to create a universe is the necessity even though He is world-incarnate. Hence the universe has been thought to be composed of "Shiva Tattva (pure, auspicious element), Shakti Tattva (potential element), Sadakhya Tattva (the element of self realisation, or being), Aishwaraya Tattva (element of identification) and last but not the least the Sad-Vidya Tattva (the element of true perception). When in between the self and self-realization, Maya (obduration, delusion) obscures the real form of objects, the Sadhaka (experiencer) has to rise above Kala (time), Niyati (sequence), Raga (attachment), Vidya (limited perception of consciousness), Kala (limited authorship). Such an experiencer who has been doped by Maya and is obsessed with time etc. is called "Purusha". Simultaneously with it is also born Prakritis, that latent power in him which goads him onto act or react. To awake from the slumber under the influence of Maya, the Purusha conjointly with Prakriti has to undergo some mental drill and comprehend the implication of Buddhi (conception), Ahanakara (personal I or ego) and Manas (desire). Taken in reverse order, the desire actuates "I" ness and at the last stage conception of things becomes clear. Hence the Purusha awakens by rejecting Maya and its five concomitents beginning with Time (Kala) etc, comes face to face with chitswaroopam resplendence or Shambhavi state and attains the Paramaishwarya or Self-dependence (Supreme bliss). This is the purport of Shaiva Darshan or Shaiva Monism as given in the "Shiva Sutra" and "Shiva Drishiti" on broad lines.

Dr. K.C. Pandey has given a long list of some 41 compositions attributed to Abhinavagupta. Among these some bear dates, some are referred to by subsequent authors and some have been owned by tradition. However, the most famous works of his on "Shaiva darshan", strictly speaking are:

Para - Trimshika Vivarna.

Pratyabhijna Vimarshini (expurgated)

Pratyabhijna Vivriti Vimarshini (full)

Tantrasara

Tantraloka

Parmarthasara

Commentary on Bhagvadgita called Gitartha-Sangraha.

Many other compositions of his such as "Shiva Drishtyalocana" commentary on "Shiva Drishti" as the name clearly signifies, is lost.

Chronologically speaking the "Para Trimshika" seems to be his first work in the "Shaiva Lore". It is in reality composed of the concluding portion of "Rudrayamala Tantra" belonging to Agama school on which Abhinavagupta penned down a commentary calling it Vivarna. However, the title of the book suggests it containing thirty verses only (Trimshika), but it has even more than these. There seems to be some confusion amongst the later commentators regarding its name, while the author himself has tried to justify it like this:

"Trimshika" is so called because it is the Supreme Lord of three powers desire, knowledge, and action."

<verses>

'Para' in Shiava terminology is identical with 'Parasamvid' - the highest power of Self-Dependence. Hence 'Para Trimshika' would connote 'thirty verses of Self-Dependence', or the Super Lord of the triple formula of desire, knowledge, and action.

Pratyabhijnnavimarshini and its larger edition Viviriti belong to the Pratyabhijna (recognition) school of Shaiva Shastra as propounded by Utpala Deva and originated by Somananda.

Tantrasara and Tantraloka deal with the same contents with the difference that the former is a brief Summary (Sara) of the latter, a voluminous treatise. The Tantrasara is couched in prose while the Tantraloka is in metrical form. These are definitely based on Malini Vijayatantra belonging to Agama school.

Parmarthsara is a philosophical composition of 105 verses and is supposed to be based on the Karikas of Shesha. In his Gitarthasangraha, Abhinavagupta has emphatically declared that freedom from all miseries can be obtained by seeing Him (Paramshiva) in everything and everywhere. This freedom cannot be achieved by renunciation of the world. The battle between Pandvas and Kaurvas is actually the race between Vidya (knowledge, perception) and Avidya (ignorance, blurred perception).

From the above it is clear that Abhinavagupta not only explained Pratyabhijna on which his fame rests, but also other Tantric works belonging to different schools. He did not believe in isolation but in collation which is the keynote of his philosophic bent of mind. Other commentators like Utpala, Kshemaraja etc. confined themselves to a single path but Abhinavagupta not only rode on other paths but also proved the old adage "All roads lead to Rome." He made a compromise between different views and presented such a philosophy of life which never grew stale. His synthesis - oriented approach to life gave a meaningful and healthy direction to his ideas.

Philosophy, strictly speaking, is the science of knowledge or the Tattva Vidya, the lore of the real nature of human soul or material world as being identified with the supreme spirit. Since knowledge emanates from Him, hence it can be usefully used as a medium to interpret Him. If there be no originality and no Shaivacharya has claimed it, since "Shivasutras" are the word of God, the originality definitely lies in interpreting these and unravelling the esoteric content in a most intelligible and homely idiom. In this field also Abhinavagupta has no parallel.

It is also to be remembered that our author does not rest his oars on the philosophic polemics, but also connects these with the ritual. Herein also he shows a master - mind in fitting ritual with philosophy, the mundane with the the spirit, the real with the ideal and to crown all practice with the precept. On account of his versatile genius he is at home in explaining the abstract in the context of the concrete. While revelling in the super world he does not forget the world as such. He is not a dreamer but an awake artist feeling rightly the pulse of supersensuousness but at the same time not forgetting the converse form of it. He tries to explore the obverse and the converse at the same time. Hence his treatment of the subject is more realistic. Perhaps that is the main reason as to why pratyabhijna school though bequeathed to him by earlier Acharyas was actually made popular by him. He not only translated the terse philosophy in the tongue of the people but also gave it the most natural direction. Abhinavagupta does not claim any originality for introducing this "Shaiva Darshan", but most candidly records:

<verses>

"Having thought over the views of Shri Somananda, I systematized these."

Moreover, in the realm of philosophy, originality is a misnomer; because the philosophy as such is the cumulative thinking processed through ages and then finding expression through the pen or mouth of an erudite scholar. Even Shankara without mincing words, categorically states that the authenticity of a system is to be tested on the touchstone of Vedas. Somananda, the originator of Pratyabhijna school

admits that his "Shaivadrishhti" is based on Shastras, though his pupil Utpalacharya testifies to its showing new path for final emancipation. In all humility (because true knowledge bestows humility) Abhinavagupta follows the same tradition of thinking.

It may be contended that he did not compose any treatise independently, but only commented upon the works of his predecessors. Therefore he can be a commentator at best, but not an original thinker. Commentary from Abhinavagupta's view point is not merely a jugglery of words but actually the personal experience gained through spiritual experiments. He lived the maxims on which he commented. So in the exposition of such matters he sets for himself three norms - first being the personal experience, reason the second, and ancient authority the third. So the contribution of Abhinavagupta to this system of philosophy is not simply of academic interest but is replete with other dimensions of thinking which even the originators failed to comprehend. The commentators preceding him gave mere dogmatic statements of the basic tenets of the Spanda school. They dared not subtract or add to these by way of argument, reasoning and judicious explanation for or against the fundamental principles. Even though some commentators notably Utpalacharya did introduce the element of argument into it, but his domain was only one - sided related to Pratyabhijna only and not the "Trika" as a whole. Abhinavagupta on the contrary did improve on him, though being his disciple, making it broad-based and embracing the whole gamut of Shaiva Shastra. He provided rational base to it and also dwelt on the ritualistic aspect of this system. He has exhaustively explained the Monistic Shaiva rituals also. He made a happy blend of philosophy and psychology, quoted extensively from the Agamas and other established authorities; perhaps he has every right to assert:

<verses>

"I (we) will unravel the "unseen" at the bidding of my Guru and Lord."

This verse does allude to the shortcomings of the earlier commentators who could not convert <sanskrit> (unseen) into <sanskrit> (seen) and so it was left to Abhinavagupta to perceive it in light perspective and accordingly transmit it to others through his writings - commentaries. His scathing criticism of Buddhists and schools of philosophy other than Shaiva with biting wit and pungent sarcasm is perhaps the most original content of what he has written.

His brief yet most pregnant definition of "Trika" definitely portrays his mastery over this system:

<verses>

"The unison of Shiva (Paramashiva) and "Shakti" (Para Shakti) is termed as supertrika".

Very succinctly he also lays down the aim of this Shastra - "The removal of veil of ignorance." However, the fundamental difference between the Vedanta and Shaivism though professing the same aim, is real rather than apparent. In Vedanta the negation of the facts of experience are a must presupposition for realization of the self; The illusion regarding the snake and rope is quite known. But in Trika there is no negative approach towards the universe but in fact an affirmation of the facts of experience with new interpretation. With this positive understanding of the environs, the realizer is simply face to face with self-recognition which in Shaiva-terminology is called self-realization.

While dealing with Pratyabhijna (self-recognition) Guru Somananda defines it as the two fold function of perception and remembrance in its totality at the same time. Utpala Deva thinks that the term Pratyabhijna connotes, the power of self, the power of cognition and power of action - a triple amalgam:

<verses>

In this realm also Abhinavagupta shows his originality in defining the term "Pratyabhijna" as:

<verses>

"Recognition of that supreme self is to be face to face with what was forgotten through effulgence (of consciousness).

While explaining the word Pratipam he very lucidly says that " (it) means that which was forgotten, or concealed but now coming into view not through remembrance but by clear cognition."

Furthermore to make it more lucid, Abhinavagupta explains that cognition is composed of:

<verses>

"When the past perception and the present perception are revived (by the object coming in full view) "

<verses>

Giving an example of past perception and present perception and their getting revived he says:

<verses>

"He is that very Chaitra" (name of a person, who was already seen before). His coming face to face now is called present perception and his cognition (that he is really the same person) was done by the previous or past perception, the bridge between the perceptions being remembrance born of mental impression. Our author's independent thinking can very easily be inferred from an ingenious definition of Pratyabhijna.

Herein he does not follow his preceptor but provides a very homely definition, when he says that the Lord is possessed of Infinite Powers. This characteristic of Him is corroborated extensively by Puranas, Siddhantas and Agamas as also by reasoning and inference etc. When by direct experience we ascertain His Nature in our own self, this may be termed as having recognized Him, or in other words, the cognition takes place.

Abhinavagupta does not consider remembrance the only vehicle of identifying the present perception with the past one. Even though Somananda explicitly lays down the role of remembrance in connecting the present and past perception and Utpala also endorses it; Abhinavagupta comments:

<verses>

"But being face to face and not by remembering alone, the knowledge (perception) because of being made clear, Recognition takes place."

He very cogently argues that remembrance is related to sight; first having seen a certain object we are reminded of it when some such form crosses our eyes. But there are cases of falling in love without seeing each other, wherein the medium of arousing love and accepting the lover from the depths of heart is confined to "either the words of female messenger or confidante or the perception of such traits in him (as being her ideal) or by any other deeds which made him renowned, she is persuaded to accept him". Here in this case sight has played no part, hence the image which first sight would have caught cannot be repeated at the subsequent sights. The remembrance is altogether absent in it. The master philosopher goes on to argue that in this case the love-lorn lady naturally weaves the pictures of his beauty, gallantry or any other exceptional distinction on the authority of three sources mentioned above. This picture will definitely be at variance with the one if the lover meets her incognito. There is no repetition of image as in the case of "Chaitra" (given earlier), how will the recognition take place? Abhinavagupta raising the controversy himself provides a most plausible answer to this predicament. When incognito hero is introduced as lover whom she has been loving for his qualities all along, the heroine receives a shock instead of joy. As long as the qualities of the hero are not revealed to her and she certifies these by her own experience and also on the authenticity of others. "He is that very person" the recognition is not so simple and easy. Hence the obstruction between what has been heard and what is actually seen is to be removed, so that the identification between the "imaginary" and the "real" is possible. Thus at this juncture the recognition is possible only by the removal of the veil as also the reconciliation between both the mental images one imaginary or unseen and the other seen or face to face. Accordingly Abhinavagupta supplements the remembrance (smaran) with (anubhav) cognition derived from personal

observation or experience. On the seeming contradiction between unity and plurality, Utpaladeva contends that:

<verses>

"The internal reality of things of diverse nature is unity".

<verses>

"that very unity attaining the knowledge or perception of senses."

<verses>

"gets multiplied under the influence of time, space and real nature of objects." Like an original thinker Abhinavagupta makes it more clear and simple by saying:

<verses>

"The cause or no cause are one and same, so unity and plurality can be the attributes of one and same object."

<verses>

"So, in essence the objects internally are one consciousness, but practically speaking as being differentiated by the blue and yellow (colours) unchangeable indeterminate or determinate imply multiplicity externally at the illusionary level."

It will be pertinent here to allude to the aim of the system of philosophy as preached by Abhinavagupta. The unavoidable preamble to every philosophic thought is to describe the why and what of that what teacher or preacher wishes us to know. In the treatment of this subject Abhinavagupta set norms of personal experience, reasoning and thirdly the scripture and in the context of these he tries to explain the domain of his experience. Herein he exhibits a marvellous sense of independent judgment. He does not accept the theories of Logicians is given in Nyaya Shastra, of as expounded in Vaishesika in details or fundamentals. From the dualism of Sankhya, idealism of Baudhas and monism of Vedanta he only differs mostly in fundamentals. According to him the world of experience is not God-made nor a portion of Prakriti (Sankhya) nor purely a subjective experience (Baudhas), nor even a mere illusion (Vedanta). It is real as it is a manifestation of superself or universal consciousness. In support of his theory he introduces the Abhasa Vada, which to define most briefly in his own words:

" All that is i.e. all that can be said to exist in any way and with regard to which the use of any kind of language is possible be it the subject, the object or the means of knowledge or the knowledge itself, is Abhasa."

He further contends that subject and object cannot be divorced from each other, so the self also from the not - self. Knowledge of objects is the the inter-mixture of the both, if these are treated as separate and opposite entities, there cannot be any concordance between these just as between light and darkness. Hence Abhinavagupta most cogently supplies the answer:

<verses>

"The (ultimate) in form is immanent and without form is transcendental."

In order to discriminate between His two aspects- transcendental and immanent-Vimarsha is the inevitable instrument. It could have been compared to the image- reflecting nature of a mirror, but during darkness images cannot be reflected, hence it needs external agents to illumine it. But the self does not need any such illuminator and can receive images by virtue of his self - independence "Svatantraya."

This Abhasa in its immanent aspect is composed of "Prakasha" and "Vimarsha" .

In Shaiva terminology by "Prakasha" is meant residual traces also which are essentially the same as their substratum. As has been said above, these images being reflected are the same as Prakasha - the cause of reflection-light-in the ordinary sense. This "Prakasha" is definitely synonymous with "Sanskara".

"Vimarsha" may be explained as the power of self to know it- in all its purity and not being obsessed by affections whatsoever.

Abhinavagupta has most successfully made his point in this field by saying:

<verses>

"This Self- Dependence (Svatantraya) faculty is essentially the power of action, which propels the "bliss of consciousness" and that may be taken as Vimarsha, its proponderance is quite appropriate."

This word "Svatantraya" has been given other names also by the Preceptors of Shaivism Vasugupta calls it "Chaitanya" being associated with "Chita" mind. The Spanda school takes it as "Sphurta" or Spanda. It is also called as "Mahasatta" and Paravak. This extraordinary interest in this faculty of "Svatantraya" by Shaiva teachers only proves as to what importance they attach to it. Perhaps it will be pertinent to relate here the conception of "Maya" as propounded by "Shaivas" and what personal contribution has been made by Abhinavagupta to illustrate and explain it.

"Maya" has been treated as a force of obscuration.

<verses>

It is more precisely born of the limited experience and so the perception of that universal experience gets blurred hence called "Ashudhavan" the path of impurity, as also the Mayadhavan, the course of Maya.

However, Abhinavagupta, gives a very concise yet pregnant definition of "Maya" by saying that "Maya" is the unmixed part of that transcendental self which engenders the shade of distinction in His "Svatantraya" power bereft of any kind of aids." Moreover this very faculty infatuates hence may be equated with Moha (embarrassment). Hence he says "Maya is the name of seduction". By the introduction of the word "Moha" as an equivalent of Maya it becomes very easy for the layman even to understand it in essence, the Moha of Arjuna being very well known. This Maya not only conceals the true nature of things and also self, but the experience of of identity with the super-self is also obliterated. To bridge the presence of identity of the self with the superself, the Jnana (perception) plays a prominent part.

The Jnana (true perception) has been enunciated as having two aspects, Baudha (intellectual) and Paurusha (spiritual), the latter is the panacea for removing the obscuration because "the experiencer having attained the stage of Highest bliss when his animal instincts have vanished altogether," finds that kind of perception which can differentiate between the real and the unreal. Consequently the course of Maya is replaced by "Transparent course."

Now the idea of "Moksha" (emancipation) as conceived by the Shaivas deserves some mention. While defining "Moksha", Abhinavagupta has to say:

<verses>

"The purity of consciousness, devoid of significance or otherwise is not only called "Moksha" but can taken any other name also."

Proceeding further, he explains the consciousness as:

<verses>

"The state of consciousness is nothing but Supreme perception."

From the above it is clear that "Moksha" is subjective realization of one's self and is both unilluminable by any external agent and unknowable by any means of knowledge.

It is super-transcendental state of experience. The three impurities of Maya comprising perception, action and innate ignorance (Anava) are to be surpassed as a whole. The predominance of Jnana (perception) is treated as a means of emancipation by other systems of Indian philosophical thought too, but Shaivas do not subscribe to this view in totality. They contend that even if the Jnana impurity is conquered, still the

realizer cannot be treated as having been liberated in real sense of the term, in as much as, the two remaining impurities still persist in him. Hence the perfect freedom according to Trika can be got only through cognition - when all these three impurities get dissolved simultaneously into that supreme soul (Samvit).

Finally, the image of Abhinavagupta as a philosopher can remain incomplete if his arguments to refute various theories of Buddhists, Sankhyas, Naiyayikas and others are not reproduced here. Among the four schools of Buddhist philosophy only two Sautantrikas and Vijnanavadins have been singled out for criticism by Abhinavagupta.

The first school argues that perception is momentary, since everything is momentary. The object of perception just as a jar etc. ceases to exist immediately after casting its reflection on the eye and other sense-organs. By inference it can be established that the object and its reflection cannot co-exist. The one being the cause and the other the effect.

Abhinavagupta proceeds most intelligently to smash this verbose of Buddhist argumentative acumen.

"This external object is prone to perception, if this is not the case then no inference can be drawn even. From the rising smoke the inference of fire is quite clear, but the fire as such has already caught our perception in our kitchen or elsewhere." So it becomes quite clear that object cannot be detached from the subject. If these two are divided, then the question of building a bridge from one to another is very difficult.

The Vijnanavadins (sensationalists) do not at all believe in the existence of the external world. According to them self-consciousness is momentary and proceeds in the form of a chain or a stream. The links in chain are the Vasanas, which generate numerous sensations, called as daily cognitions. Hence a cognition is nothing but a presentiment brought about by Vasana. Abhinavagupta proceeds to refute this theory by pointing out the contradiction inherent in this theory in as much as this school of Buddhist philosophy divides the existencity in two groups the real (parmartha) and the apparent. The Vijnana only is real and that is reflected in it has only an apparent entity. The learned Shaiva commentator further contends logically that even if the apparent be unreal but its causes or source is to be admitted as real; but how can what is nothing in itself be the cause of something? When the sensationalist brings in the Vasana element he merely repeats what the Baharthavadin means by object. How can even Vasana be the cause of presentiments which have no variety in themselves, and if each stream of self-consciousness is different from the rest, if the sensation caused by its own Vasana is exclusive and independent of each other, then each soul will be living in a world of its own and there would be no collaboration of many individuals in respect of the same object for instance carrying a heavy log.

Furthermore, Abhinavagupta proceeds to dismantle the house of sand built by Mimamsakas whose chief exponent is said to be Kumarila Bhatta. His Prakatatavada lays down that the relation between the subject and object is brought about by the "movement of the knowing-self and is an object of internal perception." He takes knowledge to mean simply an act of cognition which engenders perception and manifested state in the object.

<verses>

Abhinavagupta proceeds to remark that Kumarila being a dualist cannot conceive the self-effulgent nature of knowledge. If the subject and object have an exclusive existence at the time of cognition and at the stage of manifestation, this is a part of the object exactly as are the other qualities such as blackness, in the case of a jar; but it should be manifest to all and, not to a few, as can be inferred from what Kumarila says. In this way, if a jar is made by a potter- its creator - then as the mimamsakas contend it should only become manifest to him alone. So this theory of manifestedness is not tenable as it cannot explain the fact of individual experience.

The Naiyayika's theory of knowledge consists in taking it as the illuminator of the object illuminated. The knowledge can be taken as the lamp which makes the object manifest:

<verses>

This example of lamp for knowledge is not appropriate. The lamp shines independently without having any kind of relation with any object it illuminates; knowledge is not so. It cannot be divorced from its antecedents. Moreover while imparting its light to the object actually transfers its own luminosity to it, because as we know that the appearance of the object is dependent on the light, but the Naiyayikas do not hold that knowledge can affect the object, so it cannot hold water in view of the refutation given above. Now we turn over to Sankhya system of philosophy which lays down that intellect is composed of three qualities - Sattva (transparency), Rajas (mobility) and Tamas (inertia). However, the content of "Sattva" (transparency) is predominant in it, so it is spotless by Nature. So it can receive reflection on all sides. It is like a mirror wherein the light of self-luminous self within and the reflection of an object outside become one. The aid of the intellect has been refuted by Abhinavagupta as follows:

The example of mirror and jar on which this theory is based is not correct, because according to this, then the reflecting agent and reflected object should be similar in their nature. Actually it is not the case; the intellect is sentient and the other insentient. They are definitely opposite to each other. Secondly even Sankhya will never admit that transparency of intellect is more than that of the self, such as the reflection of a flame in a mirror or that of the sun in the water; it cannot even satisfactorily answer that Buddhi with the light of the Luminous - self does itself become light or not. So the separate identity of intellect from the self is never possible, hence this theory does not cut much ice. So his verdict the insentient cannot have the capacity to manifest the objects, cannot stand any review whatsoever. It is definitely logically true and convincing.

Abhinavagupta does not even spare the "Dualist Shaivas" from his trenchant criticism. According to this Dualistic school of Shaivism whose chief advocate is Khetapala, the ignorance is a veil which conceals the perfection of self in respect of powers of knowledge and action. Accordingly each soul by its separate variety of power cannot come face to face with that perfection which has been actually hidden by this (power etc), when this concealing power of ignorance is shattered by Divine grace in the case of a soul, then only the soul retains its former glory.

Abhinavagupta begins the refutation with a pertinent inquiry as to what can be the reason of the destruction or otherwise of this ignorance. It can not be action because it is acknowledged to be the cause of pleasant or unpleasant experience which a person enjoys or suffers. Lord's will cannot be also responsible for this because He is above partiality. He will not free some and imprison others. The second pertinent query made by Abhinavagupta is to the effect that what and how this ignorance conceals? Souls have been called eternal and un-changing, so ignorance cannot conceal these, if we concede this, then the souls will have to become transitory. If it can affect the changeless souls, then the liberated soul of even "Shiva" cannot remain unaffected by the concealing power of knowledge and action. If this will be the case, the cognition of self can never take place. Hence this theory is not only self-contradictory but also deluding.

In this scholarly way Abhinavagupta has very intelligently pointed to "Achilles heel" inherent in each of these systems of philosophy and has unerringly established the superiority of his faith over all others. He has no mercy, no compunction in riding rough - shod over the "premise" of his rivals. Their seemingly convincing arguments cannot bear the inherent supremacy of his thought as also of his diction, and get melted like snow before the scorching rays of the sun.

Abhinavagupta like a true son of the soil, does not advocate a fanatical devotion to his line of thinking. He allows us every right to differ from him, but the irresistible charisma of his thought, couched in dignified language - does definitely enthral us. To speak squarely, he pleads for facing life and not fleeing from it. Like a practical thinker he exhorts us to eschew the meaning of life and afterwards yoke ourselves to redeem it in its truest possible perspective. His positive attitude to life and universe makes the existence more meaningful and hence rewarding.

He does not preach to discard the world and disown its attendant responsibilities, because it is essentially real. He instead of it, asks us to recognize ourselves in the image of the Lord who is not at all different from us. A person ought to develop true perception < healthy attitude for looking at his environment < then

only he can recognise Him in himself and become likewise self-effulgent. The distance between the "ideal" and "real" can be easily fathomed by cognition when the mind is prepared to receive and emit images like an unblurred mirror.

Abhinavagupta performed his mission admirably and saved the humanity from the Jig-saw of intellectual acrobatics of Buddhist theology, culminating in nothingness, and in the same way from the Jargon of other systems of Indian philosophy which neither preach practical approach nor practical thinking, only telling us to reject the "present" just to prepare for "future". But Abhinavagupta affirms the existence of the present and treats it not as a means but as an end itself. Living in the present, taking life as it comes, taming it by the strength of perception and cognition is a sound prescription for the strife-torn world even at present, when its restiveness can easily be converted into quiet calm of super soul.

His attitude to life and its chief actor man - is summed up in this couplet; which he has understandably quoted from the Shastras:

<verses>

He, whose hands, feet, mind, learning, religious austerity and conduct are well balanced (restrained), enjoys the fruits of pilgrimage (even without going there)".

So, this Kashmiri philosopher weaning philosophy away from the mire of impracticability lives up to his name Abhinava. New from all angles, and his thought-provoking treatises breathe an air of ravishing freshness, even after a lapse of more than ten centuries.

3 Bilhana - The Minstrel

Prof. K. N. Dhar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

The first extant reference about him is given by Kalhana :

<verses>

"Bilhana who had left Kashmir in the reign of King Kalasa had been made by Parmadi, the Lord of Karnata, his Chief Pandit";

when travelling on elephants through the hill-country of Karnata his parasol was borne aloft before the king. When he heard that the liberal Harsa was like a kinsman to true poets, he thought even so great a splendour a deception.

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

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

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

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

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

<verses>

"There is at a distance of two and a half kosas from Pravara Pura (Srinagar) a rising plateau named Jayawan in which there is a spring of Takshaka (serpent king) of crystal clear water, veritably a disc to chop away the head of Kaliyuga ready to annihilate the "Dharma". Quite close to it is a village endowed with the virtues, opulence and all fame named Khonmukh."

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

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

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

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

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

Kalhana makes another reference to him when he enjoyed the partonge of Parmadi of Karnata. The Vikram as given by Bilhana has been identified as King Chalukya Vikramaditya VI of Kalyan who reigned from 1076 A.D. to 1127 A.D. Thus it is clear that this illustrious poet reached "Kalyan" ten years in advance of Vikramaditya's enthronement. During this decade Bilhana must have made a name by his

talent and erudition which consequently arrested the attention of the king who rewarded him munificently and bestowed on him the title of "Vidyapati" (the Master of learning).

So it seems probable that Bilhana lived between the last two quarters of the eleventh century. Probably the poet was cut short in his life by 1088 A.D. as he has ignored his patron's biggest military campaign to the south in his *Vikramankadevacaritam*. This great expedition, had Bilhana been living at that time, could not have been ignored by him while smaller campaigns have been elaborately narrated by him in his *Vikramankadevacaritam*. Thus we can rightly assume that the span of life of our poet outside Kashmir ranges from 1066 A.D, when Kalasha ascended the throne of Kashmir, to 1088 A.D. when his patron started his military campaign towards the south. However, this assertion cannot be termed as final because :

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

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

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

<verses>

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

The two introductory verses of the Kashmirian manuscript of '*Caur Panchashika*', the genuineness of which is corroborated by Bilhana himself, show that it was written in Kalyana before the poet had

obtained the favour of the king Vikrama. The mention of Lord of Kuntala and indignant address to his envious rivals and enemies prove this. It is often ascribed to "Caur Kavi" which is not a name but a pseudonym for Bilhana. It is definitely the offspring of a corrupt reacing in the colophon :-

<verses>

(Thus end the fifty verses of amor by Caura)

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unlike his predecessor Ksemendra, he does not seem to believe that the figures of speech (Alankaras) are external embellishments only. He makes use of these profusely and in a dexterous way. His similes are apt and impressive. Even though he uses a variety of metres in his compositions, yet his favourite is andakranta" in which metre Kalidasa has couched his immortal lyric "Cloud Messenger".

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

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

4 Ksemendra - The Peoples' Poet

Prof. K. N. Dhar

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

About the depraved woman, he has this castigation:

<verses>

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

In the same vein the prostitute is condemned as

<verses>

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

About the innocence of men he has this satirical compliment:

<verses>

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

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

<verses>

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

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

"Matrika Pujananam" they wasted time and money in enjoying prostitutes. Hence in the very beginning of this treatise, Ksemendra very rightly says:

<verses>

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

<verses>

"In course of time (by the curse of the time) that (Kankali) - the mother was transformed into an artificial beauty by Kalavati, associating this treatise with her name, I, Ksemendra has arranged it (into cantos)".

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

The harlot epitomizes in his words: -

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

<verses>

"The dry-as-dust miser's words can never be sweet. How can be loveliness on his face when there is no salt even in his house-hold."

Herein, the poet has played on the word 'salt' which in its abstract form may mean beauty also.

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

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

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

"An embellishment is a real embellishment when applied at the proper place, and Gunas (merits) are actually merits when they uphold the norms of propriety. So it is clear that Ksemendra does not subscribe to Rasa theory of poetry and makes bold to give his own definition. He actually makes the poetry purposeful. Furthermore in a poetic composition when different Rasas (sentiments) are intermixed propriety alone can preserve their flavour, if this kind of discretion is not employed, then the composition would only be a counter-feit mixture of sentiments. The author lays emphasis on the existence of propriety in each word, sentence, figures of speech, verbs, syntax, gender, number, adjective, tense and even on other outer limbs of poetry (Kavyangas) i.e. environment, time, intuition, thought and nomenclature.

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

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

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

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

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

'actual'. He would like to proceed from the 'actual' like a revolutionary and would like the reader to assess for himself 'what should have been' from 'what it is.' What he preaches on Morality is simply suggestive and not direct. Perhaps his approach is more realistic than Sir Sidney who would like us to go to the 'Real' via 'ideal'. Ksemendra believes in treating the 'Real' with its imperfections, and all the time beckoning us in undertones, and not directly, to have an eye on the 'perfect ideal'. "What should not be" can be very efficiently emphasized by "what actually is."

His conviction about the function of propriety in poetry comes to his succour in this dilemma. Propriety according to him is nothing but a real representation of life as it obtains. Had he painted it otherwise, it would have amounted to impropriety. Hence his candid portrayal of society is an illustration of propriety in its all shades of meaning. He would not like to pass on a counterfeit society for a genuine one. He believes in calling spade a spade and not confusing dross with gold. While discussing the attributes of a poet, Ksemendra in his 'Kavi Kanthabharna' has unambiguously laid down that a poet-in-the making should not seek the guidance of a logician or a grammarian because they hinder the flowering of good poetry. He is alive to the fact that good poetry should in no case get fettered in grammatical technicalities or the mental drill of logicians. It should flow like an uninterrupted stream. Moreover, he even goes to the extent of saying that a poet - in-the making "should neither go a - begging nor stoop to vulgarity in his narratives". His imaginative faculty should not be wanting in anything and should not fall below the established norms of good-taste. So, it is clear that Ksemendra as a teacher on poetry and also as a poet does strike a happy mean between the precept and the practice; for this he has chosen the vehicle of satire.

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

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

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

It has been contended that satire is best suited to prose. In it the appeal is made to reason, judgement, "it cannot be heightened by being garnished with an appeal to emotion". However, our poet has employed the more difficult medium of poetry, hence his task to produce the desired effect is more arduous than those of the prose-writers in this field. Perhaps for this very reason some critics have called his poetry as versified prose. As has been shown earlier, this is sheer injustice to our poet. Like a true satirist he has to subjugate his emotions to the compelling reality around him. The wings of his imagination do get clipped consequently, so his poetry may not touch the high water-mark of Kalidasa - who has no such shortcomings and his emotions are free to take any direction whatsoever. Even then Ksemendra has yoked his poetic prowess admirably well to the exposition of the real by contrasting it with the ideal. For a satirist the method of contrast is indispensable. He may feel piqued at times with the gulf between the real and his dreams, yet his anger has to be screened under a mask of 'Mirthful-laughter' as Ksemendra would say himself. The satirist has to don the mantle of a moralist though he may not like it. His insistent beckoning to the ideal - appealing to the sense of right and wrong - unconsciously bestows on him the status of a moral teacher. He cannot escape from it. Hence, in his poetry the aesthetic content is naturally subservient to the moral one. Even having such discomfitures for the full flight of his imagination,

Ksemendra has tried his hardest to introduce aesthetic pleasure into it according to his own norms of propriety, as discussed earlier. His satire does show the poet in him. His compositions are even now relished with the gusto of a lyric vibrating with emotions and have never been treated as codes on Morality. Perhaps this popular reaction to his satire is a sufficient compliment to his genius as a poet of no mean order.

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

<verses>

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

Whenever his imaginative faculty is not under the curbing thumb of content, or is free to take strides at his own will, he definitely touches the high water mark of poetic fancy. The poet in him remains subdued not that he lacks proper imagination, by the compelling nature of the subject he has chosen, and the vehicle of shloka metre which cannot admit of any elaborate treatment because of its comparative shorter span. His vocabulary is so rich that he looks like a living Dictionary; hence he could readily and easily weave a particular situation or feeling out of the inexhaustible fund of words at his command. Words flow from his pen spontaneously and at times he does not feel diffident to use the local Kashmiri words also, perhaps to give his compositions a native colouring and flavour: "The flute-player has the Veena and the "tumbak" on his shoulders".

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

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

<verses>

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

Russian revolution of 1919. In a way Ksemendra combined in himself the characteristics of a prophet and a poet. He brought down the poetry from the ethereal heights to the matter of fact and real dimensions.

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

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

5 Kalhana - The Chronicler

Prof. K. N. Dhar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

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

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

Taking cue from Dr. Buhler, who first of all pointed out the defects of the Calcutta edition, the search for a more authentic manuscript was continued by the subsequent indologists. The efforts of Dr. Stein were

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

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

His knowledge of Sanskrit being faulty, he made the confusion arising out of the Calcutta edition, worse confounded. Then onwards, in addition to this, many other European scholars have made references to this chronicle and have gleaned much useful data from it. Prof. Lassen, in his Encyclopedia of Indian Antiquities, has given a complete analysis of this work. General Cunningham treated its chronology in an admirable article in the 'Numismatic chronicle of 1918. In spite of all this, Prof. Wilson had to concede that a close translation of these cantos in such a pretty mess with regard to linguistic inaccuracies, would have been impracticable. It is noteworthy to mention here that no of these scholars had seen the MS in Sarada characters. They based all their conjectures on Devanagri manuscripts. Professor Wilson, in particular had seen the sent by Mr. Moorcraft from Kashmir and two copies in Devanagri gifted to the India House Library Lond by Mr. Colebkoole. Dr. E. Hultzsch also utilized the material brought to light by the above mention scholars for many of his thought-provoking articles. Among the Indian scholars Shri Yogeshchander Dutt's English version and R.S. Pandit's translation also deserve mention. Both these works are based on Calcutta edition.

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

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

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

- i) Last two cantos can roughly be called the contemporary history delineated by the chronicler. It definitely deserved more space, because Kalhana was sure about the ground under his feet. The first six cantos are based on different sources coupled with tradition; so Kalhana wanted to skip through these. The matter he was treating was more or less not so authentic from his view-point and so was given lesser space.
- ii) The so-called varying references are mainly, due to the bad and faulty MS; and to crown all, his incorrect translation. No such contradictions have been detected by, subsequent scholars, more recently by Dr. Stein because of the correct text. Mr. Troyer's hold on Sanskrit was not so good. He has translated Mukhtapida and Lalitaditya as two different personalities while actually they are one and the same

person. With regard to this Dr. Buhler has to say "He (Troyer) undertook a task very much beyond his strength for which he was qualified neither by learning nor by natural talent;

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

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

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

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

<verses>

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

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

Evidently the books which have attracted Kalhana to borrow do come also under the purview of chronicles, e.g. Ramayana, Mahabharata, Raghuvamsa etc., hence he could not but get acquainted with these so as to make his own composition more authentic and traditionally accurate. The point to be emphasized here is his freedom with which he has drawn upon these and has even quoted the words, vocabulary and to crown all imitated the style.

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

1. "The sky was densely screened by huge columns of smoke from which shone moving flames resembling the bushy and tawny red-hair and beards of goblins.
2. The tongues of the flames emanating from the fire the smoke of which was spent-up, gave the impression of waves of gold coming out of a golden cloud which had been, as it were, melted by the excessive heat.
3. The columns of fire strewn on the sky looked like the red headgear fallen from the crests of gods fleeing in scare before the conflagration."

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

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

<verses>

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

<verses>

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

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

<verses>

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

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

<verses>

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

One point needs clarification here. Raja Tarangini is composed of thousands of anecdotes in which individual "Rasa" in view of its subject matter, should naturally run. So in the description of war vira is there; in the details giving amors of various queens "Srinagar" is present. The intrigue and court conspiracies arouse "Jugupsa" and the sad end of some kings excites "Shoka". These sentiments are all subservient to the motif of the chronicle i. e. "Santa". Perhaps this is the reason that Kalhana ends four out of eight Tarangas of his chronicle with the description of such kings who gave up their thrones by acts of

pious resignation and renunciation. He has emphasized off and on that despite regal glory and affluence, every king, one after another, had to renounce this by the everlasting natural law that nothing is permanent in this world.

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

Without mincing words we are alive to the fact that Kalhana's poetical prowess was limited by his assignment of chronicle-writing. He wants to be a poet and a chronicler at the same time. Kalidasa did combine poetic acumen with history in his "Raghuvamsa" but therein also his talents and unparalleled skill have suffered a jolt-especially towards the closing chapters of his Kavya. Kalhana has also tried to emulate his example. Let us now discuss how far he has been successful in making a happy compromise between the two.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

About the exploitation of their subjects, Kalhana records:

<verses>

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

The ruling king also does not escape his chastisement:

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

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

Pravarsena II (A.D. 580 roughly): This king has been portrayed as a valiant warrior; when he was invited to occupy the throne, he was leading an expedition in Trigarta (modern Kangra) to recover the kingdom of his fore-fathers. He is said to have built his capital named Pravarapura, (Pravarasenapura) perhaps on the same site on which modern Srinagar stands. However, on further scrutiny and reading through the lines, it can be safely established that the new city was founded on the outskirts of Sharika parvat or Hari parvat in Kashmir. In Kalhana's own words this hill was situated in the centre of the new city.

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

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

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

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

The king founded the town of "Avantipur" situated at a distance of some seventeen miles from Srinagar on Srinagar Jammu Highway. The fame of Avantipur is still preserved by the huge temples he built there, which are still erect though in dilapidated condition. Among these ruins the most valuable are a series of sculptures which have been placed in the Srinagar Museum. His very astute and wise Minister Sura was also as pious as the king. He also founded a town after his name Surapura called Hurpora at present. The landmark of his reign is the dredging of the Vitasta undertaken by Engineer Suyya. By his ingenious

methods he regulated the course of Vitasta and the scare of famine looming large every year by excessive floods was warded off for ever. New land was also reclaimed and on one of these tracts Sayya built a township named "Suyyapur," Sopore of today.

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

Among the most powerful women who changed the course of the history of Kashmir by their irresistible personality "Dida" deserves full mention. Actually being the consort of "Khemagupta" (A. D. 950-958) she wielded the real regal power, as her consort was a weakling given to licentious habits. She was the daughter of "Simha Raja" the king of Lohara. She tried to give clean administration to the people by getting rid of corrupt ministers and even the prime-minister Phalguna. Many rebellions raised their head but were quelled by Dida as she did not show any mercy. After the death of her husband she ruled the country as a regent for minor Abhimanyu. However, Abhimanyu died prematurely and his son Nandi Gupta was installed on the throne by Dida his grandmother. He ruled for one year only and died of "witch craft" employed by her grandmother. Her other grand sons Tribhuvaha and Bhima Gupta were also despatched to other world in the same way and path became clear for the queen to ascend the throne herself. She had a love affair with Tunga a cowered boy from Poonch and made him the prime-minister.

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The most noteworthy trait of Kashmiri character is its tolerance and catholicity. There are numerous examples in his chronicle to show that Buddhist viharas and stupas were built side by side with Visnu and Siva temples. The great conqueror Lalita Ditya though himself a Vaisnava erected a massive Buddhist vihara at his newly built capital Parihasapura. Even though the king professed a certain faith, his ministers

or people could subscribe freely to a any other faith. King Avanti Varman was a Vaishnava but his minister Sura was a Saiva and there was no tension between the two on this score. Even the Kashmir rulers did not hesitate to appoint ministers of foreign descent and foreign faith. Cankuna the Turk was the minister of Lalitaditya 'Sarada' Mukhtapida. The secular out look towards life was ever present in Kashmir even in those hoary days.

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

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

<verses>

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

<verses>

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

<verses>

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

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

The kings often squeezed blood from their subjects who were already groaning under the weight of their abject poverty. Moreover the favourites of kings exploited them to their fill. Perhaps they drew satisfaction from the Fatalism and the Divine retribution present in their character. Indigenous rule at times changed hands with foreign domination. Intrigue, treason and lust reigned supreme in royal courts. To all this, Kashmiris reacted in a most stoical way. Whenever counter-conspiracies are hatched, it is not

the Kashmiri but a foreigner finding favour with the king. Sometimes revolutions of far-reaching consequences rocked their native land but they sat with fingers crossed. This clearly shows that they did not feel any sense of participation or belonging with high-ups above them. Hence Kalhana very faithfully draws the picture of idle and indifferent crowds in the bazars:

<verses>

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

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

<verses>

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

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

<verses>

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

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

<verses>

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

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

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

<verses>

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

6 The Serpentine Vitasta

Prof. K. N. Dhar

FROM times immemorial rivers in India have been treated as sacred.

After the Aryan occupation of the North when towns and cities began to be built on the banks of rivers, their utility could not be overlooked. Hence by way of gratitude the rivers were deified and varied mythological background was woven around these to justify their deification. It was believed that the violent form of rivers in the shape of floods etc could be averted by propitiation; Hence their being elevated to godly position can be easily understood. Whatever the religious importance of these rivers, it cannot be gainsaid that the economic gains the people derive from these rivers are immense. The Nature worship as extolled in the Vedas is the patent manifestation of the gratitude the Aryans owe to her salutary aspect which provided them peace and comfort in every sense of the world. Hence in the Rgveda the Rsis have all praise for the rivers.

In this Sukta direct reference to Vitasta has been made along with her prominent rivers of North India. Even in the Mahabharata this river has received mention and its sanctity even in those times attested. These references go a long way in proving that this river of Kashmir was very well known in India and it was held in great respect being a Tirtha of repute.

Nilamatapurana deals profusely with the ancient geographical History of Kashmir. This river has also been called the "Nilja" the daughter of NilaNaga which establishes its link directly with Nilanaga the son of Kashyapa who drained out the water from the "Satisar" and the land thus reclaimed was named "Kashmir," and then handing over the authority to his son, the Rsi set out for penance.

Kalhana also corroborates this account. However, when the valley had become waterless the need for water for maintaining life was felt all the more, and in an allegorical manner the birth of Vitasta has been described in the Nilamata. The contact with pisacas had made the inhabitants of the valley unclean, hence to purify them Kashyapa requested Lord Siva to prevail upon his consort "parvati" to manifest herself in the form of a river. The Goddess asked her lord to make an opening through which she could come to surface after assuming the form of a river. Thereupon Lord Siva struck the ground near the abode of Nilanaga with his trident which measured one "Vitasti" and through this fissure the goddess parvati gushed forth in the form of Vitasta. The name Vitasta was given to her (this river) by Lord Siva himself. Lord Siva made a fissure measuring a Vitasti and brought forth this holy river out of the underworld. However, Kalhana describes clearly that this "Nila Kunda" was circular in shape which acted as a "Royal Parasol" for the King Nila. Different names given to this river are Nilija, Nilakunda, and Vitasta, whereas last is more famous and current from the earliest times as shown earlier:

<verses>

The shape of this "Kunda" is now octagonal perhaps due to the renovations made in it by later Kings especially the Moghuls. No less than sixty rivers of Kashmir and Madra have been referred to in the Nilamata. But amongst them Vitasta wields the highest importance and respect which can be testified by an account in the Nitamata that this river twice disappeared and only consented, to flow permanently when given the company of other goddesses i.e. Ganga in the form of Sindhu in Kashmir, Godavari in the form of "Gudar" and Vishoka in the form of Lakshmi. This very river Veshav has been described as having come from the mousehole which at present forms the waterfall of "Aharbal" famous throughout the world.

This legend of manifesting and then disappearing perhaps alludes to more than one source of Vitasta. On second appearance it began to flow from the Naga of "Panchahasta" modern Panzeth in the Divsar Tehsil of Anantnag district. The third appearance took place from "Narasinhshrama". Even in the "Vitastamahatmya" does also mention its second source at "Vitastatra" the present "Vethavotur" situated some two miles below from Verinag to the north-west.

Next to Nilamata in antiquity and credence is the Kavya of thirty two cantos "Haracaritacintamani" by poet Jayadratha Rajanaka brother of Saivacaraya Jayaratha, who composed the saiva-treatise named a "Tantra Lokaviveka". This Kavya of Jayadratha gives a vivid description of pilgrimages of Kashmir and also reproduces faithfully from "Nilamata" of course, the origin of Vitasta-how it earned such a name.

It has been owned by Kalhana himself that he had Nilamata before him when he undertook to pen down his chronicle of Kashmir kings. Therefore he follows faithfully the account regarding the origin and the name of Vitasta as given in Nilamata:-

<verses>

"This Kashmir is protected by the king of all Nagas Nila, whose Royal Umbrella represents the circular spring (Nila Kunda) with Vitasta oozing forth from it as its handle."

However, he is silent about other sources of this river after its disappearance twice. This fact conclusively establishes that in his time only Nilanaga was taken as the source of Vitasta.

The texts eulogising the places of pilgrimages in Kashmir or even outside are called Mahatmyas. Naturally such a sacred river as Vitasta should have a Mahatmya. In this respect, only two Mahatmyas in extant form are available in the Kashmir Govt Research Library.

There might be other Mahatmyas on this subject; if so, they are confined to the personal libraries of the pandits. Unfortunately these two Mahatmyas are not historically dependable in as much as their antiquity and contents are disputable. The text in both with minor difference claims to narrate the Tirthas along the course of the Vitasta. At the very outset the Mahatmyas locate the source of the river as Verinaga instead of Nila Naga the established source by tradition and fully described in Nilamata and Raja Tarangini. The author has given the name of the village Veri Naga in which this spring is situated. In course of time this spring did come to be known as Verinaga but it is of comparatively recent origin. It is totally unknown in Nilamata and RajaTarangini and Haracaritacintamani, the oldest texts. First reference to this epithet "Vera" is found in Moghul times.

So these Mahatmya's can roughly belong to the sixteenth or seventeenth century A.D. This is corroborated by the fact that the name Saradapur or Shadipur occurs in it at the confluence of Vitasta and Sindhu.

On the authority of Jona Raja we know that this name was given to it by Sultan Shahabudin patently a corruption from "Shahabudin pura". The aim of the author seems to bring it in line with its present name "Shadipur". This pertains to the fourteenth century A.D. it is probable that the author being of recent origin had lost contact with the old tradition and pretended to write "Saradapur" etc only to announce his antiquity while he actually knew that it was called "Shadipur" in his time. Not only this, the name of the famous Moghul garden, "Shalamar" occurs in it, which was built by Empress Nur Jehan wife of Jahangir, Emperor of India (1605-1627). This conclusively proves that the author belongs to seventeenth century A.D. However, in spite of their comparatively recent origin, the Mahatmyas do display a thorough familiarity with the older texts and the current tradition prevailing in their time.

Both these Mahatmyas narrate at length the origin and source of this river on the lines given in the Nilamata. It has also furnished us with a lengthy list of Tirthas located on its right and left banks.

So it becomes lucidly clear that "Nilanaga" is acknowledged to be the source of Vitasta by Nilamata, Haracarita Cintamani, RajaTarangini and the Mahatmyas. We have no justification in rejecting this most ancient evidence.

However, there is one moremarshy lake some three miles south of Yusmarg a tourist spot, known as Nilanaga nowadays. This is probably the source of Duda Ganga ancient DugdhaGanga or 'Ksirasindhu.' Nilamata refers to it as 'Ksiranadi' and the Mahatmyas as SvetaGanga. This lake seems to be fed by snow and small rivulets coming down from Pir Panchal range. It is not definitely a Naga or a spring - a perennial waterbasin, but an inundatory receptacle. It has not enjoyed any significant sanctity, so the Mahatmyas are silent about it. Abul-Fazal being taken in by the similarity of the names has ascribed all the legends to this lake instead of Verinag. This confusion on his part has to a large extent influenced the ancient

tradition. Even though in Nilamata itself two Nilanagas are mentioned, but by no stretch of imagination, the Vitasta can be taken as flowing from it. The route of the Vitasta is quite different and the waters from this lake meet it just below Srinagar. Till then there is no contact between the two.

The present Shahabad in Anantnag district was known as 'Vera' in the ancient times. Abu-1-Fazal also records this very name for this Pargana. " Hence it is no surprise that the spring Nilanaga came to be known as the 'spring' of vera or Verinaga also. The name of the village came to be associated with this spring and it could be located easily thus. Such Nagas-springs which have the name of the village or the locality in which they are situated prefixed or suffixed with them are legion in Kashmir. Abu-1-Fazal testifying to its sanctity has recorded that many temples of stone were erected near it. However, these massive temples of stone are not there now, but a small Shivalaya exists still there. These stones must have been used for renovation and enclosing the spring by later kings. This fact can be easily discerned even now. Moreover, a hamlet in the close vicinity of this spring is still known as Verinag even now. It has been explicitly mentioned in Nilamata (762-66) that Vitastosava or the birthday of Vitasta falls on the 13th of bright half of Bhadrpada or Bhadoon, known in Kashmir as 'Vyetha truvah." On this auspicious day offerings of scents, garlands, and eatables are to be made into the river itself. In Kasbmiri the Vitasta is called " Vyetha" today.

It can easily be surmised that the small stream coming out of Nila Naga or Nila Kunda could assume the form of a big river only when being fed by other streams coming in its way. So a number of streams or rivulets join it close to Anantang and the actual Vitsasta begins to take shape. The present " Bringi " stream called "Bhrngi" in ancient times is the first to join its waters. From the northeast " Arpath " stream mentioned in Nilamata as Harsapatha, and from the west waters issuing from springs of Achabal (ancient Aksavala) meet the waters of Vitasta at Khanbal. From the north ancient Ledari (modern Lider) also rushes down with its voluminous waters to join this confluence and the Vitasta flows down majestically to Srinagar in all her glory.

From Khanbal the river becomes navigable and in ancient times this was the only dependable and profitable means of transport to and from Srinagar, and so, many important towns Tirthas and capitals came to be built on its bank. Down below Khanbal on the right bank of the Vitasta is situated the ancient Tirtha of " Vijyeshvara " modern " Vejbror. " Kalhana says that this Tirtha was built by king Ashoka (Raja I, 105). About 3 miles down below Khanbal the Vitasta is joined by 'Veshiva' (Visoka) and Rembyar rivers and this junction known as " Sangam " at present was in olden times called " Gambhira Sangani." "Gambhira " can literally mean " deep, " since three big rivers meet at this Sangam, hence it was called "Deep" (Gambhira). Dr. Stein contends that the " Gambhira " river as mentioned at different places in Raja Tarangni is the short united course of " Vesav " and Rembyar before it meets the Vitasta but no such name occurs in Nilamata in the description of rivers. In course of time the prefix " Gambhira " has dropped and only " Sangam" has remained upto date. No ruins whatsoever of the old Tirtha are seen above ground these days. If excavations are taken up we might unearth the temples built at this site by the Guru " Mihirdatta " of king Candrapida (A.D. 686-695).

Some miles below " Sangam " the Vitasta with its replenished waters flows close to the old city of Avantipur founded by king Avantivarman (A.D. 855-883). Ruins of two temples built of stone are seen there now. The Srinagar - Jammu National Highway passes very close to these. This town was very famous even after the death of its founder and finds mention in many chronicles including Raja Tarangini. In the time of Avanti Varman the Vitasta was dredged by one Suyya and its course regulated. The scare of floods and famines looming large in the horizon every year was averted. The price of one Khari of paddy would shoot upto ten hundred and fifty Dinaras. After these dredging operations were completed, that very Khari would sell at 36 Dinaras only.

At a distance of five to six miles below on the " Udar " itself was located the city founded after the name of Lalitaditya. Muktapida known as "Lyetpor " today. Since this, town was built in the absence of the King by his architect, so he did not take kindly to it. At present no ruins of the old city are seen above ground ; only lovely saffron-fields standing on these Udars greet our eyes. While coming down from these " Udars " we see the Vitasta touch the fringe of " Padampur " called " Pampur " now-a-days. This

township was built by Padma brother of Jaya Devi a concubine of Lalita Pida (A. D. 900) and a temple of Visnu was also erected there. At this place the Vitasta takes a slight curve towards the right just to be quite close to Puranadhisthana (Kashmiri Pandrethan) the old capital of Kashmir built by Praversena. At this place the Buddhists and in turn Vaishnavas and Saivas constructed their places of worship, the remains of which lie scattered all over.

Down below by three miles or less, Vitasta is joined by Mahasarit (Kashmiri Mar, Tsunt Kol). In reality it is a canal diverted from " Dal " lake, Skt (Dala), so that its superfluous water joins the Vitasta. The level of the lake is higher than the Vitasta and a water- gate has been built at the head of the canal to regulate the level of its water. It seems that in those times also, some such system of regulating its flow did exist. Kalhana explicitly mentions that Praversena II built the dyke (Setu) around the Mahasarit and in an allegorical way adds that the "Rakhsa's-knee" was used to part the waters. The part of city which falls in this locality is called Suthu even to-day. Moreover, it can be inferred easily that the back waters (Mar in Kashmiri) extended upto " Khodabal " (Ksurikabala) as used by "Kalhana". In this virtual island was the temple of Maksika Swamin known as " Mysum " nowadays. The confluence of Mahasrit (Tsunta-Kol) with the Vitasta was known as a Tirtha since very old times. Bilhana in his Vikramankadeva Caritam (xviii, 28) says that the temple of Siva called Ksemagaurivara was built at this confluence by king Ksemagupta, (A. D. 950-958). Mankha refers to it in his 'Srikanthacaritam' as "maha sarid vitstyo sangam." While Srivara in his Zaina Tarangini gives it more recent name "maari sangam". Evidently this maari is the modern maar which was a useful means of internal transport and extended up to " Narvor " (Skt Nadavana) before passing into the marshes of the " Anchar Lake. "

One fact comes out prominently while following the course of the Vitasta from Khanbal to the city proper, that all the important towns and Tirthas have been built on the right bank of the river and, the left bank has been ignored completely. There is a cogent reason for this, in as much as, on the right bank elevated 'udars' made these townships and Tirths flood-proof, while on the left bank the river has eaten into not very high and solid embankments and thus marshes have been formed. Such land could never be depended upon for construction purposes. This fact can be witnessed even to-day. Just before meeting Mahasarit, Vitasta enters into the precincts of the city; perhaps the temple of Shurahyar at the foot of Gopadari (Takhti Suliaman, Shankara carya hill) joined the gateway to Pravaraapur (Srinagar). The dykes on both sides of the river are built on solid foundations and also at a considerable height, so that a flight of steps commonly made of stone have been carved out of these for reaching the river itself. The approaches to the river are called " Ghats " and have served from a long time as the temporary bazars or "Mandis" for vegetables, fuel and other necessities of life when the river transport was in vogue. Even to-day the food rationing Depots run by the Government are installed at these ghats and the barges carrying heavy loads of rice, flour, and even sugar are anchored there. The city of Srinagar is also located on the two banks of this river at present linked by many permanent bridges. However, in olden times particularly during the Hindu Rule permanent bridges were not built for fear of invasion or of fire. Kalhana refers to at least two bridges which were built by joining big barges. He also asserts that it was Praversena II who introduced this art of boat bridges and got massive bridges of boats built at his new capital Pravara pura." The making of bridges with boats was as much important from defence point of view as from that of fighting outbreak of fire. These boats could be disengaged at a very short notice and the advancing army of the enemy could not cross over to the capital, or the blazing fire could not spread so easily.

Just a hundred yards or so below the Marivitas-tasangama to the left, the Vitasta is diverted into a smaller river called occasionally Ksipt Kulya modern (Kuttokol). This means the rivulet (Kulya) having been taken out of Vitasta (Ksipta). 'Kut' In Kashmiri, means inferior or artificial; since this stream was not natural hence earned the name Kuta. This branch again meets its source the Vitasta beyond the seventh bridge. Just on this diversion stood the old Palaces of Dogra rulers which have since been takenover by the state Government and are used as offices known as old Secretariat. On the left bank of the river in front of these old Palaces over-looking the Mahasarita-Vitasta Sangama is a Vaishnava temple called Gadadhara temple now-adays, supposedly built by Dogra rulers. No reference to this is found in any of the chronicles on Kashmir. On this tract of land girdled by Vitasta on one side and Ksiptika on the other, a

virtual island, presumably stood the Royal palaces in olden times. This island was called by the name Kasthila; (Modern Kathul). This inference is strengthened by a passage in Raja Tarangini which shows that king Ananta (A. D. 1028-63) transferred his Royal residence to the vicinity of the temple of Sada Siva to left bank of the river. Since imposing and massive structures of wood were used for making a palace, so this locality came to be known as Kasthila (derived from kashth wood). "The evidence of buildings made of wood in Srinagar is corroborated by the huge conflagrations which overtook Srinagar frequently and at times the intensity of the fire was so great that it crossed to the other side of river also, and set it to flames". Easily combustible materials as wood and birch bark used for roofing could only workout such havoc. There is a Siva temple in this locality also presently known as Kathalisvara; Sada Siva temple as alluded to above may be this Dr. Stein has tried to identify this with modern " Purushyar " just below Kutkol. However the shrine of Siva built there on the Ghat is of recent origin and built by public munificence, whereas the temple at Kathul does bear patent marks of antiquity. Moreover, Kalhana writes that this shrine of Sada Siva was in front of Soma Tirtha on the right bank of Vitasta. This Soma Tirtha is definitely the present Kashmiri " Somyar " shrine just close to the second bridge. Both the shrines on the left bank viz Kathlesvara and Purushyar can claim this privilege though not exactly in front but a bit removed from right downstream and upstream respectively. The elevation of Kathul or the Zaindar Mohalla as it is called now, is also comparatively higher than the rest of the city; perhaps it shows that this island between Ksiptika (Kutkol) and Vitasta was intentionally raised to protect the Royal palaces from the ravaging waters of these rivers when in fury, as also furnishing it with a vantage position when attacked.

After this, the Vitasta flows at a much slower pace upto the weir where a lock has been built to control the level of water in the city. Many more Tirthas been located on its banks, but no reference can be found for these, nor any ruins sighted. However, between the 6th and 7th bridge just near the weir to the right Queen Didda (A.D. 980-1003) built the " Didda Matha" called presently "Dedmar" now-a-days. Srivara also refers to this part of the city frequently in his chronicle. "Just in front of the "Didda Math" on the left bank Ksiptika joins Vitasta again having parted with it earlier near the "Gadadhar temple ". However, before we follow the course of Vitasta beyond the weir, it will be pertinent to remove the misnomer that "baths" and hot-water baths were unknown in Kashmir before the Muslim rule. Kalhana has preserved for us copious references regarding "Snariagrhas", "Majjaanavasa" "Snanakosthas" etc in his chronicle. These may be translated as "river baths" and "bathing cells". Presumably the first two were used by male Population and the "Kosthas" individual cells were reserved for ladies. These were built of wood and could be shifted from one Ghat to another. At the time of the "great fire" even these were devoured by the raging flames. The corruption from "Snankoshta" as "Stankuth" is even used to-day in the same context. Ksemendra mentions such baths in his Samaya Matrika much before Kalhana.

Just below the weir one glaring difference becomes patently visible. The right bank of Vitasta changes into marshes being very low and the left bank is considerably higher; within the city both these banks command the same height for understandable reasons as the city is situated on both of these. Some furlongs below from the left bank "Dudganga" joins the Vistata. At this confluence as at every Sangama a Tirtha is essentially located. Bilhana clearly alludes to it." The most renowned Sangama is however located some distance below towards the right when the Sindhu the greatest tributary of the Vitasta meets it at Prayaga.

The "Sindh" comes down from Gangabal lake and enters the Plain at Dugdhasrama - Kashmiri "Dodarhom." The name Uttara Manasa is the name given to this lake by the ancient chroniclers, Kalhana (RajaI-57), HaracaritaCintanmai (Iv-87) and Nilamata (610,970); Haramukuta Ganga Mahatyma also testifies to it. The valley of Sindhu is the modern district of Lar the old "Lahara". At Dodurhom all the various branches of this river meet and also form a veritable river which wending its way towards the west, it reaches the Vitasta quite opposite to the village Shadipur. The "Sindhu" can also mean an ordinary river in Skt, yet " Sindhu" in Kashmir has been equated with "Ganga" in its sanctity and importance. Nilamata, Haracarita Cintamani and Mahatmyas have repeatedly referred to it. Nilamata identifies the Vitasta with the Yamuna and the Sindhu with Ganga the two most famous and holiest rivers

of India. Hence their confluence has also been called Prayaga (Nila-vv 297). It is held in great esteem and respect by the devouts since very ancient times. However, on the evidence of Kalhana we have to believe that the present position of Sangama is not so very ancient. This confluence was artificially engineered by "Suyya" while busy in dredging operations for desilting the Vitasta. This was done under the orders of king Avanti Varman (A.D. 855-883). He further says that at the former confluence the two temples of VishnuSvamin and VainyaSvamin were situated close to Phalapora and Parihasapura, Kashmiri (Paraspura), and the confluence which Suyya contrived near Sundaribhavana the temple of HrsihesaYogasvamin was erected as it was the deity of worship ishtdeva of Suyya.

On the authority of Kalhana himself we know that Parihasapur and Phalapura were the two cities founded by Lalitiditya Muktapida (A.D. 750); we have to assume for relying upon this evidence that the Vitasta at that time flowed near these two cities just below the Uddars on which these are situated and the Sindhu met it there, "The plateau situated with heaps of ruins of which few have been excavated. Barring Buddhist monuments there are purely Hindu structures also visible there." Pt. R.C. Kak has to say further, " crossing the ravine in which nestles the little village of Diwar Yakmanpura and ascending the plateau opposite are seen the immense ruins of two extraordinary large temples; one of them has a peristyle larger than that of the Martanda." This ravine may be the dry bed of the Vitasta now as it flowed then before its course was changed and harnessed by Suyya and the two temples alluded to above may be temples of VisnuSvamin and Vainaysvamin built on these heights. At present at this confluence a small Shivalaya is situated and in mid-stream some distance from the bank, a pedestal of stones is constructed on which a cinar trees has grown. Kalhana specifically mentions that the tree was Vata (fig) and not cinar. It may be concluded that the fig tree could not catch up with the climate of Kashmir and in course of time it withered and in its place the local tree of benign majesty cinar was transplanted in its place as figs are not grown at all in Kashmir. There is also a belief amongst the Hindus here that this cinar has remained stationary in size since it was planted. Some miles below the confluence, the village of Sumbal comes next. This village is now situated on both banks of the river joined by a bridge. However, in those times when the Vitasta was flowing towards the left, the ancient capital of Kashmir Jayapura is situated. The town was founded by king Jayapida in the second half of the eight century.

Somewhat below the present bridge to the left stands the shrine of Nandikesvara alluded to as Nandi Kesava. Close to it a channel from the river goes towards Manas (Saras) lake, now known as Manasbal. This lake is mentioned in Nilamata and Raja Tarangini by Jonaraja A short distance lower the vitasta glides its way through the Wular. This very big lake is named as Mahapadmasaras founded by Maha Padama Naga who is believed to dwell in it as its presiding deity. Nilamata and other older texts relate this fact at length. The name Wular given to this lake nowadays is obviously derived from "Ullola" occurring in Jonaraja's Rajatarangini. In Srikanthacaritam Mahapadama has been equated with "Ullola" by its commentator Jona Raja. Many myths and legends seem to have been woven around this lake in which it has been mentioned that this lake was a very thickly populated town named Candrapura, and through the curse of sage Durvasa was submerged under water.

Many other legends bring in the name of king Visvagasva and a Dravidian magician. From the north via the town of Bandipura, Madhumati stream joins the lake. This stream is mentioned in Nilamata also for its sanctity. However, one thing remains patently clear that the Vitasta while passing through the lake does not altogether lose its identity. Very cautiously it follows the rule of keeping to the left of the lake and a string of water is easily discernible in that vast expanse as that of the Vitasta.

After wading through the waters of the lake, the Vitasta regains her own original stature nearabout Suyyapur modern Sopore. This town now a very flourishing centre of fruit-growing is a standing monument to the engineering acumen, of Suyya who regulated the course of Vitasta in the time of Avanti Varman . This town was founded by the Annapati himself on the reclaimed land after desilting Vitasta. Three miles below Sopore the Vitasta is joined by "Pohur" stream from the right at Doabgah. This name does not appear either in Nilamata or Raja Tarangini when its two tributaries "Mavar" and "Hamli" are distinctly mentioned in Nilamata and Raja Taraiigini as Mahuri and Samala respectively; However jona Raja has referred to it as " Pahra".

Some miles downstream the Vitasta enters the Varahaksetra, and the principal town of this Ksetra is known as Varahamula, Baraniulla of to-day. The name is evidently derived from the ancient, Tirtha of VishnuAdiVaratia near the site of the present Kotitirtha very close to the river bank. This shrine was destroyed by Sikandar Butshikan to which Jona Raja refers explicitly. The town ably was located on the right bank of the river in those times. It has now spread over extensively to the left also eating into the Karewas adjacent to it. In those times a bridge also existed over the Vitasta for come and go from right to left and vice versa. This town also was important from strategic point of view; hence a "Drang" watch-tower was also constructed over there.

Even to-day where the Vitasta narrows down and flows over large boulders which is referred to as "Dvara" by Kalhana the name of the locality is persistently known as "Drang". However, to the left of the bank Turuska king "Huska" built his capital Huskapura, which has survived as "Ushkor" nowadays. It seems that "Huskapura" was more important than the "Varahamulla" in olden times. Kalhana refers to it frequently and kings other than the Indo-Scythian "Haska" also embellished it from time to time. Lalitaditya built a great temple of Vishnu and a Buddhist Vihara there. Ksemagupta spent his last days at the two mathas he had founded at Huskapura.

Kaniska the famous Kushan ruler also founded a city "Kaniskapura" (Now Kanispura) to the left of Vitasta some furlongs above "Ushkhr". Understandably there was much space available for the extension of the city on the left bank rather than on right where it is closely girdled by hills; since the route to "Sarada" also lay through Varahamulla, this town was more of a stopover station than the actual city and consequently was founded on the right bank. Some distance above the gorge in which the Vitasta goes down and rises up again as a river by its own right in the west Pakistan under the name of Jhelum, "Indradvadasi" festival used to be celebrated in ancient times. On this day presents and clothes were given away to the poor. This day is still observed in Kashmir under the same name "Inderbah" on the 12th of the bright half of Bhadrapada but with a difference. It used to be a day of festivities and gaiety, but now this day has been reserved for manes. Shrada is being performed there on the spot which is known as "Kanimaja" Kashmiri Kaniyasi- Mata in Sanskrit. The name as such does not occur in any ancient text even though Indradvadasi is mentioned in the Nilamata. The place has been called as Varahaksetra in general.

The boons accruing from this river are so many that it can be called a veritable Mother; but at this place it becomes smaller in expanse and volume, so it may have been called a smaller Mother. It might be even derived from kan verb meaning to lessen or to reduce in size.

After emerging from the emerald hued spring of Nila at Verinaga, we have followed the course of the Vitasta from Khanbal to Khadanyar. This Khadanyar can be traced from Khadana Vihar built by one of the queens 'Khadana' of king Meghavahana. The Vitasta Mahatmya (xix, 60) refers to this locality as Khadanahara. This journey of eighty miles and odd of this zig-zag river conceals in its bosom the variegated cultural and religious values of the valley. These miles definitely represent the milestones stretching over thousands of years for recording its inflow and outflow; virtue and evil, rise and fall, joys and sorrows of the Kashmiris at large. So it does not seem any exaggeration when Vaisampayana says to janmejaya:

<verses>

"O king, whatever Tirthas exist on this globe are found there (in Kashmir)."

And to elucidate his point he adds:

<verses>

"There (in Kashmir) the springs, ponds and Mountains bestow virtue. There the rivers and streams are very sacred; their shrines are immensely sanctified and likewise the hermitages also. In the midst of which the great spring goddess Vitasta born actually of the Himalayas has sprung up dividing it (Kashmir) like the parting-line of a lady's hair."

7 Panchastavi - A Brief Study

Prof. K. N. Dhar

7.1 Prologue

The compound word 'Panchastavi' in ordinary parlance connotes a collection of devotional hymns divided into five cantos. The very first verse of the first canto remakes it abundantly clear that these panegyrics are essentially meant for the 'Rainbow-hued' Divine Energy comprising the 'speech' and 'resplendence of symbols'. Moreover the whole gamut of Alphabet from AA to Ksa is presided over by this Transcendental Energy; and to speak squarely, it is the progenitor of the sound and sense. At times it has been equated with super-knowledge, bliss and even this whole cosmic world. Moreover, this 'super-marvel' Maha-maya creates and annihilates this world of sound and sense by the triple formula of desire, perception and action. However it is also to be conceded that this poetic work is essentially an allegory in which the mental experience of supreme consciousness has been clothed in the flesh and blood of words to make it appear as physical or concrete. The poet has very candidly referred to this approach in the fifth canto (6th verse). So the 'Benign Motherhood' of that 'Primeval Energy' has become the focal point throughout the pages of this devotional composition.

7.2 Title of the Composition

But this word five pancha or, the original panchan has many other shades of meaning, moreso with the Saiva philosophers, which naturally must have weighed with the poet while giving a name to his composition. So, it will not be out of place here to , allude to those shades contained in the number five, so as to comprehend exactly as to what the poet wants to express by its use. Perhaps this contention presupposes that the devotee-poet has deliberately confined his imagination to five cantos (stavas) only, so as to make it synchronize with other shades of meaning contained in this number.

In 'TantraSadbhava' - a Shaivistic treatise, the Divine Energy has been described as five-fold, panch-mantra gata and also Panch-vidha having five forms. Herein clear reference has been made to the five modes of reciting a Mantra or an incantation with syllabic instants (Kala). These are Ishana with five instants, Tatpurusha with four. Aghora with eight; vamadeva with thirteen and Sadyojata also with eight respectively, making a total of thirty eight, which works out to be the exact number of consonants in the Alphabet.

The school of cognition in the Shaiva-lore takes five as the synonym of five duties which are Abhasan appearance, rakti attachment, Vimarshan scrutiny, Bija source, and avasthananam establishing. These five duties or the stages of perception are also extricable part of the muttering of an incantation Japa-vidhi; hence the reference to mantroddharah delivering an incantation is not without purpose in Panchastavi.

Moreover, this pentad of devotional poems is essentially a treatise on Para-vidya super knowledge, as conceived by the Shaivas. Naturally to spell out its contrast with the negation of knowledge avidya - Ignorance, the poet must have made its five-fold division in his mind. This ignorance comprises tamah - error- Moha - illusion-, Maha-mohah - obduration-, tamisrah -fallacy, and andha mental blindness; copious references throughout the text of Panchastavi for dispelling tamah - error moha - illusion etc. have been made in this context. " Consequently these concomitants of ignorance are to be crossed, so that Super knowledge may dawn which is also called Shuddha Vidya or sad- vidya) by the Shaivas, which can be attained by adopting the course prescribed in Shuddhadhvan - the pure path. The Shaivas also believe that the purusha - the limited individual self has five envelopments of niyati - confinement, Kalah - experience of changes in time, Ragah - attachment, Vidva -limited knowledge and Kala -limited authorship. The cumulative effect of these aberrations produces Maya (obduration) and this can be removed completely by Shuddha vidya, the pure knowledge as alluded to above. Actually Maya obduration, is the name given to non-identity between Shiva and Shakti. So the poet invokes the 'Immanent Mother' Sakala Janani - to emancipate all the living beings from this 'knot of Maya'.

As a corollary to this, having overcome Maya (obduration) the experiencer has to traverse five stages of sad-vidya, assimilative consciousness (Aishvarya). All pervasive conscious-self, Sadakhya, objective conscious self, Shakti tattva predicative manifestation, and Shiva-tattva subjective conscious-self, so as to identify himself with the Parama Shiva (Supreme conscious-self), the acme of Shaiva realization. The Panchastavi-kara (the composer of Panchastavi) has referred to these in very unambiguous terms also."

In addition to these shades of meaning projecting from five, it cannot be gainsaid that it does not connote the body made up of five elements namely Prithvi, solidity. Apas liquidity, Agni (formativity). Vayu (aeriality) and akasha (etheriality). The recitation of an incantation is definitely a mental drill with physiological basis; so the body - the very first expedient for accomplishing Dharma- is an inevitable part of this mental discipline. Hence the poet is at pains to refer to this Vehicle in his eulogies to the Supreme Energy.

Not only this, in several Tantric works, human body is looked upon as Shri Chakra (disc of bountiful Superhuman power) in which the microcosmic angles of the Energy (Shakti) have been detailed as tvak (Skin), asrah (blood), mamsam (flesh), Meda (lymph) and asthi (bones). The macrocosmic angles have also been defined as the five elements, five tanmatras (subtle elements) belonging to Shabda (sound), sparsha (touch), rupa (colour), rasa (flavour), and gandha (smell), five senses, of perception, five senses of action and five pranas. This aspect of SHakti (Energy) has been fully brought out not only by Panchastavi but also by another compilation of panegyrics named Saundarya Lahri (the wave of Beautitude) even. Again the five karnas @ur (generative causes) in Shaiva philosophy are Brahma (the progenitor), Vishnu (the nourisher), Rudra (the annihilator), Sada-Shiva, (perennial & immanent conscious spirit) and Ishvara (the supreme Lord). To this belief the poet has succinctly referred in these eulogisms."

Last but not the least, the Shiva from which the Shaivism derives its name, is supposed to have five faces, Panch-mukha, but it is just a corpse (Shavah), without the union, with Energy (Shakti). This very thought has been expressed by the author in dexterously fine poetry. The Saundarya Lahri begins the devotional praise of the Super-Energy with this belief.

So it has been made abundantly clear that the poet, who composed Panchastavi was an ardent Shaiva and had all these shades of five in his mind, when he deliberately selected this very number, so pregnant with esoteric content, for choosing an apt and befitting title for his imagination concentrated in Panchastavi. It could not have been a mere accident or even a happy coincidence; it was wilfully done by him as a conscious artist and a versatile Shaiva.

In tune with the arguments advanced above, it also seems plausible to assert that Shaivism in essence advocates a happy compromise between materiality (bhoga) and spirituality (Yoga), a rewarding attitude to life, and if that balance is tilted in favour of any of the two, that attitude will get disturbed and may not contribute to the well-being of the humanity at large; so when vamacharah (the left hand ritual of the Tantras) pleaded for the introduction of pancha makara (five Ms); naturally as a healthy reaction to this degenerate Tantric ritual which ran counter to the Shaiva teachings, the poet thought it fit to substitute the five eulogiums for five Ms. This conjecture is substantiated by the dig in undertones he has dealt at such believers in his own composition. The use of the words aparey and budhah are significant here. Budhah (the wise, enlightened) call this super-Energy as transcendental (akulam); in contrast with this aparey (others), not enlightened or wise call Her Kaulam personifying Kaulacharah.

7.3 Nomenclature of Cantos

Furthermore, the poet has captioned each canto with a sub-title. Herein also these subtitles have been used not haphazardly but with a purpose.

First Canto: The first canto bears the sub-title Laghu (insignificant or light). In the penultimate verse of this chapter, the poet has justified the use of this word and hinted at his insignificance laghustvatmani for undertaking such a lofty yet burdensome task for analysing the Super-Energy. However, also, it seems

that he has tried to play on the word 'Laghu' and in keeping with the Shaivistic tradition tried to keep it occult rahasya sampradayah. As the word discussion has many other meanings also we have to glean any such out of these, which is in consonance with what has been described in this canto.

Without mincing words, it may be said that this canto tries to define, explain and emphasize the purport contained in the aphorism ' Vidya shariratta mantra rahsyam. "The occult power of an incantation is its efficacy to strike identity between the sound and its symbol. " Vidya has been described as nothing other than the symbols (matrika) of the alphabet. Hence the 'origin of letters' and their method of grouping into an incantation and the consequent mode of recitation has been fully dealt with in this canto. This very knowledge of letters has been treated as a fond Mother granting each and every boon to her children. These sounds and symbols (nada, Bindu) emanate from the Muladhara where these are coiled together like a Kundalini - the coiled serpent and traversing twelve stations (dwadash-dalam) approaches the Brahma-randra and then its return or descent into the Kanda or Muladhara begins and it again lies dormant there. The poet, while describing this terse and yet intricate discipline of the breath is alive to the fact that it may not be taken kindly to by the prospective realizers; they might feel diffident to practise this course which seemingly appears guru (weighty, difficult); hence to make it popular and banish all the scare from the minds of the devotees, he has captioned this chapter as Laghu (very light, easy to comprehend). Some say that it is the composition of a devotee named Laghu Bhattaraka, hence the sub-title Laghustava will mean a panegyric composed by Laghu, a diminutive from Laghu Bhattaraka.

Second Canto: The second canto, is known as charchastava (the panegyric containing careful study or reflection). Herein the attributes of the Divine Mother (Energy) in cosmic form have been fully described. She is also invoked to cut the shackles of birth and rebirth, and to release the devotee from the prison (bondage) of his body. This canto gives in detail the immanent form of the Super-Energy, whereas the first brought into bold relief Her Vishvotteerna transcendental form.

Third Canto: The third canto bears the title gatastavah. Gatah is patently derived from Ghat verb meaning to unite, to join or, bring together. Herein the ghatnam or sanghatnam (union) of Shiva and Shakti is complete. The impersonal as described in the first and the personal in the second cantos respectively get fully immersed in each other in this canto just like the water and its container (Ghatah). This coincides with the paraparadasha or bhedabheda vimarshanatmakta (complete identity) for which sadyidya (the perennial and pure knowledge) is also a synonym. Hence the third canto deals with this aspect of knowledge. The Ghatah (pitcher) is looked upon as the body metaphysically by the Yogis and the water inside it is taken to be the soul (Atman). The body of the alphabet (Vidyasharira) has been profusely mentioned in the first Canto, the second locates its soul and the third marks their auspicious blending, hence the use of the word ghatah or the verb ghat. So the poet jeers at those fools who torment their body with various kinds of penance or make themselves paupers by spending lavishly on Yajnas (sacrificial fires) and liberal remunerations. The realizer attaining this stage has not to bother himself with these fruitless rituals. This very union between the sound and the symbol, para (higher) and apara (lower), the immanent and the transcendental. Shiva and the Shakti, Bheda (duality) and abheda (identity) has been very beautifully alluded to by the poet while addressing the Supreme Energy as 'Shabda Brahmamayi'.

Fourth Canto: The fourth canto is called Amba Stavah, a panegyric eulogizing the Mother. The word Amba is to be read in the context of Jyeshtha and Raudri. While discussing the origin of letters, the 'Tantra Sadbhava' has to say that Raudri the terrible, on account of the agitation it produces, is the first stage of a letter being conceived. Jyeshtha-'the elderly or prominent' indicates its form being taken, and Amba is the final sound which comes at the tip of the tongue. Hence it is established beyond doubt that embryonic and formative stages of a letter having been described at length in the previous chapters, the fullfledged word having taken shape and being pronounced singly or is a part of an incantation is actually the Amba. This word also means a mother like matrika, hence may also mean vidya Super-knowledge as corroborated by the poet himself in the very first verse of this chapter. Herein, consequently the praises of Vidya have been sung which has been naturally equated with Shakti (energy) without which Shiva is a non-entity (asamartha). So, this Amba (Mother) is the real generative power in nature or man ; bereft of Her, this world would look desolate. Moreover, only when Her two lotus - feet are enshrined in the of

hearts people, the puzzling din and strife of obstinacy, argument and counter-argument will cease. In the last verse the poet prepares the ground for captioning the penultimate chapter as 'sakala janani stava' by invoking Her as sakala bhuvana mata (Mother of all the worlds - inanimate or animate) with Her protruding breasts ebbing with the milk of human kindness.

Fifth Canto: Sakala (entire or whole) can be expounded in more than one way. It may mean, along with other parts, digits or full, such as sakalaindu (the full moon). It might also connote in the language of Shaivas as sayenjan (with consonants) as against nishkala (avyenjan without consonants one of the methods of japa muttering an incantation. It might also indicate the medial sounds or letters of the incantation with sakala japa vidhih the method of muttering with consonants. The latter part of the compound Janani (Compassionate Mother) makes it more clear and all the same unambiguous. Actually this chapter is devoted to the propitiation of the 'Universal Mother' Jagatmata; and this Universal Mother is maha vidya Super knowledge being beyond speech and argument. This all-pervading Mother represents in Her ownself attributes of creation, sustenance and annihilation, as also the over-lordship and the super-knowledge, thereby exhibiting diversity, out of unity. She showers supreme bliss on those, who take pains to know Her in essence.

7.4 Precise import of Tripurasundari

Before proceeding further it seems pertinent to explain the content of Tripura or Tripura Sundari personifying the 'Divine Energy' and repeatedly used by the poet in all the cantos.

tri denotes number three and *pura* means among other things, the body also. The word thus literally will indicate any such woman who has three bodies (tripura) or who represents in herself the beauty of three worlds (whole cosmos). Perhaps to facilitate the exact comprehension of this word, the poet, on his own, has advanced reasons for calling this 'Divine Energy' as Tripura. After enumerating the triple form of gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra), fire (household, sacrificial and of pyre), energies (desire, perception and action), basic vowels, worlds (Bhur, Bhuvah and Svah), Vedas (Rig, Yajus and sama) and other cosmic manifestations, he very convincingly tries to establish that this threefold division is actually an extension of the essence of the Divine Energy, consequently called Tripura. Shaivistic lore confirms this view of the poet, 'Prapanchasara' asserts that 'Ambika' is named as Tripura because of its accent on the three basic vowels. 'Tripurarnava' lays down that the Energy residing in 'Sushumna, pingala and Ida'-Blood Vessels-as also in the mind, intellect and soul is called Tripura. 'Kalika Purana' says since everything is threefold, so she (Divine, Energy) is called Tripura. 'Vamakeshvara -Tantra' believes that Tripura is threefold in the form of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and also personifies in Herself the three powers of desire, perception and action. 'Varaha Purana' also explains the name on those very lines. Hence the word Tripura is actually the manifestation of triple power of the super-Energy-Raudri, Jyeshtha and Amba-the birth of a letter from the embryo to the actual pronunciation. Letter is an indissoluble part of an incantation, hence the poet feels that Tripura Sundari on being discerned by physical eyes or through mastering a Mantra (mentally) dispells sins and mitigates the fear of death.

Hindu genius has all along provided form (Vyakt BERTE) to the formless (Avyakta), not because it believes that 'Divine Energy' can have any form, but with the sole motive of making that abstract Entity look like a concrete object, especially in human form, so as to make it more acceptable and intelligible to the general masses. To make this approach more impressive and effective the image of the Mother came in handy for them. "An unworthy son may be born, but there can never be a bad- Mother." This attitude is at the root of the Mother- worship so popular with the Hindus. In this way also the so called polytheism grew out of the monotheist. Even in the hoary times of Vedas the seer was constrained to remark "Ekam hi sadvipra bahuda vadanti "The Reality being one is interpreted in many ways." On the same analogy the poet-devotee of panchastavi has provided all the human attributes to Her, and yet made her look superhuman. Hence Tripura in essence being an abstract feeling of mind, has been painted in words pulsating with undivided devotion as a 'Loving Mother'; such discipline of mind is a mental experience beyond the domain of physical words. This discipline will remain incomplete, if the mention of the

common belief is not made that Tripura is the consort of Tripurari (shiva). Propitiation of Tripura is still performed in Kashmir especially by a sect of Kashmiri Pandits, known as Tikus, presumably a Kashmiri rendering of trik.

7.5 The name of the Composer

Unfortunately for us, the poet has maintained sphinx-like silence about his name, time or lineage throughout the length and breadth of his versified composition. However strange it might seem, but it is all the same true about many Sanskrit authors of repute. Even Kalidasa, the prince among poets has been also reticent about himself. Barring a few authors like Bilhana and Ksemendra, the date and name of whole galaxy of Sanskrit luminaries of Kashmir is still a matter of research. In the Shaivistic literature only Abhinavagupta has given his brief biographical sketch and some dates in one of his stotaras devotional panegyrics. Herein his versatility has to be thanked, otherwise the Hindu attitude of mind by and large feels shy of publicity more so, of self-advertisement.

In 1917 A. D. T. Ganapati Shastri brought out an edition of the first chapter of Panchastavi naming it as Laghustuti with the Sanskrit commentary of one Raghvananda. On the authority of the commentator he put down the name of the poet as Laghu Bhattaraka:

<verses>

However, he has also referred to another commentary on the same treatise which to quote him is very voluminous and consists of nearly two thousand verses by some Parameshwaracharya. This commentary is not still out, hence nothing can be said about it. Had this commentary been made available after getting it printed, who knows many knotty problems would have been solved. In his introduction the learned Shastri has not referred to Panchastavi at all, and has, for all practical purposes, thought these 21 verses to be an independent work, and not the first canto of Panchastavi. Curiously enough the commentator Raghvananda also has not made the mention of Panchastavi or its other cantos even once directly or indirectly. This intriguing silence poses many questions which deserve plausible answers. Firstly, it seems that Panchastavi as a whole is unknown in the south and only its first chapter has gained currency there. Therein also the original Stava has been substituted by Stuti even though both mean the same thing. Moreover, it is thought to be a Composition of some Laghu Bhattaraka.

It is very well known that Shaivism of the south is predominantly dualistic in content. Madhvacharya (A.D. 1199-1276) has described: ' Shaiva Darshan ' as, a, dualistic system, which is fundamentally at variance with the Monistic system which thrived only in Kashmir. Nimbarka (A. D. 1162) emphasizes that it is from duality bheda that non-duality abheda can be realized. In the Tantric literature a clear division has been made on the basis of duality and non- duality; hence the Tantras like Kamaja, Yogaja, etc. numbering ten have been ascribed to the dualistic school of Shaivism. Therefore it seems surprising that a composition like this advocating non-duality should come from the south. As will be made clear lateral Panchastavi as a whole, beyond any doubt, breathes an air of being composed in Kashmir, and to crown all, by a Kashmiri author. Hence it seems plausible to surmise that the text of only one canto was commented upon by Raghvananda for propounding a faith which would have raised many eyebrows there. If we contend that the other four cantos were lost, it will not be tenable in the face of his not referring to any one of these in his commentary. For fear of being misinterpreted and also misunderstood, he stopped at the conclusion of the first chapter. Perhaps this will also solve the puzzle of substituting Stutih for Stava by him. Even though both these words mean the same thing, yet in usual practice Stava is a collection of stutih; Had he used the original Stavah he would have then betrayed the knowledge of other Stavahs also. Hence he changed the word to Stutih without impairing its connotation as in the original, and also thereby implied that he knew nothing about other cantos. Our poet has used the Stutih (praise) in the same context, which confirms our belief in the rightness of this conjecture. Raghvananda wanted it to look like an independent and single Stutih (praise) of the 'Supreme Energy' like 'Saundarya Lahri' or Bhairavastuti of Abhinava Gupta.

Bhattaraka or Bhattara is an appellation of respect or esteem joined with the names of either very learned Brahmins or Kings, its diminutive Bhattah still survives as a generic name for Kashmiri Pandits. In south no such practice is in vogue perhaps with the exception of Kumarilla Bhatta; so Laghu Bhattaraka seems also to be a Kashmiri Brahmin; 'Laghu' taken as an adjective would mean 'quick witted' or one who was so proficient as to give the minutest details Laghava (noun) about the Supreme Energy. Hence it can not be the actual name of the author but a commendatory epithet used by the commentator for his erudition and devotion. On the analogy of *raiyauhabhedah* (Panini's diction in his sutras) it strikes as the name of the commentator itself *laghava* becoming *Raghava*. Hence we come to the conclusion that the commentator did not know the real name of the poet and to be on the safe side ascribed it to a quick-witted Kashmiri Brahmin Laghu - Bhattarka and thereby inserted his name also with it.

Lakshmi Dhara in his commentary on - Saundarya Lahri while quoting from Panchastavi has referred to its author as an 'Acharya' generally, but in one case has referred to Kalidasa particularly also in this context. However, we can authoritatively say that he is not the famous Kalidasa of Raghuvarnsha or Shakuntala repute. It might mean "A votary of Kali," some Acharya who was a devotee of Kali is perhaps meant by him.

In some manuscripts in the possession of the Kashmir Government Research Library the name of the author has been given as Laghavacharya, and in some as Acharya Prithvi Dhara, disciple of Shambhunatha. In one Ms the name of the poet has been written as Shri Ramchandracharya. Kashmiri tradition ascribes it to Abhinava Gupta. In the quoted verses from Panchastavi used by commentators of 'Vidyarnava' and 'Saubhagya Ratnakara' the author has been mentioned as Dharmacharyah. Nityananda, the commentator of Tripura Mahimastotra also corroborates the same view. Harabhatta Shastri, the reputed local scholar also has taken Dharmacharyah to be its author.

The very fact that there is no unanimity of views about the authorship of Panchastavi leads us easily to think that actually the author has wanted to remain anonymous to which view the last verse of the first canto also subscribes. The use of *Laghustvatmani* (insignificance of his own self) debars him to proclaim his name. This is the zenith of humility and knowledge has been acclaimed as the giver of the same. As to the names Acharya, Kalidasa and Dharmacharyah, we may say that actually these are not the proper names but assumed ones. Acharya may mean a preceptor and Dharmacharyah accordingly indicates a preceptor of Dharma, here Shaiva Dharmah ostensibly. At times even scribes when not finding the name of the author therein, may have put in their name in his stead. In the absence of any indisputable and authentic evidence, we are forced to conclude that the authorship of Panchastavi is an unresolved mystery.

7.6 Date of Composition

Panchastavi is the quintessence of Tantric scriptures of non-dualistic school. The earliest extant reference to its verses used as quotations are found in the Saraswati Kanthabharana of King Bhoja. The probable date of the composition of Saraswati Kanthabharan is between 1030-1040 A. D. Hence Panchastavi must have been composed much earlier to it; by the time of Bhoja its poetic merit (leaving devotional apart) must have been established on firm footing, only then it could deserve a place in this work on poetics. Moreover Saundarya Lahri whose authorship is ascribed to Shankaracharya, does in a way, treat the same thought as couched in the Panchastavi.

For this very reason Lakshmi Dhara has quoted profusely from it. It is very difficult to say as to which composition of these two is earlier; in other words, what debt they owe to each other is a subject of profound research. However it can be said without any fear of contradiction that the subject matter of these two compositions being similar, as also the phrase and idiom at many places, both these might have been composed at the same time when the devotional climate in Kashmir was vibrating with 'Shaivistic Monism'. It is also believed that Shankaracharya was converted to this line of thinking during his sojourn in Kashmir. Local tradition of Kashmir also confirms it. Shankara's date has been fixed between 788-820 A.D. So it seems probable that Panchastavi was also composed during this period, Even if it may be

argued that Panchastavi is posterior to Saundar Lahari, still it could not have been composed by after 1030-1050 A.D. in any case. The upper limit may be fixed at 788-820 A.D. Shankara's visit to Kashmir and consequently composing Saundarya Lahari by him, and the lowest limit is furnished by the date of Bhoja's treatise on poetics (Saraswati Kanthabharna) i.e. 1030-1050 A.D. During this Span of period out poet's composition must have seen the light of the day. So in all fairness to the author, it may be concluded that Panchastavi must have been composed in the latter half of ninth century and by the time of Bhoja its verses had attained sufficient fame and credence for being included in his work.

7.7 Common authorship of five Cantos

One more point deserves consideration before we conclude this brief study, whether this is the work of one and the same author, who-so-ever, he might have been. On the strength of the internal evidence as well as the external, we have to answer this query in affirmative. The data available to us from the internal evidence conclusively points towards this hypothesis. Besides the astounding similarities of phrase and idiom and even repetition of words, the reference made to Vatsa Raja Udyana who was blessed with plenty and opulence by the Divine Mother, in more than one cantos, corroborates this view. Not only this, in the second factual reference there is mention of a famous Kashmiri king Pravarsena also, who, has been equated with king Udyana. The use of api (also) in the verse itself makes this inference obvious. The king Udyana as also the "Pravara" (Pravarsena) is the correct translation and not 'Udyana pravara' or very esteemed Udyana. Pravara herein is not a qualifying adjective of Udyana, but a noun, name of another king Pravarsena, the use of api (also) can be justified only then, otherwise it seems redundant. The translation thus would be 'king Udyana' (as referred to already in I-12 but also Pravarsena (api) which agrees with the singular sah in the third line, otherwise should have been tau (these two). In this verse, therefore explicit reference to Udyana has been made. Pravarsena has been obviously mentioned explicitly. If the poet had meant to refer to Udyana again, he could not have escaped the blemish of repetition and as such his verses could not have been cited as examples by rhetoricians like Bhoja and Mammata.

Taking this suggestive import into account, we can easily identify as to which Pravarsena is meant by the poet, as Kalhana has given two kings of this name in his Rajatarangini. It seems Pravarsena II (590 A.D. roughly), who was a great warrior and an ardent believer like vatsa Raja Udyana. In Kalhana's own words: "He founded the city of Pravarpura on the outskirts of Sharika Parbat, which formed the centre of the new city". This Sharika Parbat, now known as Hari Parbat is regarded as the abode of the Goddess. So the cause of establishing the capital around Sharika Parbat is not far to seek. Being the recipient of favours from the Goddess he wanted to remain permanently under the canopy of Her feet literally. Moreover, verses not only from the I and V cantos, but from II, III and IV have also been quoted by later writers, this fact beyond any doubt establishes that these were the product of a single poet's imagination.

7.8 His Kashmiri Origin

He was a Kashmiri by birth needs no further elucidation. The monistic Shaivism was founded and propagated only here. It could not catch up with other schools of this philosophy, more especially in the south. This poetic composition is found as a whole in Kashmir alone, and from very remote times its verses are on the tongue of the Kashmiri Brahmins. In this connection reference to purely Kashmiri herbs like trupsi also points eloquently towards this conclusion. Moreso, reference to Pravarsena discussed earlier, also substantiates this view. Reference to Udyana in this respect is not so important, as he has been an ideal with most of the Sanskrit poets and Dramatists for his amors, exploits and bravery. Pravarsena is known only to Kashmiris; Kashmiri scholars have often referred to him, but no mention of him has been made anywhere in Sanskrit literature outside Kashmir. Tripura Pooja is exclusively carried on here without any break from times immemorial. Tripura worship outside Kashmir does not seem to be

popular, even Tantriks over there have chosen kali as their Tutelar Deity (Isht Devi). Only the Brahmins of this place persist with this name of the Goddess.

7.9 Epilogue

In the end, it looks quite appropriate to invoke the 'Supreme Energy' in the words of the poet himself who is bold enough like other true Shaivas of Kashmir to announce that caste restriction is no bar to Her propitiation; but only the steadfast intellect and unflinching faith overcomes any impediments whatsoever, ushering in a span of material opulence and spiritual ascendancy for the devotee.

In this context it will be of interest to note here that the charisma of 'Shakti' worship here in Kashmir, prompted 'Adi- Shankaracharya' to pay this tribute to Her immanence and transcendence:

"Oh Youthful Spouse of Shiva, Thou art Mind, Ether, Air, Fire, Water, Earth and dost thereby transform Thyself into the universe. Nevertheless there is nothing beyond Thee. By Thy play Thou dost manifest Thy consciousness and Bliss in the body of the universe."

8 Concept of "Maya"

Vedantic and Shaivistic points of view

Prof. K. N. Dhar

At the very outset, it may be said without any fear of contradiction, that in philosophy unalloyed originality is a misnomer. It is actually the sum total of the thinking on a particular subject, collated, coordinated and brought uptodate by the stalwarts in this field. It would, therefore, be in the fitness of things to give a bird's eye-view of the philosophic content supposed to emanate from the word 'Maya', as discussed in the various schools of philosophy in India, which has rightly been taken as the raw material on which the Vedantins and Kashmiri shaivites built their lofty edifices later on.

In the earlier Vedas-the first book of Humanity-'Maya' has been used in the sense of supernatural or extraordinary prowess attributed to the pantheon of gods. In more ancient Vedic hymns it is praised as 'world sustaining power'. But the later Vedic literature comprising the upanishadic lore, it began to convey the sense of illusion, though in subdued tones. So, this philosophic content relating to this word, had already been spelt out in the time of upanishadas. The later philosophic treatises in the classical age of Sanskrit must have taken a cue from the meaning attached to this word in the upanishadas and have remarkably kept its intonation in tact. The succeeding philosophies tried to provide the why and what of this kind of import projecting from this word.

The logical Realism (Nyaya) of Gautama a virtual reaction against Buddhist scepticism has no concern for this word 'Maya', but substitutes it with the appellations Doubt (Sanshaya), fallacy (Hetuvabhasa) and Error (Mithya Jnana). To speak precisely, doubt is wavering knowledge, Fallacy is inconclusive knowledge and Error is defective knowledge. All these three attributes of knowledge definitely provide the base on which the superstructure of 'Maya' was installed later on.

Atomistic pluralism (Vaisheshika) of Kanada propounds the theory of (Abhava) with respect to Maya. It is that very attitude of *Neti Neti* (negation), on the contours of which vedantins later on elaborated their theory of Maya. This negation (Abhava) is an antithesis of affirmation (Bhava), absence of distinction between the two - The Existent and the non-existent and the result is Error (Moha), blurred perception.

The originator of Sankhya system of philosophy Kapila substitutes Maya with the avidya (ignorance) aspect of intellect (Buddhi). It has been explained as non-distinction of 'Purusha' from Buddhi called 'Akhyati' (non-apprehension). To quote:-

"Just as a danceuse retires after displaying her dance to the audience; in the same way, Prakriti (gross matter) manifests herself to the purusha (passive spirit) retiring subsequently." This non- apprehension of 'Sankhya' is actually the precursor of Maya.

Patanjali in his yoga-sutras asserts "when the persons possessing a body mistake by their erring intellect, this very body for the soul (Atman), this kind of bondage is wrought by ignorance (Avidya); its annihilation is emancipation (Moksa)." While Sankhya calls it non-apprehension, yoga terms it as mis-apprehension (Anyatha- khyati), which can be substantiated by misapprehending one-the rope from the other-the snake, due to the machinations of ignorance (Avidya).

The ardent advocate of Mimamsa Philosophy Jaimini contends that it is not non-distinction alone which engenders misapprehension, it is also attended with false identification (Akhyati), thereby erroneously inferring non-distinction between the broken piece of a conch-shell and silver. In this context, this school of philosophy holds that it is mal-observation coupled with faulty remembrance giving birth to this invalid cognition. It further argues that misapprehension is not a product of wrong knowledge, but a mere negative factor of non-perception due to weakness of mind. When the valid cognition dawns, it restores the strength of mind and misapprehensions do not recur. This is the exact purport of Akhyati theory of these investigating rationalists (Mimamsakas). Interestingly enough, Badarayana composed his Brahma-sutras getting inspiration from one of the branches of this system of philosophy called posterior mimamsa (uttara Mimamsa), commonly known as vedanta-sutras also.

It will be intriguing to note that none of the philosophic systems enumerated above have used the word 'Mayas' as such, even though they have lucidly narrated its essence and antecedents. They have refrained from using the exact appellation 'Maya', but have substituted it by 'sanshaya' (Doubt), 'Mithya Jnana' (Error), 'Abbava' (Negation), 'Avidya' (Ignorance) and 'Akhyati' (Non-discrimination), representing all those constituents of 'Maya' discussed thread-bare by the vedantins and shaivas alike subsequently.

Gauda Pada while commenting on the Vedanta or Brahma-sutras of Badarayana, has used this word 'Maya' for the first time in the classical period of Sanskrit literature.

He has vehemently laid down that Maya is unreal because it advocates duality as between the Jiva (soul) and the Brahma (Absolute Truth). This is like a dream seemingly looking real but inherently unreal. Just as in darkness the rope is imagined to be a snake, in the same way, the self is also imagined by its own illusion as having many forms. Actually in that state of existence there is no production (utpati) or no annihilation (Nirodha). To sum up, the imagination being unreal, finds itself realized in the non-existent existents. The objects are neither different nor non-different (Na Naredam... na prathak, naprathak); the sages have perceived it as devoid of imagination and cessation of all false appearance (Nirvikapla prapanchopashamah). The absolute truth (sat) is immortal, beyond the pale of birth and death, therefore it can not admit of any change by its own nature (svabhava), it is therefore, indivisible. All objects as they appear to us are likened to a magical or illusory elephant (Maya hasti), as it exists only or appears to us existing only with relation to experience. Hence, it is the experience which bestows on it the characteristics of birth, death etc. To quote: "By the nature of a thing is understood that which is its very condition, that which is inborn, that which is not accidental or that which does not cease to be itself." Gaudapada treats life as a waking dream, and contends that world exists only in the mind of Man. "The world of duality is mere Maya, the Real being the non dual" (Mayamatramidam Dvaitam, Adavaitam Paramarathatah). Just as sunlight falling on the finger appears straight when finger is straight and crooked when it is crooked, but in reality it is neither the one nor the other. It is as space in vessels seems to move when these are moved but in reality remain motionless; just as the sun does not quiver when its reflection quivers in the water, so the non-dual Atman is one and changeless (Avikari) in essence, but seems diverse through the association with objects (Visaya)- a trick manipulated by Maya; therefore, Maya according to Gaudapada is the faulty representation of transcendental consciousness into cosmic experience. When the unifying balance between the consciousness Absolute in personified Atman and the experience condensed as in Jiva is disturbed, it is said to be the sorcery of Maya. The Brahma and Jiva are not parallel entities, forms and names, or transforms itself into the world; this kind of they are congruent. The jagat or samsara - world of objects is transitory, it comes and goes, so the pleasure and pain. It is actually non-existent (Mithya), the ever-existent (Satyam) is only Brahma. When mental experiences appear as real, Maya is thought to have unleashed its jugglery.

However, it was left to Adi Shankaracharya to condense and re-interpret the content given in Brahma Sutras and Gauda Pada Karika and furnish a firm footing on which the Vedantic philosophy could survive triumphantly unaffected by other schools of Indian thought. Even though a host of commentaries is available on the Vedanta-Sutra, yet the 'Shankara Bhashya' is the tallest of them all. Hence, it should not seem surprising that vedanta and Shankaracharya have become synonymous. His is the last word on this branch of Indian philosophy.

As regards Maya Shankar's premise is that it is an antithesis of Brahma because of being inextricably connected with the world (Jagat). Brahma is real (Satyam) while world is transitory or unreal (Mithya). It is definitely part and parcel of Brahma-the very basis of creation. As nothing can be created out of a vacuum, in the same way Brahma being the only eternal entity, the world does emerge out of it only. At this stage Ignorance (Avidya) intervenes to confuse the human mind and intellect by mistaking the Finite form of Brahma with its Infinite form. Therefore, ignorance is the progenitor of Maya (Illusion), unreal seeming as real. "Since Maya is deceptive in character, it is called 'Avidya' or false knowledge, it is not mere absence of apprehension but positive error." Toys and pots made of clay, though bearing different names and shapes from each other, are nothing but clay; similarly this 'Maya' through 'Avidya' gives rise to plurality without scanning the inherent unity. When Brahma projects itself into myriad forms and

names, or transforms itself into the world; this kind of activity inherently of Brahma is called Ishwara with relation to the world and the power to procreate is alluded to as Prakriti. (Ishwarsya MayaShaktih Prakriti). Therefore Maya is the energy of Ishwara, His inherent force by which He transforms the potential into the actual world." It has no separate identity, it is in Ishwara as heat in fire. Maya through the machinations of false knowledge (Avidya) or erroneous perception (Mithya Jnana) exhibits its modus operandi (Vyapara) in two ways of concealment (Avarna) and misrepresentation (Viksepa). It hides the truth and at the same time mis-represents it. To conclude, it would be pertinent to quote from Shankara direct :-

"As the magician is not affected by the illusion (Maya) he has himself created, because it is without reality (Avastu), so also Paramatman is not affected by the illusion of a dream because the soul is not touched by sleep or waking." The ever- erring factor which disturbs the mental and psychic equilibrium between the creator and his creation is Maya. Such mental aberrations have relation to time and space and in their context unity is regarded as plurality, heterogeneity as homogeneity. This is in brief the content of Maya as enunciated by Shankara.

Monistic Shaivism of Kashmir has the 'Shiva-Sutra' of Acharya Vasugupta as its sheet-anchor. This shaivite scholar has defined Maya as:

'Kaladinama Tattvanam aviveko Maya.'

Non-discrimination of the limited elements of authorship (kala) etc is Maya.

Non-discrimination (Aviveka) has been explained by its commentator KshemaRaja as follows: "Paramartha Svarupasya Aprathana Svabhavah." The nature of non-projection of the highest form of Truth.

This would clearly denote that the stage of non-projecting or non-extending of the supreme spirit is 'Maya'. In other words, it would connote the inability of the supreme consciousness (Samvit) to transfer its consciousness to the objects around. This kind of non-perception and subsequent non-identification between the self (Atman) and the objects (Padartha) will precisely convey the purport of Maya in shaivistic thought: shaivism has treated maya as shakti (Energy), even the primeval Energy or Nature (Mula Prakriti). It is identical with the immanent form of Shiva; His transcendental form is unaffected by it.

Actually Maya is revealed in the Pashu (animal) stage of the Atman fettered by the impurities of action and perception, called the impurities of Maya (Mayiya Mallah). On the path of self-realization (Chaitanyam), it is to be contended with at the initial stage when the Jiva is bound by impurities (Pasha Badha) and when he is dispossessed of these fetters (Pashamukto), he becomes Shiva. So, the Maya is an ephemereal mental aberration between Jiva and Shiva, a stage between the Pasha-baddho (Animal) and Pasha-Mukto (Subliminal) mental states, fleeting of course. It is in flux and flow as long as Jiva is possessed by non-discrimination (Aviveka); once this veil is shattered, it takes to heels. It can no longer seduce Jiva into wrong thinking even though being a seductress (Vimohini). Hence, it is devoid of permanency. It is actually a passing phase at which uniform essence of creation is presented in multiform, one seeming many. To speak briefly, when one primordial force is seen in multiplicity through faulty mental projection, it is said to be the working of Maya according to Shaivas; but at the same time its influence is far from being permanent, it is transitory and persists only till the time the 'Sadhaka' or the realizer is at a distance, or even at a discount from self-realization. It is more or less the immanent (Vishvarnaya) form of Transcendental Shiva (Vishvateerna), and inalienable ingredient of His self-conscious spirit. This very approach of shaivas marks their fundamental difference with the vedantists. The shaivas take Maya as an inevitable aspect of Shiva when releasing His shakti (Energy) from His fountain-head. Even though He is universe incarnate (Vishvarupa), yet He feels the urgency of creating a universe, so that His shakti (Energy) can have full play. This Maya is called a veritable screen which conceals the real form of things (Tirodhanankari) deluding us into believing the multiform of universe, which in essence is uniform. The moment, the realizer through his perceptive cognition (jnana), takes the blue (neela) and the yellow (peela) as one, and only one entity, the Maya stops her machinations.

Therefore shaivas treat Maya as not as unreal but momentary. As against it, the vedantists proclaim that Maya is unreal (Ayathartha), coinciding squarely with their thesis that universe is unreal (Jagat Mithya). Shaiva scholars are at pains to argue that this whole creation is a reflection (Abhasa) of the Super-self which is real, omnipotent and self-dependent (Svatantra): therefore, the relation between the world of appearance (Vishvamaya) and that of Transcendence (Vishvoterna) is that of the reflected object and the reflector. If the reflector is real, how can an object, its reflection, be unreal; since the reflected object has no separate entity from its reflector. Hence Maya has to fulfill her role in transmuting transcendence into immanence. It is thus a veritable hide and seek between the primordial and subliminal aspects of the same force which is Shiva. Vedantins taking Maya as a perennial deluding force, treat this world as unreal, illusory, but shaivas do not subscribe to this view. As argued earlier, they take this world as real-an image of superconsciousness (Chaitaynam) which to all intents and purposes is self-dependence (Svatantrva) incarnate. Hence shaivas invoke Maya as the progenitor of the world of objects as a whole (Sakala Janani), or as Casual Matrix (Amba). The attitude of shaivas towards the concept of Maya is positive, affirmative in the sense that as long as the equation between shiva and shakti is disturbed, it has to be there. As against this, the vedantins treat Maya as negation of vidya (Avidya). The inherent ignorance of jiva makes it also a permanent affair with him; As long as 'Jiva' is a part of deluding universe, he cannot get rid of it, he can not be emancipated. Shaivas contend that a realizer can attain emancipation while living (Jivanmuktavastha) in this world, that is when his coalition (Jnana) is complete and does not waver in seeming diversity around him, he can attain bliss of unity, being in perfect health, mentally as well as physically. The line of thinking adopted by vedantins is that life being false needs to be abjured, while shaivas treat enjoying life (Bhoga) as a preamble to meaningful renunciation (Yoga). In this context Abbinavagupta has asserted emphatically that this world is essentially Truth. Therefore, in vedantic school of philosophy we come across with a galaxy of ascetics having renounced all earthly concerns (Sanyasins), but in shaivism we are confronted with spiritual guides (Acharyas) who have owned life and also have risen above it; with them matter is as important as the spirit. These are rather complementary to each other; hence they are averse to caste taboos and kitchen puritanism. Their approach is, to speak in nutshell, psychic and not intellectual like those of the vedantins. They had their eyes wide-awake and could even anticipate the demands, the vagaries of mind would make on human intellect later. They provided the panacea in advance in terms of their emancipated and more healthy outlook, so that human mind does not get derailed into nihilism in future. In the context of changing time and consequent outlook, shaivas do possess an edge over all other Indian schools of philosophy; Maya, with them is therefore a fleeting psychic experience, as long as 'Self-Dependence' (svatantrya) is at an arm's length. As soon as this kind of diversity (Bheda) is dismantled by the awakening of spirit (Chaitanya), such enveloping clouds, prone to error, meet away through the effulgence of spirit; The realizer does attain shivahood being dispossessed of such obdurate shackles as the Maya is called. At this pinnacle of spiritual bliss (Paramananda), the confusion between duality (Bheda) and Non-Duality (Abheda), manifested (Kula) or unmanifested (Akula), ceases permanently.

Vedanta preaches equipoise and tranquility of mind labelling it as Bliss (Ananda). This is mental bliss related to thinking (Bhauda) which is limited in essence. Hence, they have indulged in hair splitting argumentation. Their approach is, therefore, intellectual.

Distance between the intellect and the spirit does also mark the frontiers between the vedanta and shaivism. Vedantists lay emphasis on mental Ascendancy, while shaivas advocate vehemently spiritual Transcendence. The conception of Maya as illustrated by these two schools of Indian philosophy hinges obviously on their respective approaches.

Shaivism is a philosophy is more realistic and universal than the Vedanta, in is much as, it has made a happy amalgam of the prevailing Shakta and Tantric beliefs in vogue in Kashmir then; whereas vedanta is idealistic in approach and self-contained in content, thereby meant for only those who are intellectually more advanced-the elite-so to say. Common folk with common-place intellect have been by-passed, since they can not comprehend the exact essence of the brain-racking intellectual gymnastics indulged in by the towering giants of vedanta philosophy. Hence the conception of Maya as outlined by the vedantists is

above the average quotient of intelligence possessed by an ordinary man. Shaivism, on the other hand, has given a straight and simple definition of Maya, in consonance with the average intelligence obtaining in an ordinary mortal. It has abstained scrupulously from jig-saw approach of the vedantists. To conclude, with Shaivas, Maya is a psychic disorder, a passing phase, while with the vedantins it is a mental aberration entwining the human mind and intellect permanently; they treat this world being entrenched in the mire of Maya as a waking dream.

The shaivas look at it as a seductress, a momentary dis-equilibrium between self and self-consciousness." Therefore, Abhinavagupta has most graphically unfolded the import contained in Maya in this homely idiom:

"Maya is the unmixed part of that transcendental self which engenders the shade of distinction (Bhedavabhasa) in His Self-Dependent power (Svatantrya Shakhti), which does not stand in need of any aids."

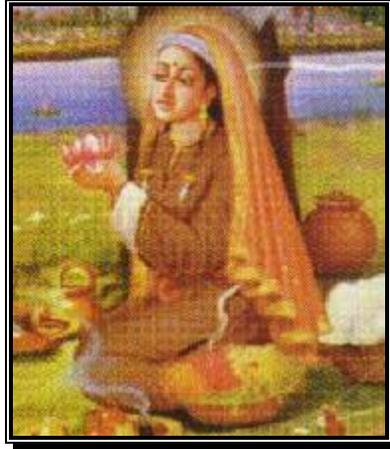
In conclusion, it may most fairly be emphasized that Indian outlook believes in assimilation rather than in segregation. It has made a heart-pleasing compromise with all that is good and edifying so the poet is not far from wrong when he asserts:

"Thou art Brahma-The Creator, Vishnu-The Preserver and Thou art Matter-the embodied soul, Ego-consciousness, the Moon, the Sun, Nature of things, the Lord of Jainas-Mahavira, the Illumined Sage-Buddha, Sky, Air also Shiva and Shakti. By these different names, O Goddess ! Thou art heard of and called by the righteous."

Even though vedantins and shaivas are at variance with regard to the conception of Maya, yet their destination is same-ennobling human intellect and awakening human spirit. This is exactly the rhythmic jingle of the heart-beats of Indian mind from times immemorial.

9 Laleshwari - An apostle of Human values

Prof. K. N. Dhar



Laleshwari

Cultural heritage of a country borrows measured sustenance from the philosophy of life nurtured inch by inch, by its denizens from the time, man awoke to the consciousness of self and spirit. It may well be called the culmination of quest of man from finite mooring, to infinite dimensions. At the same time, this search of man for finding his feet on the spiritual plane, can in no way be the last word on this subject, since such pursuits are cumulative in character and content. This edifice comes into being brick by brick, hammered into proper shape by savants and saints from time to time. However, it calls for reinterpretation every day in and out, so that the erring human being, with all his frailties, is not derailed into the abyss of animality. Perhaps this is the veritable theme of the famous word of Lord Krishna in Gita "when vice prevails and virtue dwindles, I resurrect my own being for proffering refuge to the virtuous and annihilating vice completely; thus re-establishing human values in every age". In our happy valley Laleshwari most charitably projected such human values, so dear to Kashmiris from the dawn of history. An irrefutable proof of this attitude of conciliation instead of confrontation can be gleaned from the pages of Nilamata Purana wherein Lord Buddha has been acknowledged as an incarnation of God Avatara. Buddhism, to speak squarely, was essentially a revolt against Brahmanism, yet the catholic Brahmin with his proverbial forbearance did not use the same language or adopt the same attitude as the Buddhists had employed with respect to Brahmanism. The healthy approach of Kashmiri Brahmins was never negative in essence but purely positive. So, we can safely assert that Laleshwari, a vigilant sentinel of Kashmiri culture displayed highest magnitude of courage and foresight in those not very auspicious times beckoning man not to discriminate on the basis of religious labels:-

<verses>

It was actually the continuation of that Catholic attitude of mind displayed by Kashmiris from times immemorial.

However, time does not maintain a uniform tenor or temper. It is at times moody and capricious; and when the political map of Kashmir was redrawn in the fourteenth century by the induction of sultans over the Kashmir scene, this accommodation of head and heart received a jolt. Kashmiris became oblivious of their pristine past; present consequently got divorced from it, mutilating its brilliant face and its attendant decorum. During those unsavoury and all the more unpalatable times, Laleshwari fortified to her marrow by the innate strength of her conviction, rose to the occasion and strove hard put to an end to this dismal era of persecution and vandalism. In this crusade her tools were not abjuration but affirmation; bitterness changed hands with sweet and more persuasive compromise. Having elected to tread this path of self-suffering, she became a model for millions of her country-men to abjure the mundance and propitiate the

sublime. It was no less than a miracle by which the sufferings of the people lost their sting and they learnt to bear up with these with stoical resistance. They were exhorted to rise above the self and reach up to the super-self at which stage pleasure or pain have no relevance or meaning. Some say it was self-deceit, fleeing from the actual life, rather self-forget-fulness to feel shy of the stark realities of life. The most apt answer to this faulty assertion is provided by ever-awake Lalleshwari herself in these words:-

<verses>

"Some may heap cavil on me, even some may curse me; They may say whatever they like to say. Some may worship me with the flowers of inherent cognition; yet I do not feel ruffled with this kind of impeachment or praise, since I am concerned with my own self and do not grudge what others have to say about me."

Muslim rule over Kashmir, for reasons obvious, sounded the knell for the use and propagation of sanskrit language. Bilhana, the famous lyricist of Kashmir had once boasted that, "In their household the Kashmiri women even speak sanskrit and prakrit as fluently as their mother-tongue." It was now an old wooden story. However, a bridge was to be built between the present and the past for which sanskrit had been a very potent instrument; but the general public had lost contact with it. Persian was the order of the day in its stead. So, Lalleshwari chose to speak to the people in their own idiom; hence Kashmiri became the vehicle of her message. In this way, she did not only make her message more intelligible and comprehensible to the masses, but also achieved the purpose of bridging the gulf between the past and the present. Present is an improved version of the past providing the base on which future can be built. In her time the friction between the past and the present was the loudest; hence, she like an expert alchemist, by her healing touch saved Kashiniri culture from being eroded and bruised. Her clarion call to assimilate human values in thoe dark days won for her the esteem and acclaim of Hindus and Muslims alike and the edge of ruthless proselytisation got blunted. It was no mean achievement on her part in uniting the lost children of one God, when every effort was being made to segregate them from each other. Her message was so universal and appealing that the tallest of Muslim Reshis of Kashmir Sheikh Noor -ud -Din Noorani made her his ideal and expressed what he owed to her in these words:-

<verses>

"That Lalla of Padmpur (Pampur) was fortunate enough in gulping the ambrosial nectarine draughts; thereby she won our adoration as an incarnation of immortal Divinity. Benevolent God, grant me also such a boon."

Lalla's message couched in quartrains called 'Vaks' is very simple and straight bereft of any curves or terseness. It is actually an exhortation to man to indulge in self-cognition. It is a readymade manual on self- education and consequent self-consciousness.

<verses>

"I felt fatigued by imessant self-search, thinking that no body could partake of that hidden perceptive knowledge; I, ultimately got immersed into it and could find admission to the Divine-bar; therein the goblets are full to the brim, but none possesses the nerve to drink these."

Mental drill is preamble to self- consciousness. At that pinnacle of self- discipline mind gets tamed automatically effortlessly:-

<verses>

"The steed of mind gallops through the sky, encompassing this whole universe. During the twinkling of an eye it can traverse millions of miles. He, who is proficient enough to put it on rails by controlling its reins, check its wayward demeanour by clipping its wings in the shape of mastering his own inhalaton and exhalation can attain the stage of self-cognition."

Worship, in the words of Lalla connotes self- introspection. It has nothing to do with external paraphernalia:-

<verses>

"Mind is the flower-seller and faith the flowers. Worship should be undertaken with the offerings of mental equipoise. Shiva is to be given a bath of tears. Incantations are to be recited in silence, without making a show of these. In this way only self-consciousness can be awakened from within."

According to Lalleshwari a realizer has to hammer out his mental attitude on these lines:-

<verses>

"He, who considers his own self and others as alike, abjures distinction between 'I' and 'you', He, who treats days and nights alike; is undisturbed by pleasure or pain. He, whose mind is bereft of duality, whose heart beats for all alike; only such a realizer can perceive the highest of preceptors-Shiva."

But, that shiva is within the self of the realizer, as inseparable from it as the smell from the flower. Immanence is self and transcendence is super-self-shiva in the language of Kashmiri monistic Shaivacharyas:-

<verses>

"Why do you beat your breast for nothing ? If you possess unwavering intelligence, you shall have to seek Him from within, Shiva is seated there and searching Him from outside will be of no avail. Do believe my word, baked with self- perception."

Without beating about the bush, it can be safely asserted that Lalleshwari's forte was Kashmiri Shaivism. This concept of Kashmirian philosophy actually revolutionized the age-long attitudes of man, more so of the Brahmins. It advocates a caste-less society as also abhors Kitchen-puritanism. Hindu society ailing through its own defective approach, justified such a kind of major operation for instilling evergreen health into its rusty veins. Shaiva scholars of Kashmir diagnosed the disease rightly and prescribed such an elixir for its longevity which defied the time with its nihilistic redclaws. Had not this philosophy of life been at hand to the Kashmiris at that dismal hour of history, no Hindu worth the name, would have survived in the Land of 'Kashyapa', alien culture would have made an easy morsel of him. Lalla's Vaks, are actually a Kashmiri rendering of shiva sutras; When this philosophy was born, no such predicament was there, as was faced by Lalleshwari in her own times later on. At best, shaivas had to contend with the Buddhists, whose attitude was also home-spun and not foreign in any way; Hence, Lalla had to reclaim the lost faith of her brethren, provide a viable alternative to the enticements an alien faith was offering to the people at large; and at the same time, in performing this double duty, she had to be always cross-fingered, not invite the wrath of the rulers. It definitely goes to her credit that while discharging her mission, she did not make a single enemy out of the other camp. To crown all, her message did cut through the man-made barriers of religions, Hindus as well as Muslims became her votaries with equal gusto. Her appeal was humanistic and not sectarian. Her approach was of positive affirmation and not of negative abjuration; consequently it multiplied her friends. Her ingenuity in steering safe between the two antagonistic factions is unsurpassed. She was instrumental in replacing call to steel by call to human conscience, consequently changing sourness to sweetness:-

<verses>

"We, human beings, did live in the past and we alone will be in the future also. From ancient times to the present, we have activated this world. Just like rising and setting of the sun, a usual routine, the immanent Shiva (jiva) will never be relieved of birth and death."

Lalleshwari did not preach any hard and fast religion, she even disdained ritual. She projected a way of life quite in harmony with our cultural traditions, in which a happy amalgam was made of what was good in Buddhism, Hinduism and even Islam;-

<verses>

"That transcendental- self may assume the names of Shiva, Visnu, Buddha or Brahma; I am concerned only With their efficacy in cutting asunder my worldly affections, which might be accomplished by any one of these."

Therefore, it follows from this, that she was not dogmatic or rigid either. She welcomed the healthy wafts of wind coming from any direction wktsoever, anointing her body and soul with chaste Divinity. She always kept the windows of her mind open, rejecting what was mundane and assimilating the sublime:-

<verses>

"The Super- Lord is supervising His shop with personal care. All the aspirants are eager to take away wares of their liking. Whatever, you would elect to buy, does not admit of any intermediary; It is to be earned by your own effort, since the shop is devoid of any hinderance and even a watch is not kept over it."

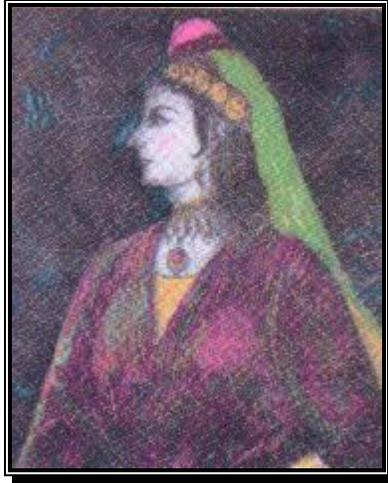
This is the acme of Lalla's message. Man has been exhorted to seek his own self front within, without any external aids. Self-effort is precursor of self- education finally culminateng in self-conscionsness - Shiva - as she calls it.

As long as the silvery bellows of the Vitasta maintain their rejuvenating rhythm, as long as the virgin snow on the Himalayan heights retains its unblemished splendour and stature, the exquisite 'Vaks' of Lalleshwari soaked to the full in the inherent values of Kashmiri culture and human understanding will go on, unimpeded of course, in providing dignity to man to recognize his own self and not to run after deluding shadows; since the culture of a land never dies, the message of Lalla portraying meaningfully the humanistic attitudes ingrained in our culture, will never grow stale. Its fragrance and flavour are evergreen.

10 Habba Khatoon

Philomela of Medieval Kashmir

Prof. K. N. Dhar



Habba Khatoon

The cultural heritage of Kashmir is as rich as it is varied. This mental child of 'Kashyapa' has been the recipient of fondest love and bountiful benevolence from Nature and has consequently enthralled the whole world by its superb physical charm from times immemorial. To crown all, this physical grandeur has been very usefully groomed by Kashmiris in weaving the rainbow. Coloured texture of mental and spiritual attainments. In many respects they have been pioneers in evolving a cult of philosophy in tune with their environment and called it as 'Shaivism'. A galaxy of rhetoricians have taken pains in prescribing norms and standards for making the literature in general and poetry in particular more acceptable and representative. To say squarely, not a single branch of literature has been left out by these savants without their impress and alchemic touch.

Not only this, Kashmir has been the testing-ground of three universal religions of the world-Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The traits of all these religions have fused into the attitude of a Kashmiri like milk and candy; and it is no surprise that though bearing Hindu or Muslim or even Buddhist names, a Kashmiri even to-day in actual practice is a living embodiment of Buddhist compassion, Hindu tolerance and Muslim zest for life. Therefore with such a Catholic background, secularism to a Kashmiri is not a political expedient but an article of faith ingrained in his blood from the hoary times to the present day. 'Kalhana' in his monumental History of Kashmir 'River of Kings' has not mentioned even one Communal trouble between the Buddhists and the Hindus when a voracious race was in progress between their respective adherents to make their own tenets popular and thus steal march over other faiths. In contrast to this, Buddhist Kings have donated large sums for the erection of Hindu temples and shrines and vice versa. Religious battles have always been fought here on paper, in a more rational way, or through dialogues which never left bad taste in the mouths. During the Islamic period Sultan Zain-ul-ab-Din Badshah in an admirable way and forsooth like a Kashmiri to his marrow renovated demolished Hindu places of worship and even started 'Langars' at Places of pilgrimages for feeding the hungry and the devout. 'ShriVara' in his 'ZainaTarangini' has mentioned such 'Satr' or Langars, one of which was located at the foot of Mahadeva mountain.

In this way, when in the 14th-15th century an alien culture knocked at the mountain-doors of Kashmir for being shown in, the values cherished by Kashmiris all along had already prepared a hospitable ground for its happy welcome. The puritanic proselytizing tenacity of Islam in the absence of any mentionable reaction on the part of Kashmiris compellingly changed to more logical and rational methods. In this

political and religious upheaval, long-cherished secular outlook of the faith of the people would have received a jolt, but at this juncture literature came to our succour.

At the confluence of Hindu and Muslim cultures 'Laileshwari' or 'Lalla- Deda' stands like a colossus beckoning people to eschew differences of colour, creed or faith and yoke themselves to attain Identity with Him-- the All-pervasive Transcendental Force called God as such, Therein all are equal, the worldly appellations drop down like slough from a snake. The pursuit of mundane is an exercise in futility; Therefore the goal should be beyond mundane-materiality; It is no use counting mile-posts of material gains or losses and getting lost in its maze; the eye should be on the destination-- the real and permanent.

For reasons obvious, the social fibre of the Kashmiris was also undergoing transformation at that time and the present could not have been in any way palatable to the denizens of Kashmir at large; so like an awake artist 'Lalla' dismissed the present as trash and ushered in spirituality in its all shades 'Being' was replaced by 'to be'. By borrowing sweetness from the 'unknown' 'Lalla' virtually transformed the frustration or people into the hope to live with ever -appetising gusto. 'Lalla' could not help striking a happy compromise between Kashmiri shaivism and Islamic sufism. It was in tune with the times. To quote Dr. Sufi "Even long before the formal conversion to Islam, Islamic sufism had already entered the valley." Cultural conquest is always a pre-requisite to any other kind of conquest. A Kashmiri by nature tolerant and catholic kept his windows open for inhaling the fresh air of sufism. He even assimilated and owned much of it what was good and rejuvenating.

But, by the time Habba Khatoon's inebriating imagination began to find words, this climate of spirituality and mental drill had become suffocating and even stale in the context of fast changing economic conditions and human values; emphasis on individual instead of on the society had become the accepted norm of public relations and thinking. The extrovert attitude yielded place to introspection. So, the poet in these changed environs harnessed his imaginative faculty to interpret his or her own feelings; Hence, Habba at the very outset of her poetic career rebelled against the prevalent standards of poetry-writing. Textbook idealism is not found in the dictionary of her pulsating emotions. She did not also try to bridge the distance between the ideal and the real. Her substantial contribution in this domain is to interpret her life as it was and not what it should be. Total absence of didactic content in her poetry (what ever is available to us) lends support to our belief, that she always believed in translating her feelings without any redundant appendages of ideal, faithfully and with sincerity of purpose. Her poetry consequently is a happy blend of sweetness and pathos. She has preferred to live in the present, past was beyond her reach and future out of her comprehension.

Kashmiri nation at that time was groaning under internal exploitation and external aggression. The last indigenous ruler of Kashmir Yusuf Shah Chak personified in himself levity and depravation in every sense of the word. "His own Subjects being fed up with his way-ward conduct had to invite the mughals to get rid of such an incapable and debauched ruler," Writes Dr. Sufi in his 'Kasheer'. His regal writ could not run outside his palace where passion and carnality were reigning supreme. This trait of inviting aliens to redress their troubles is not new to Kashmiri character at all. Kalhana has alluded to this many times when the natives falling foul with their rulers invited the neighboring Kings of Lohara (Lorin) and Parantosa (Poonch) to sit on the throne of Kashmir. The great queen 'Dida' herself belonged to Lorin and installed her brother Jayasimha as the king of Kashmir just before her death. So, the Mughals who had vulturous eyes on Kashmir already, but their incursions had been thwarted by Kashmiri twice before, exploited such a situation to their fill. This was a welcome addition to their diplomatic bag of conquests. Yusuf Shah at last awoke to find his own people arrayed against him. The Mughals arrested him and forced him to live a life of solitary confinement at a remote village in Bihar outside Kashmir, where he ate his heart away in sole distress and breathed his last. It has been contended by some overzealous Kashmiris lately that uprising of Yusuf Shah against the Mughals symbolized the urge of Kashmiris to fight external domination. Unfortunately, the contemporary historical evidence of this period does not, in any way, confirm this view, however laudable it may seem to be.

Moreover, the famine of 1576 A.D. due to the untimely snowfall multiplied the miseries of the people. The devastating effects of this unprecedented famine persisted for full three years and Kashmiris passed their days on starvation level more or less. To this injury insult in the shape of 'Shia-Sunni' troubles was added. Sectarianism became pronounced and it let loose all the evils which nurture and sustain it. In such a disappointing state of affairs, the poet naturally has to close his eyes against all that is happening around and in self-deceit revels in the fanciful panorama of his heart. Habba could not afford to be an exception to this Universal truth. Hence her love-poems do breathe an atmosphere of total self-absorption being blind and deaf to the environmental vicissitudes. These may well be labelled as throbbing vibrations of self-immersion but not self forgetfulness. Her ego is always pronounced in each line of her verse.

Unfortunately for us we are actually at sea about the life of this Nightingale of Kashmir. No authoritative contemporary record has been unearthed so far to test the veracity of the popular tradition which associates Habba with Yusuf Shah Chak. Moreover, we have no hesitation in doubting the credence of the contemporary records as the History writing even to-day is not free from strings of pressures and pulls. During the rule of the English the events of 1857 have been mentioned as Mutiny, and those very events under the Indian rule have been treated as war of Independence; A dispassionate account of historical events devoid of personal projections is rare even to-day when every man proclaims that he is free and has been given every opportunity for independent thinking and expression of opinion thereof. In those hoary days, when history was compiled at the behest of the king, perhaps in proportion to the munificence the ruler lavished on such mercenaries, distortion of historical facts has always come in handy for the rating clique and its sycophants. In the same way, there is a thin line between aggression and liberation; In such a dilemma the verdict of people should have been the guiding principle for us all, but wherefrom it is to be made available?

Moreover, the evidence of the historical data which is still in manuscript form and has not undergone the acid test of public opinion cannot be relied upon. In Kashmir even to-day people who enjoy leisure and have aptitude are given to record their own experiences in which casual references to rulers have also been made in Sanskrit, Persian or Urdu; but for reasons obvious these cannot be termed as histories as such. Perhaps every Kashmiri house-hold having mentionable literary background of any order can boast of such personal record. By no stretch of imagination these can be treated as historical evidence worth quoting. Therefore, the chronicles written to order or as a product of personal caprice have no place in literary or purely historical criticism, Kalhana has not mentioned the great Shaiva philosopher Abhinavagupta even once. Does it follow from it that Abhinavagupta was not a historical personality at all?

In the face of such scanty historical material at our disposal, we have perforce to fall back upon the popular tradition which in unequivocal and unambiguous terms has all long associated Habba with Yusuf Shah. In the reconstruction of histories of literature the tradition has played no mean part. This kind of unbroken evidence cannot be dismissed as cheap and unreliable altogether. The tradition passes from generation to generation by word of mouth. If in literary criticism this had not been taken cognizance of, then the religious lore of entire humanity would pass on as forged; Actually the case is reverse of it. Tradition has all along held the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran as the most respected and the most genuine of all the available literature that has come down to us by the word of mouth. Tradition embraces in its ambit the force of public opinion which cannot be disregarded at any cost. Public opinion in its turn breeds sentimental attachment, and this sort of living testimony is far superior to other media of evidence. Perhaps this irresistible public opinion forced the later Persian chroniclers to make a mention of Habba though two centuries or more after her death. The reasons for maintaining Sphinx-like silence regarding 'Habba' by the contemporary chroniclers may be attributed to the aversion Sunni scholars had for the wayward behaviour of a Sunni girl in consenting to become a 'Keep' to Shia Yusuf Shah. The Shias on the contrary did not like to tarnish the image of the Shia king Yusuf by making a mention of his licentious disposition towards Habba. The Hindu Historian could not afford to offend these both sects hence sat on the fence. Therefore, instead of adopting an iconoclastic attitude a critic should own a positive outlook and respect the tradition and the sentiments of people from which he cannot alienate himself. Later skt

chroniclers i.e JonaRaja or Shrivara have not mentioned 'Lalla' at all though being her contemporaries, yet the popular tradition has had her day in as much as 'Lalla' lives before our mental eyes even to-day. Historicity in ordinary and unsophisticated parlance connotes systematisation of facts, values, tradition and outlook. Therefore, the role of tradition can in no way be under estimated.

When the dust of such controversy had settled down, Birbal Kachru and Hassan Khohyami, the first chroniclers in this field, thought it fit to mention her by name. Both these historians have given an account of 'Habba' though in a slipshod manner; but piecing the incidents together we can build her personality without any fear of contradiction or historical irrelevance. According to them "Habba" was the scion of a well-to-do peasant family living at Chandrahara, a village near the famous Saffron fields of Pampur. She had been married to Aziz Lone one of her collaterals. The proverbial animosity between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law dampened the marital relations between Habba and her spouse. She was forced to live with her parents. 'Habba' at such a tender and impressionably age could not recover from the rebuff she received at the very threshold of her conjugal life. Her despondency flowed out in the form of poetry pulsating with unartificial fusion of sound and sense. Her fame reached the amorous ears of Yusuf Shah, who admitted her to his harem as a 'Keep', and did not allow her the status of a queen. Both the chroniclers are punctillious about using the phrase "sharing the same bed," about her.

Further, Mohammed Din 'Fauq' and Abdul Ahad Azad have provided us with her actual name 'Zoon', as faultless as the moon. Mahjoor has also accepted this name without a murmur. 'Habba Khatoon' presumably a more respectable mode of address than 'Zoon' must have been bestowed upon her when she joined the harem of Yusuf Sbab in keeping with the royal etiquette. There should be no surprise, or eyebrows need not be raised when a Kashmiri lady is supposed to have two names. In olden days, Kashmiri girls after their wedlock earned a new name in their inlaw's house. This custom has persisted with Kashmiri Pandits even now.

A section of popular belief ascribes her home to Gurez where a contiguous mountain and a spring are named after her.

Internal evidence as culled from her verses confirms the first view:-

<verses>

"My parental home is situated at the tableland of Chandra Hara."

Her another name can be inferred from this:-

<verses>

"I am bemoaning my lot in Plaintive cries, the Moon (Kashmiri Zoon) has been devoured by an eclipse."

Shri Amin Kamil's well-edited booklet containing only twenty songs is the only authentic source material available to us for commenting upon Habba- Khatoon's poetry; however, in addition to these, Kashmiris ascribe many more poems to her and these have been printed. As long as an anthology of all her available songs is not compiled and given the seal of an authoritative edition, we have to confine our comments to these twenty songs only. Interpolations will be there, more essentially so, her extraordinary popularity has been a bane for the original texts composed by her. The more popular a poet, the more danger is there of interpolations creeping into his compositions and after the mischief has been done it seems very difficult to distinguish gold from dross, and often dross passes on for gold.

'Habba' is very proud of her lineage:-

<verses>

"My parents brought me up with fondest possible care; A host of maid- servants was at my beck and call. I could not fore-see that the dreams nourished by me would be shattered to the ground. No body's youth with childlike innocence should go unrewarded like that of mine."

'Habba' testifies to her being very well-read:-

<verses>

"My parents sent me to a distant school for receiving tuition. The teacher there beat me with a tender stick mercilessly and ignited a fire within me; No body's youth with child-like innocence should go unrewarded like that of mine."

She did not ignore the religious education also:-

<verses>

"I committed thirty 'Siparas' of the Holy Quran to memory in a single sitting, faithfully adhering to the diacritical intonations; yet the valentine punctuated with love could not be read with such facile speed. What will you gain by my passing away."

She has woven the scene of her marriage in these words:

<verses>

"My parents blessed me as a fortunate daughter, and beckoned to me that the in law's were waiting in the compound for taking me away. My silver- studded palanquin had golden ear-rings hanging down on all sides. Alas ! innocent youth of any body, with child-like innocence should not go unrewarded as that of mine."

But all this pomp and splendour could not pacify the wrath of her mother-in-law :-

<verses>

"The mother-in law grabbed me by my hair, which stung me more than the pangs of death. I fell asleep on the supporting plank of the spinning wheel, and in this way, the circular wheel got damaged. I cannot reconcile myself with the atrocities of the inlaws, O! my parents, please come to my rescue."

Habba unfolds her love for her husband like this:-

<verses>

"I have been waiting for long with extreme patience for you - O! my love (or Aziz) do not be cross with your moon (zoon)! I have adorned myself lusciously from top to toe; so enjoy my youth as lively and inviting as a pomegranate flower."

But Aziz did not relent and Habba had to experience the pangs of forced widowhood:-

<verses>

"I am on pin-pricks for want of an avid response to my love; my bubbling youth is on its ebb. My awake parents, do read in to the hint I have dropped."

The stings of separation from her husband in her prime-youth can better be imagined than described. Perhaps her being on the brink of human patience can justify her consenting to give company to Yusuf Shah Chak. She could not wait for legal or other formalities involved in sharing his bed. This might seem not very laudable, yet it is true of every maiden who is a slave to her senses and whose warmth of love has all along remained unrequited, moreso, it is all the more pronounced in the case of a lady who would like to wreak vengeance on the callous society not reciprocating her sentiments, no matter if she loses her identity in this bargain.

For the span of years in which Habba lived, no cogent authority is available. Mohd Din 'Fauq' and in his foot- steps Abdul Ahad Azad have given her life span from 1641 to 1552 A.D. on the authority of 'Tarikh Baharistan Shahi.' But on close examination Shri Amin Kamil refutes this and says that these dates are nowhere found in this chronicle. However, her association with Yusuf Shah can give us a clue as to the years in which she was still alive. The reign of Yusuf Shah has been determined as 1579-1585 A.D.; so we can safely assume that during these years at least Habba was living. Akbar annexed Kashmir in 1585

A.D. imprisoned Yusuf Shah and exiled him to Bihar; so, when her paramour Yusuf fell on bad stars, Habba must have eaten her heart away in disgust and dismay. This was the second rebuff she received at the hands of the Destiny, and this impulsive Lady unresponsive in love, unaccepted by the society still did not own defeat. She created an exuberant world of her own, punctuated it with her emotions resonant with the dirge of what she had got and what she lost. She lived in her thoughts, so to say.

Such a state of mind is a fertile ground for the induction of Romanticism. Habba deliberately ignoring the less pleasant side of her life indulged in dreamy habit of mind. Romanticism is the acme of poet's independence of feelings; under its spell he refuses to be bound by conventional restraints. A romantic poet has either the nerve to rebel nor the will to compromise with his environment. Unmindful of what is happening around him, he delves deep into the inner most recesses of his heart and without fear or malice pours out his feelings as they ooze forth. Such a poet is incapable of clothing his emotions with artificial adorations. Romanticism may thus be called the highest water-mark of poet's individual thinking.

Habba may be called the harbinger of such kind of poetry in Kashmiri. She is the originator of popular love-lyrics in Kashmiri literature. However, her love is earthly; she could not rise above it; Her passionate love has its source in the enjoyment of senses and not their denial in any case. She does not feel fed-up with sensual pleasures, but at times would like to revert to these with ever-increasing appetite. She cannot reconcile herself with the sour-truth of being a widow who has perforce to abjure sensuality. She would not like to show herself off as a pious lady either, under the cover of so-called piety myriad sins do thrive when a woman is not mentally ready to own a salutary course of life for herself. Her poetry, therefore, is a candid expression of her feelings which has immensely contributed to her popularity. She does not like to play hide and seek. Her appeal is straight and unsophisticated.

Habba's forte is love-in-separation. She has not sung even a single verse eulogizing the munificence of Yusuf Shah when she was in her company. In the words of Kalidasa 'Separation chastens love,' Hence, Habba like a born-poet selected 'separation' for her treatment of love. Her verses throughout waft an air of restlessness and not contentment; Calm Composure and resignation to be in turmoil to fate are absent in her poetry. She seems sit cross-legged, She believes in winning love by bodily excellence alone:-

<verses>

"I will apply on my body of spotless silvery sheen, the greasy whiteness of milky creams; I am immensely enamoured of thee; I will anoint myself with scented sandal-water. MY love! I will relish to be your slave."

Even though Habba has repeatedly and even lustily made a call to flesh only, yet her songs reverberate an aroma of lasting flavour; though these songs may sound as sensual to a moralist, yet 'Habba' has made no secret of her sensuous attitude to life. She has all along wanted to drink deep at the fountain of life without any saintly pretensions. Therein her moral-courage shines the best. Her voracious hunger in this respect seems unsatiated. To her present holds the mirror to what she lost and what she had gained. Her songs are a lament in every sense of the term. She is firm-footed in her convictions and does not vacillate. This is perhaps the most glaring trait of her poetry. She has no concern for morality or ethics in the sense that she would not elect to be a preacher: She revels in being always loud. She revels in being immersed in her imagination only, yet her ego is always loud. She is not shy of parading her beauty and is rather conscious of it also. Even though she has paid a heavy price for it, still she has no regrets in this behalf.

Habba's refrain is love wedded to pathos; consequently she has kept the windows of her mind shut and her heart is only wide-awake in emitting and receiving images from her fancied dreams. The pathetic content of her poetry is all the more aggravated by the elusive nature of her ideal which has consequently earned for her the epithet 'Nightingale' of Kashmir most squarely. She does not subscribe to the view that "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." In the absence of any appropriate and meaningful response to her simmering emotions, she has opted for self-suffering, telling beads of her tear-drops. Be it Heemal, Arnimaal or Habba Khatoon, it is the Kashmiri woman bemoaning her lot in pathetic plaintives, the common subject with all these, the victims of the conspiracy of circumstances. Habba Khatoon essentially is a typical example of such a woman who cannot make any kind of

compromise with life. In this predicament she could have turned a rebel, but, she instead of it, becomes a martyr by consent. This is exactly the most salient feature of Kashmiri womanhood. Towards the closing years of her life, Habba does express her remorse for not compromising with the life as it is, but fashioning it according to her imagination; none the less in the same breath she admits that missed opportunities need not be recalled. She does indicate the 'Achilles Heel' of her personality-to rule only and not to get ruled:-

<verses>

"I, Habba Khatoon, is definitely sorry for not adapting myself submissively to the moonish caprices of my lover. I do recaptulate those missed opportunities, but it is now too late to atone for these; therefore, You, my lover! should not be cross with me."

A sense of guilt seems to haunt this love-lorn lady, but at the same time her self-willed nature dismisses this weight on her heart by taking refuge under the excuse that race is already run. This subdued expression of penitence does portray her loud thinking in unguarded moments, but like a wakeful artist, she cancels it in the second breath. She does not flop, as the idiom goes.

Habba's songs are musical in essence and pathetic in spirit. She has also been acclaimed as a melody-queen of Kashmiri poetry. Her popularity is also due to the fact that her songs are not only a replica of Kashmiri sentiments but also a potent vehicle of Kashmiri music. Her originality in this sphere is undisputed. Even though she has appropriated a sizable chunk of Persian words and Persian similes, yet she has refrained from owning Persian code on metres. She has in their place introduced home-spun Kashmiri melodies pertaining to rhyme and rhythm in her quartrains.

Therefore, her songs self-contained in each quartrain can be more profitably compared with the 'Vaks' of Lalleshwari or 'Shruks' of Nund-Reshi from the style-point of view only. These cannot be classed under 'Gazal' or 'Nazam' of Persian metries, despite the fact that Habba has a tendency to repeat refrains.

Therefore, it is not without reason that 'Mahjoor'- the doyen of Kashmiri romantic poets, has dealt a dig at one of his celebrated predecessors- Rasul Mir in this pregnant verse, for not paying well-deserved compliment to Habba Khatoon:-

<verses>

"Rasul Mir of Shahabad has profusely alluded to the moon of Qandhar; Why has he been averse to the moon (Zoon, Kashmiri) of Chandrahah?"

11 Abdul Ahad "Azad"

The poet of tomorrow

Prof. K. N. Dhar

PHYSICAL exuberance of Kashmir is as inebriating as its mental excellence. Herein, we find a happy compromise between the prowess of body and ingenuity of mind; To speak squarely in Kashmir, we witness a living example of superb soul enshrined in a superb body. Nature has been luxuriant here in weaving a dexterous tapestry of rainbow-colored flowers stretching over miles after miles. The jingle of babbling brooks endows it with undying seraphic music. Taking a cue from this physical eminence, Man here has not lagged behind in providing a meaning to his land of buxom youth.

Man, here has always tried to replenish this physical eminence with his inquisitive mind ever-ready to bridge the gap between his own self and the opulence around. Hence, here in Kashmir, we perceive a veritable equation between Man and his environ.

Therefore, to derive inspiration from amiable surroundings as also to groom it purposefully with the richness of mind over here, Man has provided a silvery tongue to this arresting panorama of enticing youthfulness; The result has been exhilarating poetry vibrating with the heartbeats of Nature and Man alike. So, it does not sound as an exaggeration when Bilhana-the celebrated lyricist of Kashmir Christenes his homeland, Kasbmir, as the 'land of Divine Speech,' from whose womb saffron and poetic prowess have sprung up as real-brothers." Right from the day, when Man planted his feet on this land, his mental exercise has never cooled its heels. It has been a continuous drill; Man, as such, could not afford to be anything but a poet in such an inspiring and soothing climate. Tools for scaling such virgin heights were already there; it was now left to Man to use these for his edification. The denizen of this fairyland took this challenge in fight earnest and a galaxy of philosophers, chroniclers and poets have shone an its firmament. In modern times 'Azad' has very laudably and all the more, very loudly beckoned to man to derive inspiration from the evergreen nature around him, and consequently tame his animality to reach upto such heavenly heights. He, essentially, is a poet of human values bemoaning the shortcomings and inhibitions under which Man is constrained to count his days; but at the same time, inspring him to know his own self as well its his compatriot, which only can usher in an era of mental peace and worldly affluence for him. He has not woven songs of sorrow, but has always wafted an aroma of optimistic rosy future through his pulsating imagination. He has consequently opted for finding an asylum in the future, disdaining the unpalatable present. He may, therefore be called a poet of morrow.

It might well be contended that this kind of ostrich-like behaviour on the part of the poet may sound as self-defeat and hence is a left-handed compliment. Herein, it can be said very conveniently that 'Azad' did not at all shut his eyes towards the present red in tooth and claw; he did not also own self-deceit--a salient trait of Romantic poets. He was very sure of the ground under his feet, but at the same time, he presaged a meaningful future for the Man, though himself living in the present. He was essentially a poet of Man unscreening his wants and aspirations, unveiling the satan underneath his fair complexion, portraying most pathetically the man's dilemma being ground under the weight of exploitation and oppression and to crown all his faulty attitude of dividing man and man on the basis of religious beliefs. These all stigmatic characteristis of a mentally sick man were obviously unbecoming of him- the crown of creation. Therefore 'Azad' an everawake artist could not all the time afford to deride him, cultivating in him a sense of irreparable frustration, and bluntring his initiative. As his ardent votary, he tried to instill fresh hope in him for bettering his present and on its contours build a happy future. He, therefore, strove hard to keep the spirit of Man alive and kicking. The distance between the actual and ideal was to be smoothed by the Man himself. In utter frustration and inner turmoil, he would never rise to the occasion, bence the need to sustain his hopes holding out economically secure, fraternally amiable, socially agreeable and politically undominating future to him, This, in short, is what 'Azad' strove all his life to accomplish. In all fairness to him, it cannot be dubbed as self-defeat or self-deceit, it is self-education and self-discipline. 'Azad' would never like Man to bite the dust, but rise above it, so that a future comfortable in every

respect would be guaranteed for him, This kind of attitude is the forte of all poet-philosophers for them shadow has never been a substitute for substance.

'Azad' is inherently possessed of uncommon consciousness of head and heart. He has never elected to go into the shell like other Kashmiri Romanticists. Instead, he has tried to analyse Man in every sense of the word, bereft of any curves or blind alleys. His approach is direct, therefore sparing us the fatigue of fruitless kite-flying in respect of the essence contained in his poetry. We are saved the embarrassment of solving puzzles and conundrums, rack our brains in interpreting his message and derive inferences interwoven in his poetry throbbing with life. He most candidly asserts that his propitiation of the Muse is only a medium to focus attention on Man. In this field, he wears his profession on his sleeves:-

<verses>

"O! Adorer of religious values, you have opted for puritanic religiosity; And I have elected for my own faith. You resign yourself completely to the steadfast faith in God, and my aim is to propitiate Man."

In other words, the poet begins with the real and does not get lost in the maze of ideal. Man was made after the image of God; he is a macrocosmic representation of his microcosmic spirit. Therefore, to propitiate Man is actually to adore God. Azad believes in the affirmation of life and not in its negation. For him Man is not a solid bundle of flesh and blood only, but a manifestation of undaunted vigour and unvanquished spirit. He may have forgotten, or even obliged to forget such sterling qualities for the time-being, for which he is not only to blame; Azad's poetic fervour has tried to re-ignite that dead spirit in him. It is awakening Man to his stature:-

<verses>

"This world is a thorn of unfulfilled ambitions in my garden; And the world- beyond is a blot of scare and fear on my skirt. Therefore, I owe it to Man to usher in a new- spring and bring back blossoming health to this garden of his; So that Man like the flowers will attain full bloom therein."

It can be conceded forthwith that 'Azad' has no pretensions for being a spiritual preacher. He is mainly concerned with the material well being of Man. He does not make tall claims for reforming the spiritual attitude of Man. He does not go beyond the material contentment of Man, He makes him conscious of his rights and obligations, but does not dabble in awakening him to spiritual consciousness alone. He has concern for him on the material plane only. A hungry man is always an angry individual.

When this anger against the society has made him unbalanced, he can in no way harness his faculties to reach up to the subliminal heights. On the other hand, if he gets two square meals without any fuss or friction, he can usefully yoke his mind to achieve self, consciousness and consequent self-realization; Stuck up in the mire of material insecurity, his yearning for spiritual edification will be an exercise in futility. Self-consciousness presupposes mental peace and equilibrium. If it is denied to Man, how can we expect him to engage himself in self- search. He has his frailties, he is not a super-soul adept in self-denial. He would like to have his minimum wants satisfied, hence abjuring world is foreign to his genius in these circumstances. He is weighed down so much by the oddities of life, that he is always nursing a cramp in his back. With this physical and mental ailment, his soul does receive bruises, hence is incapable of unfolding its wings, without mincing words, 'Azad' has elaborated his point of view in this behalf, in these words:-

<verses>

"O God, I do not yearn after riches and gold, but would implore you to show me such a world in which Divine obedience is to remember God within always, but not to pray to Him everytime for the fulfilment of each and every want."

He would like Man to be self- reliant, architect of his own fate. He has to put in efforts incessantly for making his life self-dependent and not to look to God for making him materially secure always. Relying

on the Grace of God will naturally breed indolence in him and mar his initiative, which 'Azad' would never allow. God's blessings are reserved for those who help themselves. For him the religion of Man is straight-forwardness wedded to truthfulness. Hypocrisy degrades Man:-

<verses>

"Even though holding rosary in his fingers (A Mussalman), or donning the sacred- thread around his neck (A Hindu), such a human- being is diffident to speak the truth, can well be called a 'Peer' among his flock, or a Brahmin among his tribe."

According to 'Azad' he does not deserve the title of Man. He deludes people by his outer appearance and exploits their credulity. He is an imposter and a pretender. He lacks courage to call the spade a spade. It would be better to quote the exact phrase used by 'Azad' in this respect:-

<verses>

"Nature had brought you to life simply for disseminating love; instead of it, O! Man, you converted your religion and faith into a lucrative trade, a veritable device for minting money."

The poet in 'Azad' is an indefatigable crusader against inequality between man and man in terms of his religious beliefs, creed, social injustice and political exploitation; but at the same time, he does not subscribe to the theory of total annihilation as propounded by Marxists. He advocates the view of total upliftment called 'Sarvodaya' in Gandhian parlance. He does not borrow foreign tools to make social order viable, but prefers to remedy the ills rampant in Man and his society by home-spun prescriptions. He is enamoured more of Gandhi than of Lenin or Marx:-

<verses>

"Even the ferocious torrents can be arrested and tamed, if the man plunges himself, with out any fear, into the turmoils and tribulations of life and does not sit on the fence. This very trait of self- suffering is discernible in Gandhi--the Head of our Family, and is completely absent in alien people and their ideology."

'Azad' is alive to the fact that independence of India and that of Kashmir is in the offing. It is a writing on the wall. At that hour of political emancipation, our leaders shall have to undergo an acid test. If they choose the line adopted by our erstwhile rulers, the English, then this freedom will have no meaning. It will mean only change of masters. Indigenous political power cannot be a synonym for corruption, but should in its stead goad man on to sublimity. Political leaders should personify detachment, never feel intoxicated by the power they are supposed to wield- a mandate and a trust from the people. It has often been seen that the man loses his head at this time of his political elevation and paradoxically enough uses the same power given to him by the people, ruthlessly against them. Therefore, he cautions the future rulers of our land in these words:-

<verses>

"The foreigners have now bolted away after doing a brisk business here. It is the turn of our own kin now, but they also appear to me as the shrewd tradesmen presiding over their business-houses. O! Sylvan pine tree, who does nurse you?"

Their tricks of trade to exploit innocent people are enumerated as under:-

<verses>

"These enemies of healthy social order screen away the truth the people by invoking religion, authority, God and His Godliness and even destiny."

Even though 'Azad' was not destined to witness the era of independence in its fullness, but how prophetically he has pin-pointed the behaviour of our rulers to be. He could smell future in advance. In this predicament, the people have no choice but to opt for slavery once again. The self-centred leadership

has monopolized all the fruits of freedom, these have not been allowed to trickle down to the masses at large. Being disillusioned, the man would like to revert once more to foreign domination. The so-called love and concern by which these leaders swear is nothing short of opium mesmerizing the thinking and vision of the people, so that the unbridled rule of these Political jugglers is perpetuated undisturbed:-

<verses>

"That poor soul can never think of detached behaviour of fearless self-denial; He, who is devoid of his mental as well as physical balance, and to crown all, has planted his feet on the pedestal of authority endangering his equilibrium all the more, that so called concern for the weal of man as professed by such leaders actually dopes the dauntless spirit of man, denying him to keep his head high, and forces him to bite the dust."

'Azad's' conviction in Hindu-Muslim amity and consequent Solidarity is marrow-deep. He abhors division of man into parochial nomenclature. Human beings have one and only one religion that is living up to human values. The fruits of hardwon freedom should not be frittered away on Hindu-Muslim squabbles. Humanity need not be sacrificed at the altar of communal frenzy:-

<verses>

"Those who call Hindus and Muslims as brothers, hand and glove with each other, are strictly guided by the tenets of the vedas and the Quran; they have no other Holy Book for preaching this enlightenment. If God had to segregate nations and creeds from each other, then He would have provided them with separate earth and Sky."

The children of God share the bounties of the earth together; They are uniform in body and soul. Why should their thinking get muddled?

<verses>

"I, as a frailman, took into account only the negative aspect of life- the turmoil of the waves, friction and even man- handling, The positive phase of life is contained in the maxim unity amongst Diversity; But, I only paid heed to the brewing of quarrels and the subsequent bad-taste these leave in the mouth. Had there not been oneness of Man how could such ignorant people pull on with those gifted with reason? For me, life is a continuous journey to reach up to that ideal."

After going through the entire poetic prowess of 'Azad' this inference is irresistible that his attainments as a celebrated Kashmiri poet were not a matter of days; It took him years after years to find his feet and thus project his message through rhyme and rhythm. Thus, we can glean three patent stages in his poetry from start to the end, in which his heart- beats have built inch by inch the premise on which his innate imagination indulged in playful sport. The first stage may well be termed as the period of initiation; Herein the poet has tried to harness his talents in translating his emotions, feelings and experience. This is the first attempt, hence cannot be free from shortcomings. His poetic fervour at this time was greatly influenced by the current Persian trends in vogue in Kashmir. It is more or less a Kashmiri rendering of Persian songs replete with the symbolism of 'Gul' and 'Bulbul'! Not only the content of his poetry is inspired by Persian 'Gazal' but even the form, the phrase, idiom and even vocabulary has been borrowed from it. In this behalf, it may be said that 'Azad' could not gather moral strength to rise above the traditional trends current in Kashmiri poetry till then. He could not also afford to plough a lone furrow and extricate his poetry from the traditional stamp of Persian Muse. Therefore, his poetry at this stage could not be expected to touch the highest water-mark of independent thinking:-

<verses>

"I became fully intoxicated after gulping down the wine of love, even bordering on lunacy; This, I drank at the tavern of Love, one goblet after another. He filled my heart with inebriating warmth of love to the brim, so that not a niche was available there to lend ear to worldly advice. I experienced a very thin line between my life and death, presumably having lost my head by excessive indulgence."

This kind of sensual and sensuous poetry is not actually in the grain of 'Azad', but he feels compelled to toe the line his seniors had earmarked for themselves. Even the Persian vocabulary has been freely used by him, which to speak the least, has shorn the wings of his inherent imagination. At times, such Poetry sound as versified prose wafting the flavour of Persian propensities:-

<verses>

"The heart, the life, the love and the reason-The four bloodsuckers, in their own way, torment the helpless and abject feverish sentiment of irresistible call of flesh."

In this stanza only 'chhi' and 'Nali' are pure Kashmiri words, the rest being Persian; such artificial poetic constructions, initial attempts of a novice, can be profusely multiplied.

'Azad' has very sincerely confessed that at the initial stage of poetry-writing, 'Mahjoor'; the Doyen of Kashmir's lyricists, was his mentor. He used to get his poetic compositions revised and corrected by him. We can very safely assert also that at this time 'Mahjoor' was also his model. 'Azad' has at times composed his own verses on the pattern used by 'Mahjoor'; such Poems even though not imitations strictly speaking, are actually the models before him for undergoing, constant drill to catch up with this 'Master of Kashmiri Muse'. For example, 'Mahjoor' wrote the famous poem is "karo bulbulo deedaari gul" "O Bulbul steal a glance at the flowers," and 'Azad' like a faithful apprentice composed a poem with the caption "vuchh bulbulo darbaari gul" "O, Bulbul witness the Durbar of flowers." The construction of verses, their meter, and the content are exactly similar. In the same way, 'Mahjoor's' famous romantic poem "baagi nishat ke gulo" "O Flower of Nishat Garden, come unto me with exquisite fund of coquetry," has been rendered by him into his own picture-poetry like this "baagi naseem ke gulo" "O flower of Naseem Garden, come unto me with captivating babblings of a child."

However, after such a brief honey-moon with this kind of poetry, on which Mahjoor's influence was the loudest, 'Azad' was successful in carving out an exclusive experimental ground for his independent thinking, totally divorced from the tradition and any extraneous influence. It may well be called the stage of experimentation,

'Azad' was rebel and a reformer at the same time. His imagination pregnant with new values revolutionary as well as altruistic could not remain tethered to the hackneyed norms of poetry for long. The force of circumstances, brought out the real poet in him which was in content and form home-spun and hand-woven, so to speak. After undergoing excruciating travails of labour-pain, when there was a twilight engulfing him disturbing the exact equation between his head and heart, in the second stage of his poetic fervour, his imagination got chastened, and his vision was divested of faulty aberrations. He located his goal with meticulous ingenuity. He was no longer a dreamer weaving reveries of sound and sense, but a vigilant sentinel of human values. He chose to discover Man, and his environment contaminated with contradictions. To him love, was not a sentimental frenzy now but milk of human kindness saturating meaningfully every phase of life with its attendant vicissitudes:-

<verses>

"Love robs even high-statured seers given to penance, and also the well-read matters of knowledge; It tarnishes the innocent and flower-bedecked bodies of fair-maidens. At the threshold of Your Youth, you erred in selecting opulent people as your companions, perhaps not knowing that even the kings have been reduced to abject penury and those who used to give change hands with receiving alms."

This is actually the hard core of life and 'Azad' is now fully groomed to analyse it. For him poetry is a potent vehicle to unravel this bitter truth of life. It is neither jugglery of words, nor an expedient to indoctrinate people:-

<verses>

"Taking bold of a pen and to write from beginning to the end cannot be called a pleasing composition. It is nothing but gold-coating on brass, simply to cheat the innocent people."

'Azad' is now alive to the fact that beauty has its limitations; ugliness cannot be termed squarely as its antonym. These are actually states of mind, a very thin line dividing these. In the context of changing values, beauty and ugliness can become complementary to each other, as the sun and shadow in actual life. So, the poet has to proclaim:-

<verses>

"To the wise love is self-suffering, wrapping their boney skeleton underneath their garments. People with diverse intellectual dimensions call these either devices for minting money, or highway robbery; only a few can read true 'leadership' into it."

True leadership worships service before self. It has to set an example for others to follow. 'Azad' displaying courage of highest order took up the challenge of the time, its stresses and strains, its demands and obligations most seriously:-

<verses>

"Having fully felt the pulse of this age, 'Azad' is now composing these songs in which the 'Flower', the Bulbul, the wine, and their unquenching thirst are totally absent. Can this kind of poetry commend itself to poets?"

'Azad' changed the entire fabric of Kashmiri poetry, its woof and warp. He deviated from the age-long tradition. With eyes wide awake, he metamorphized the content as well as form of Kashmiri poetry. He is alive to the fact that this sweeping change will not earn him laurels for the present, because it will be lacking in the traditional attributes. He bemoans the content of Kashmiri poetry in these words.-

<verses>

"Was it befitting on your part to have bargained your faith and world for fleeting sentimentality. You were actually nursing with love those flowers which had lost their fragrance. It was not becoming of you."

This attitude of the poet heralds the third epoch of his poetry. Herein his imagination has become fully baked, his outlook completely changed and his nerve surprisingly enough quite strong to defy the tradition and usher in a new way of life. He has evolved a method of sweet persuasion punctuated with direct approach. He beckons to Man:-

<verses>

"O Dullard! you bemoan your lot, and blame your destiny least knowing that this heaven or hell is the outcome of your own actions."

Then what should be the attitude of a perfect Man according to 'Azad':-

<verses>

"If you are very soft, lying flat like the earth, the world will trample you and also heap indignities on you. If you act like steel, then remember, one day will come, when you might have tamed lions by chains even, yet this very trait of yours might also turn the steel in you into a dagger or a sword."

The attitude of Man should be middle of the road, neither too soft nor too hard. In being too soft, there is every apprehension of losing the image, and in being too hard there is every chance of using that very steel against the people which had earlier shielded them from tyranny and oppression. Therefore, Man has to tread his ground very carefully, paving a rewarding path between these two extremes. He has to apply reason, the guarded treasure of his, and not get blinded by animality:.

<verses>

"O Man, you were supposed to be the lighthouse of innate reason, but you acted like a contagious fire. You have brought discredit to humanity in the most callous way."

Man was modelled by Nature to share the common weal and woe of his co-brethren; but he reappropriated to himself all the good things of life and thus starved his fellow-beings:-

<verses>

"Nature had uncovered all her treasures for your free use. You had to share these equally with others; but you elected to become their sole guardian-cobra."

His clarion call to awaken Man to his duties is quite understandable in the background of communal disharmony, exploitation, tyranny of foreign rule, appalling inequality and monstrous behaviour of Man having lost his moorings. His nature-poetry should also be construed in that very perspective. He most consciously injects love of motherland and humanity into the dead veins of Man, bringing him back to robust health; Love for land and love for man are the two most predominant ingredients of Azad's poetry:-

<verses>

"The sweet warbling Bulbuls and cuckoos girdle round my motherland disseminating love and harmony. The flowers of this fairyland hold cups in their hands; How auspicious and thought provoking is my land of birth! "

In the very second-breath, he weaves this arresting panorama of bountiful Nature:-

<verses>

"The 'Dal lake' with its full-grown crop of lotuses is steady and silent, as if to preserve its ego of immensity, Nevertheless, the violent water-falls rush down from the hill-tops in frenzied ecstasy; How auspicious and thought-provoking my land of birth is? "

His love for Man with unparalleled catholicity can be conveniently inferred from this verse:-

<verses>

"You proclaimed yourself to be the pillar of religious obligations in terms of Hindus and Muslims; Actually you were least concerned with it. Seeing your actions, the entire humanity is in consternation."

The religious labels dividing Man from Man have no relevance to the demands the universal values of brotherhood are making at present. This kind of inconvenient luxury is out of date now. We had to pay through our nose by this artificial division between the sons of the same soil in the days of yore. This lapse needs to be rectified now:-

<verses>

"It is verily the man who constructed the temples and who also laid the foundation of 'Kaba'. Therefore, O you believer in the Quran, what fault do you find with the Gita."

Change is the sauce of life, monotony its poison. 'Azad' has explained this universal truth like this:-

<verses>

"What is life? It is a folic depicting change. Oneness of God was the harbinger of oneness of His creation; The unity of Man is the consummation of that oneness. The real purport of life is continuous turmoil, and the essence of turmoil is change."

This is the message of 'Azad'; continuous struggle against odds. Actually life had never been a bed of roses for him. He could only get a petty pittance of Rs. thirteen per month as a teacher. Despite this economic discomfiture, he never grumbled. He could hardly keep the wolf out of the door, yet he was more keen to drive away the wolves of exploitation, social inequality and political aggrandisement. His poetry is not individualistic. It is the dirge of the underdog scattered over length and breadth of this globe. He does not weave his own sighs into heart-rending poetry, but laments the woes of Man-a fallen angel. He would like to rehabilitate him, restore his pristine glory. Self is absent throughout his poetry. He sings

for whole humanity. His entire poetry is a saga of human consciousness; He does not pretend to be a preacher, a mystic, or a romanticist. He is the conscience-keeper of man.

Even though, the present, he was destined to face, was thoroughly unpalatable, yet he disdained it only to build a rosy future out of it debris. Ignoring his own to-day-inhospitable and discomforting, he, like a valiant crusader only looked towards the bright to-morrow, when Man would recognize his own self and get rid of all the ills which irk him at present:-

<verses>

"The revolution in the thinking of Man will bring back to life the doped Bulbuls, the flowers- gardens will be in fall bloom. Those who are bereft of head and heart will be looked after by this sweeping change."

But 'Azad' died a martyr to his own ideology; burning love or humanity consumed his blood every day in and out, and at a comparatively younger age of forty five he had to drop down his mantle. His 'to-day' was physically over; he had discarded it mentally since long, so it made no worthwhile difference to him; Yet his 'morrow' dawned with all the brilliance he had endeavoured all his life to bestow on it. The poet in 'Azad' can never die because his imagination is wedded to the immortal human values; The soothing touch of his poetic-alchemy will resurrect him in the morrow-the vocal champion of which he was throughout.

He is, to speak precisely, a poet of to- morrow. He only feigned to count his breath in to-day, actually his heart lay in the day following. Therefore, it was not without meaning that 'Mahjoor' his tallest senior, mentor and model paid him this glowing tribute:-

<verses>

"Oh! 'Azad' has concealed himself from this world; or the cup of life has eluded him. 'Mahjoor' would like to unfold his heart over his death by saying that the sweet-throated Bulbul has opted for silence."

12 Roopa Bhawani in Kashmiri Language and Literature

Dr. A. N. Raina



Roopa Bhawani

12.1.1 SANSKRIT

In Kashmir, poetry has ever been true to religion and thought. In early times Sanskrit was the Language, mainly Musical. It was the voice from the depth of heart, not a verbal exercise, tinged with any affectation but a simple and sincere expression of thought and knowledge preserved for the good of mankind. It was the glorious age of this language in Kashmir when scholars and researchers dived deep to unearth the treasures by the giant intellects whose characteristic zeal for divine wisdom enabled the preservation of knowledge and spiritual experience.

12.1.2 SHAIIVISM:

It is believed that phonetic distortion and decay in Sanskrit gave rise to Apabhramsha followed later by Prakrit. Kashmiri emerged as a language towards the close of the 14th Century when it assumed some form in its original base of Sanskrit. Till then Shaivism had expressed itself as the doctrine of Self recognition. The doctrine had made an appeal with its love and devotion regarded as the two main planks of this faith. Giant intellects like Abhinava Gupta, Utpaladeva, Kshemendra and other seers and scholars had enriched this thought and culture with their admirable contributions. As a doctrine of soothing thought Shaivism inspired love and affection in human hearts discarding all the painful and tortuous methods of seeking God. This soothing faith found a wide appeal across the Himalayan frontiers into Tibet, China, Kabul, Kandhar and Bactria. Intensive intellectual activity covered a vast field of literature in Philosophy, Poetry, Chronicle writing and rhetorics. Kashmir was not a forgotten land of mountains intellectually and spiritually isolated but an illumined literary heaven shedding light of knowledge and wisdom across its Himalayan borders.

12.1.3 ISLAM

With the coming of Islam, Hinduism come under the influence more refreshing and deeply protestant. Islam, it is to be admitted, gave a jolt to Hinduism in its spiritual slumber of ages. The Buddhism with its virtuous path for life had discarded the fighting element in man. However, the onslaught of Islamic faith could not alter and dive deep into the philosophic and spiritual attainments of Hinduism. May be Islam in its beginning resorted to force but, as time passed force created a subdued apathy in hearts. Passion, rage, and physical conquest made no appeal to people and failed to overpower the good in man. The result was the reflective minds dominated head and heart imploring the need of some sort of spiritual discipline for the daily conduct in life. It was this feeling that stimulated into a rational view when Sufism emerged as a doctrine of oneness based on tolerance and unity. It was a healthy approach to religions based on essential unity for human happiness. A harbinger of peace Sufism or mysticism served Islam in the real sense of the term.

12.1.4 KASHMIR

Sanskrit suffered change and what followed is known Apabhramsha that followed Prakrit. Philologists traced the merger of languages in time and in Kashmir both Apabhramsha and Prakrit ultimately merged into Kashmiri - the modern Kashmiri of Lal-Ded.

Kashmiri, it may be mentioned developed as a language, not as a dialect. It emerged in a scientific manner well rooted as it was in its antecedent Sanskrit. Within the Panjal ranges and Kajinag mountains Kashmiri became the mother tongue of those peace loving inhabitants who steadily settled to an appreciation of regular phonological correspondences of certain words and syllables which indicate common roots. Sounds may have suffered a little change here and there in certain positions to a degree but the identity was retained. To mention some of the basic words at a glance still in common use among many are Prakash, Sumran, Shabd, Rishi, Sunder, anand, Samaya, Prabhat, etc.

Koshur as Kashmiri is called belongs to the Dardic group profoundly affected by the Indo-Aryan spoken Sanskrit and during over two thousand years a part of the "Sanskrit Culture World" it was Yogeshwari Lalla (Lal Ded) whose Vaakh laid a sound foundation of this language. Her Vaakh passed from mouth to mouth in the beginning. Her four-line stanza Vaakh in Kashmiri poetry forms the base of modern Kashmiri. Her verse was uttered with all seriousness saturated as it is with philosophic thought to be pondered over and not only sung and enjoyed. These stanzas became food for deep thinking and in the words of Lal Ded herself "My Guru gave me but one precept - from without withdraw your gaze within, and fix on the inmost self."

It is necessary to mention here that her Guru "Siddha" had an important place in her spiritual attainments.

Philologists may have taken pains to study the original form of Kashmiri but the conclusion is accepted by all that Bhaskara's Lalla-vaakh in Sharda script is to be taken as authentic in modern Kashmiri.

It may not be a digression to say that language has its own rhythm of origin and growth. Time punctuates its pulsation. Nature provides elements for its enrichment. It is then that a language assumes its form. It enters deep into human mind. Some believe, may be rightly too, that the origin of a language is always divine. It flows out or even sprouts forth from the depth of soul destined to be its progenitor. So has it been with Kashmiri also.

12.1.5 LAL-DED

Lal-Ded the well known saint-poetess irradiated a deep and impalpable influence with her verse during the 14th century. Her verse had a transforming power of engendering purity and human brotherliness.

Her message found the response among the people irrespective of caste and creed. Her sayings established a tradition of harmony and tolerance which is our priceless heritage. There is not a Kashmiri, Hindu or Muslim, who had not some of her Vaakhs at the tip of his tongue. Her Vaakh or pithy poems containing spiritual experience documented in a form which is of immense value to the seeker. These are inspired speech.

Undoubtedly the progenitor of modern Kashmiri Lal-Ded is the first among the moderns not only chronologically but in modern quality of interrogation and expostulation, to her poetry. Her poetry comes alive for us even today.

The close of the 14th century brings to end the age of Yogeshwari Lalla. Till then her Vaakh had established itself and spread like fire in the valley of Kashmir. A climate of modern Kashmiri had covered itself the entire mind and senses of people who readily accepted this Shaiva-Mystic whose minstrel wanderings earned for her the name of divine Mother.

12.1.6 NUNDRISHI

It is time to see how after Lal Ded followed the line of Sheikh Noor-ud-din, reshi of Chrari-sharif in his Shrukhs educating spiritually the people of Kashmir for over fifty years (1377-1438 A. D.), in a simple vernacular. The theme, form and tone, was essentially that used by Lal-Ded in her Vaakhs. Of literary interest these pithy verses formed the correct coin of common speech. It is true that Persian influence intensified, but it also is true that interests widened towards a humanist awareness. The modern Kashmiri was taking birth towards an enlightenment and understanding. New words bring new life and standard of literary language develops towards a form of linguistic discipline. By the close of 13th century the age of Yogeshwari Lalla and Nundrishi come to close. Till then her Vaakhs and his shrukhs had established as a corrective for human mind and intellect.

12.1.7 RUPA BHAWANI

By the first water of the 18th century when Rupabhawani passed away (1721 A.D) Kashmiri language had undergone considerable change during about three centuries since the time of Lallashwari. With the coming of many Iranians from Iran where persecution by Timur drove away rich crop of scholars and seekers. Essentially these Savants after finding an asylum the happy valley of Kashmir ushered is that branch of Islamic mysticism known as Sufi-cult. And when Rupa Bhawani appeared on Kashmir scene a synthesis of Hindu and Islamic mysticism had already come to birth. In the back drop of this harmonious attitude to life Rupa Bhawani became its vocal interpreter. She became a seer for search but she was Search for herself having attained perfection from her very birth. Rupa, a spring of spiritualism, was destined to attract people from all faiths. Rupa's life reveals a course of events divine indeed but destined to fulfil a purpose. There was spiritual illumination as it were from her very birth. Faith moves mountains as such the palatial house of Pt. Madhojoo Dhar, acquired a sort of divine dimension. Rupa Bhawani will live so long as her verse is there. It is therefore, imperative that her Vaakhs be understood to the extent possible. In this respect a word about her verses will be to the point. Admirable as the attempt of Sh. T. N. Dhar, who brought out a volume on "Life, teachings and Philosophy of Rupa Bhawani" in 1977 is one cannot but value this attempt as a contribution to the literature and language of Kashmir. Any attempt as a critical study of her divine verse depends on a careful study of her text prepared by this studious researcher.

That Rupa was light herself, there is no doubt about it. Her utterances are saturated with wisdom, divine learning nothing unusual about her, spiritual experience and attainments. She admits herself to be the spark of great Brahman destined to proclaim "Soham". This message was readily accepted by the Hindus and Muslims alike. It is here that mention of Sufi thought seems necessary.

It has already been mentioned that many Iranians had come to Kashmir and there was an effective influence of Sufism here. These Sufi Saints like Shah Sadak who tried to measure his spiritual strength with Rupa Bhawani made him accept her superior attainments when Shah Sadak spent years in penance in upper Lar. The reply of Rupa Bhawani to Shah Sadak was "Surat-ma-zeth". By this time cultural mingling had effected itself and spiritual contacts had brought about identical views and approach to the quest of spirit. Hazrat Hashimbin-Mansoor had already declared "Analhaw" in 1900 A. D. The thesis his book "Kitabul Tawasoon" was "I am truth, God".

In Kashmir the times had changed since the day of Avantivarman (855 to 883 A. D.) of Utpal Dynasty, remembered even today with his temple at Awantipur. His court was adorned by two eminent poets Ratnakar and Anandvardhan. The modelling and drainage system and the drudging of the Jhelum mouth

at Baramulla was taken up by Suyya the founder of Suyyapur (Sopore). It may be of interest to mention that the Tantrics opposed to the Brahmins were again in power for some years but rebellion and the economic devastation brought misery to the people. The Rajput of Lohar Dynasty ruled Kashmir like the rest of India for more than a century when Kshtriya rituals entered the Brahmanic cult. As is common with despotic rule the whole period suffered from murders, suicides, corruption-material and moral- a record of which has been prepared by Kalhan Pandit who followed in the 12th century in the reign of Jayasinha. The mysticism from Iran was a slow but soothing stream aimed at raising up of moral and spiritual values and oneness of God. Therefore, Kashmiris readily accepted it in all its traits in which the Reshi order of Nundrishi was also contained. So Kashmiri thinking evolved out of a happy amalgam of Sanskrit, Buddhist and Islamic values.

Now is the turn of the text of Rupa Bhawani's verse, in diction, style and cumulative expression.

12.1.8 STYLE

We owe it to a Brahmin Pandit Kesho Bhat of Rainawari Srinagar, who prepared the text of the Vakhs of Rupa Bhawani originally in Sharda, seen and revised by late Pandit Hara Bhat Shastri before these were published by Kasho Bhat himself. "These Vaakhs of the Divine Mother do not seem to have gained much currency during the last 250 years. There is no record of any writing to show that any attention was paid to interpret these verses". It begs not for a rise towards climax. The reasons are not far to seek. It required a careful study of the original text now available in a volume. Original to the core these Vaakhs need reading over and over again. This diction requires thought and understanding of a high order for which it is essential to have some basic knowledge of Shastras. Her thoughts as expressed in her verse leave much to ponder over before realising the meaning. Thus there is more than what meets the eye. It is then that a reader becomes aware of the fact that Rupa Bhawani had a Yogic stand, all her own, in the domain of spirit. She is perfect and as such there is no beginning of an idea of philosophy in her verse. Each verse has its own rhythm in thought and its effect in totality.

It is not the earthly verse but an outburst, rushing out of the depth of her soul where senses and mind vanish that void where mystics enter a trance. The gaze is thus deeply within (Antarmukhi)

<verses>

In such a state of concentration there is the bliss of union with the Infinite. The translator has however taken pains to explain the subtle principle of Muladhara in these ten verses strewing the refrain for clarity and concentration. It will be no digression to say that the physical span of Rupa Bhawani's movement has not been beyond ten miles from Srinagar and its environs within the Hariparbat side of the Anchar Lake with its mountain amphitheatre with the Lar area where Shah Sadiq lived at a higher elevation. Rupa Bhawani settled here for her meditation at Vaskur. The famous shrine of Rajni Devi at Tullamulla is situated in this area. Shankaracharya hill and the Mahadev Peak look over this region.

12.1.9 COMPARISON

It may not be fair to weigh words of Rupa Bhawani and compare these with other poets of Kashmiri. There being nothing very common in vocabulary, such an attempt will lead us nowhere. In thought, however, Rupa Bhawani states her Yogic preparation with that of Lal Ded. Accepting like Lal Ded the guidance of Guru before whom ego waxes with divine logic, one attains the state of divine union. A close study of the Gita and the Vakkhs will reveal an identity of views. Here again Gita (iv,46) be referred to for each shape of experience in the practice of Yoga. Well-versed with the Yogic technique of Lal Ded, Rupa Bhawani explains how unity of self with the supreme self required "Anugraha" to free the spirit off the shackles of matter. In this respect Rupa Bhawani does not go beyond the teachings of Gita.

<verses>

Does this form the basis of her miracles? Well versed in Spand Shastras as she was, it may not be easy to appreciate the verses that follow the verses of Ist canto. It requires spiritual intelligence to follow the Vakkhs in the second canto (113 verses) in which the great union is propounded. Rupa Bhawani is above

the experience of pleasure and pain. The translator has rightly remarked that "The truth of developing inward vision through these utterances can be understood by the practice of Yoga". The purpose of Yoga is summarised thus:

<verses>

"World teacher, ever in service, worthy of infinite worship."

While going carefully through the words in Sanskrit and sound close to each other in meaning Kashmiri similar or identical may appear, but no separate word in Kashmiri is either attempted to be searched or found. It is not the homophony of words, but the regular phonological correspondence of words and syllables indicating common roots.

Modern Kashmiri bears no resemblance with the language of Rupa Bhawani and no amount is worthwhile to make such an attempt. New words brought new life to this language and in keeping with the traditional cultural mingling the Kashmiri got enriched. Its vocabulary depending on its prefixes and suffixes enabled a new coinage of words. The sweetness of Kashmiri poetry is due to that mystical quality of individual coinage making it fit for poetry. There is no abuse of foreign words. They are set well in sound and meaning.

There is nothing beyond God in Rupa Bhawani's verse. And if life aims at aimless journey one wonders how in a mysterious wandering one can get peace of mind.

The third canto signifies perfection exclaiming "I am that great Brahman". Such verse, to be intelligible, needs grace of God (Anugraha). Since Samadhi comes in it so it becomes an exercise in yoga that for perfect to a degree far beyond is not within comprehension. It appears that no effort is made by Rupa Bhawani to make herself intelligible to the non-sanskrit speaking people. Reason is not far to seek. Gushing out of wisdom in Sanskrit completely annihilates environmental consciousness which is an attempt at a low level to that of bliss of Heavenly peace, the domain of Supreme Brahman. "Greatest miracle of biological power is the development of speech in man which finally developed into power of writing," Very rightly remarked by Shri T. N. Dhar, at page 156.

Coming to the 4th canto of Vaakhas it ends the divine message being the last. Her spiritual quest is an open penance aiming at spiritual unity. Renunciation leaps to actual attainment. "Having nothing yet hath all" is often quoted. It applies to the teachings of Rupa Bhawani. To give up worldly pleasures for some time never means complete renunciation. It is a period of penance a sort of spiritual preparation aiming at purification of the devotee. She depends on wisdom enshrined in the Vedas to give up duality. Respecting tradition, custom and kinship, she only bridged the gulf with yoga. Samadhi she stresses, siddhi, skill, prosperity, gush out from the source. Personality is to be, free from decay and death.

12.1.10 CONCLUSION

Linguistically speaking Kashmiri appears not to have emerged as an accepted mixture of Sanskrit and Persian words as is proved to be later in the middle of the 19th Century. In the time of Rupa Bhawani whatever the reasons, the diction in her verse shows no synthesis of, Sanskrit and Persian. Assimilation appears to have taken along time as her verse is not even a half baked mingling of words from Persian. it is not easy to erase her contribute on to Kashmiri language. Had it not been for her rich verse (about 150 verses) to Kashmiri literature-"obscure and obsolete" verse as mentioned in haste by some critics - the poetess may have left little impression on Kashmiri. This is not to be forgotten that the verse of Rupa Bhawani is to be studies in isolation and not as an evolutionary wave in the synthesized current of Kashmiri. A recluse as she was her spiritual domain was a divine Kingdom of her own, unconcerned with the people around her.

13 Pilgrim Spots of Kashmir

Prof. Chaman Lal Sapru

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Sanskrit Shloka says that almost all the pilgrimages of the World are also found in Kashmir, such as the holy Ganga and the Prayaga.

Every Hindu considers it his duty to immerse the ashes of his deceased ancestors in the Ganga. In Kashmir we give the same preference to Gangabal as is given to the Ganga in holy scriptures. The same is true about the prayaga at Allahabad where the Ganga, the Yamuna and the invisible Saraswati meet and our Prayaga at Shadipur which is the 'Sangam' of Kashmir's two important rivers the Vitasta, and the Sindhu. Every Hindu who offers prayers according to Sanatana traditions, worships God in the form of PANCHAYATAN. The Panchayatan comprises the following deities-Ganesha, Shiva, Vishnu, Devi and Surya. We have temples and Teerthas attributed to the above mentioned gods and also dedicated to Avatar like Shri Rama.

13.1 GANESHA

Ganesha is worshipped as the Aadi Deva (The First Deity). Ganesha is the son of Sankara or Shiva. Every Hindu starts his worship with obeisance to Lord Ganesha. Ganesha is considered as the Siddhidata (the, boon-giver) and Vighnaharta (destroyer of obstacles). In Srinagar we have a prominent temple of Ganesha in the heart of the city. The temple previously under the management of the Dharmarth Trust, is now managed by a local managing committee. An annual festival on Vaisakha Shukla Chaturdashi is held in the premises of the temple and a Mahayajna by the Brahman Maha Mandal is performed on the Brahma Jayanti day. There is a legend that during the atrocities committed by Pathan rulers, several hundred years back, the original idol of Lord Ganesha was submerged in the Vitasta by the Pandits to save it from desecration. During the Dogra rule the idol was reclaimed by the devotees and installed on the Vaisaka Shukla Chaturdashi in the temple.

This particular idol is placed in the outer temple by the side of the Siva Lingam and two bigger and more attractive idols, most probably donated by Dogra rulers, are also installed in the main temple.

There is another important temple of Lord Ganesha at the foot of the hillock of Hari Parbat which every Hindu considers it his sacred duty to go round every day. Lord Ganesha's temple is the first amongst the shrines strewn on this hillock.

Even the holy pilgrimage to Sri Amarnathji starts with the worship of Sri Ganesha at Ganeshabal near Pahalgam.

13.2 SANKARA OR SIVA

There is hardly any place of Worship in Kashmir, where you will not find a Siva Lingam. In the world-famous cave of SWAMI AMARNATHJI an ice Lingam is formed to full size on the fifteenth of the bright half of every month, (Poornima), hence is of reverential attraction to the devotees of all faiths. This holy place is visited on the Shravana Poornima every year by thousands of pilgrims from far off places. The Pilgrimage starts from the Dashnami Akhara of Srinagar in the form of a procession. The Mahant carries the holy silver mace of Lord Siva and is followed by hundreds of Sadhus reaching the cave on the Shravana Poornima, which coincides with Raksha-Bandhan.

People like Aadi Shankaracharya, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramtirtha have visited this place. Swami Ramtirtha has composed beautiful verses in praise of the mysteries of the Lord. Swami Vivekananda says to his European disciples, "The image was the Lord Himself. It was all worship there. I never have been to anything so beautiful, so inspiring.

13.3 SANKARACHARYA TEMPLE

A beautiful stone-temple of Lord Shiva is situated on a hill in the Srinagar city commanding a magnificent view. The temple is managed by the Dharmartha Trust. It is believed that the first Sankaracharya on his visit to Srinagar, meditated on this spot. Swami Vivekananda has given the following description of the temple:- "Look ! what genius the Hindu shows in placing his temples ! He always chooses a grand scenic effect. See ! the temple commands the whole of Kashmir."

The snow-clad peaks round the valley bear one or the other name of Lord Shiva You have "Mahadeva", "Harmukha", etc. Under the Mahadeva peak in the picturesque range of Harwan, the famous Siva-Sutras (the base of Shaiva Philosophy) were composed. Devotees visit this place particularly on the same day on which the pilgrimage to Amarnathji is undertaken. They also visit the following places of worship connected with Shiva on the same day. Dhyaneswar in Bandipur, Thajwor in Bijbehara and Harishwar in Khonmoh.

There are numerous temples of Shiva in the whole valley. Sadashiva temple in Purushyar and Someshwar temple in Habba- Kadal find the description in the famous histories and Puranas of Kashmir.

13.4 THE VISHNU PADA

The only holy place connected with Lord Vishnu in Kashmir is Vishnu-Pads or Kaunsar Naga. This is a big lake situated at a height of more than 14,000 feet in Anantnag district. The lake is shaped as a foot and it is believed that Lord Vishnu had placed his holy foot in the place where the present big lake was formed.

13.5 THE DEVI (DIVINE MOTHER)

We have numerous places of pilgrimages attributed to the Goddess in Kashmir of which the Kheer Bhawani, Shri Sharika Mandir, Mahakali Mandir (Srinagar and Vadora), Jwala Mukhi (Khrew), Shailaputri (Nagabal, Baramulla), Baladevi, Sri Vaishnodevi and Sarthal Devi (last two in Jammu region) are well known.

13.6 KSHEER BHAWANI

The temple of Goddess Maharajni, known as Ksheer-Bhawani, is situated about 14 miles away from Srinagar at village Tulamula in the famous Sindh valley. The road leading to Ksheer Bhawani has also spiritual significance. J. Krishna Murti in his booklet "At the feet of the Master" writes about the following four "Sadhanas" to achieve realization. They are Viveka (Discrimination), Vairagya (renunciation), Sadachar (righteousness) and Prema or Mumukshaa (the eternal love). While going to Ksheer Bhawani one comes across the places bearing the same name. First we reach 'Vicharnaga.' Vichar is synonym of 'Viveka'. Then we reach 'Tyangal-bal' (the hill of burning charcoals) and Kavaj-var (the fire of cremation ground) and Amarher (the immortal staircase). These two names also denote the feeling of renunciation. The third place is Aanchar Lake, which derives its origin from Aachar (the righteousness). After going through these places we reach the cherished destination, the holy place of the Divine Mother and one is all love pure and divine with the Divine Mother.

An old Sanskrit text called the 'Bringesha Samhita' carries a chapter known as 'Rajny-Pradurbhava' and the Pauranic description of the said Teertha is given in the said book. The demon-king of Lanka (Ravana) in order to attain unlimited power worshipped Mother Maharajni. The Divine Mother, after being moved by the immense 'tapas' (penance) performed by Ravana, bestowed upon him many boons.

Soon after, Ravana began to lead a life of luxury and after forcibly taking away Sita, prepared himself for a battle with Lord Rama. After watching the misbehaviour of Ravana, the Devi asked Hanumana to take Her to Satisar (Kashmir) along with 360 Nagas.

Hanumanji installed the Devi at Tulamula village in Kashmir Valley. Here the Devi is being remembered as 'Ksheer-Bhawani' or Goddess Rajna. The Devi began to be worshiped with flowers and offerings of milk and sweets only.

The Brahmins of Tulamula have been described in Rajatarangini as full with spiritual powers.

For quite some time in the past this important Teertha remained under flood waters and it was only after a pious Brahmin Shri Krishna Pandit had a vision that the place was rediscovered. He was a great devotee of the Devi and composed the famous Rajna Stotra.

A beautiful marble temple has been erected in the centre of the 'Kunda' (spring) by Dogra rulers. This spring changes colours and is shaped as "OM" in Sharada script. Every year an annual festival is held on Jyeshtha Shukla Ashtami at this holy place. Swami Vivekananda and many others have performed Tapas at this holy place and had visions.

13.7 SUN TEMPLE AT MARTAND

Only five miles away from the town of Anantnag is a village known as Mattan or Bhawan. In ancient scriptures the name of this place is given as Martand (the sun). Here is a beautiful spring and a small rivulet flowing nearby known as the Chaka. On the banks of the Chaka thousands of devotees; from northern India perform Shradhas to their deceased ancestors on Adhikmasa months on Vijaya Saptami. About 2.5 km. from the spring are ruins of a magnificent temple known as Martand. The temple in Indo-Greek architectural style was built by the great emperor Lalitaditya.

13.8 OTHER SHRINES

The two prominent places of pilgrimages of Muslims and Sikhs are Hazratbal and Chhatipadshahi. The Hazratbal shrine on the Dal lake facing east is known as the second Mecca. The holy relic of Prophet Muhammad is preserved here. The Chhati Padshahi is a Gurdwara near Hari Parbat which had been visited by the sixth Guru of the Sikhs.

Besides the above mentioned places of pilgrimages there are hundreds of holy places found in Kashmir. A brief description of these places is given below:

13.9 DISTRICT ANANTNAG

AMARNATH

This is the holy cave in which the ice-lingam of Lord Siva is formed changing its size with the waning and waxing of the moon.

VETHA – VATUR

(Vitasta-tatra) : Here is the source of river Vitasta. Annual pilgrimage to this place is performed on the thirteenth day of the dark half of the Bhadra month.

KHANA BARNI

Dedicated to Divine mother, it is near Qazigund.

KAPAL MOCHAN

Annual festival on Sravana Shukla Dwadashi is held here and devotees perform shradha of teenagers. It is situated near Shopian.

MANZGAM

A temple in the forests is dedicated to Mother Rajna. Annual festival is held on Jyeshtha Ashtami.

13.10 PROPER ANANTNAG

A holy spring after which the town as well as the district is named is famous for its crystal clear water. Annual festival of Ananta Devata is held on the fourteenth day of the dark half of Bhadra month.

THAJIWORE

It is situated near Bijbihara. An old Shiva temple is found here and the annual festival is held on Sravana Poornima.

GAUTAMA NAGA

It is situated about 4.5 kms. away from Anantnag.

LOKABHAWAN

Annual festival is held here and a Mahayajna performed. It is 11 miles from Anantnag.

UMA NAGARI

A temple and a spring of Goddess Uma is found here. Annual Mahayajna is performed here.

NAGADANDI

Sri Ramakrishna Maha sammelan managed by Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee Kanyakumari, is situated here. An ancient spring and a few idols of some ancient temple are found here. Annual festival is held here on the day Chhari (Amarnath Yatra) starts. It is 3 km. away from Achhabal.

GOSAYEEN GOND

An attractive neat and clean Ashram is found here. During Amarnath Yatra a number of devotees visit this Ashrama and stay and mediate for a few days.

VISHNU PAD

Known also as Kaunsarnaga. It is about 14 miles away from Aharbal fall. It is a hazardous journey.

JWALA MUKHI

This Teertha attributed to Goddess Jwala is situated about 20 kms. from Srinagar in Anantnag district. A temple of Jawalaji is situated on a hillock there. Annual festival is held on "Jwala Chaturdasi" (fourteen day of the dark second half of Asharh).

KURUKSHETRA

It is near Pampore (famous for saffron, where famous mystic Poetess Lalleshwari or Lal ded lived). Festivals are held here on the occasions of solar and lunar eclipses.

BALADEVI

This famous Teertha is attributed to Bala Bhagwati. She is considered to be the 'Istadevi' (presiding deity) of the Dogra rulers, hence the Teertha is managed by the Dharmarth Trust. This place of pilgrimage is situated in Balahama near Pampur.

13.11 DISTRICT BARAMULLA

KOTI TEERTHA

It is situated on the right bank of the Vitasta at Baramulla. It is believed that the holy water of one crore of teerthas reaches here through Vitasta and therefore is very sacred.

SHAILAPUTRI (Devibal)

This Teertha is situated on the left bank of the Vitasta at Baramulla. This is a miniature Ksheer-Bhawani.

NANDKESHWAR (Seer-Jagir)

A famous place of Nandakeshwar Bhairava situated on the left bank of the Vitasta at Sopore. The annual festival is held on Jyeshtha Amavasya here.

NANDKESAWAR (Sumbal)

A place for worship of Nandakeshwar Bhairava situated in Sumbal village. **GOPHABAL:** Situated near Langet, Handwara.

BHADRAKALI

The Teertha attributed to Goddess Kali is situated in a thick pine forest near Vadipora (Handwara).

TAKAR (Gushi)

Situated near Kupwara this teertha attributed to the Divine Mother (Maharajna) is found here.

CHANDIGAM

Situated in the picturesque valley of Lolab in Sogam, a Niranjani Akhara is established here.

GOSAYEEN TENG

Situated on a hillock at Baramulla. Some springs attributed to Bhagwan Ramchandra are found here.

SHARADA JI

It (now in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) is situated on the bank of Kishanganga famous throughout the country before partition. This is considered as a "Siddha Peetha" like Sharika Chakreshwar temple at Hari Parbat. It was a place of learning also and students as well as scholars from far off places used to come here. Some monuments still exist there.

Sharda can be approached via Hoaihama (Kupwara) through the Safawali Gali which leads to Lashadut and from Laderwan (also in Kupwara) via Patukha Gali which leads to Shalabhothu. Both Lashadut and Shalabhothu are on the LOC. The Safawali route is comparatively easier.

Across the LOC, Pakistan has constructed a pucca, metalled vehicular road on the right bank of the Kishenganga. A regular passenger bus service plies thereon. The bus plying on the road belongs to the Abbotabad Kashmir Bus Service.

One can go to Sharda by either these routes or from Muzaffarabad or Teetwal which have bridges strong enough for carrying vehicles across the river. The journey by bus would obviously be comfortable. But then the bridges and the whole of the vehicular road are in Pakistan. So undertaking the journey is dependent upon a request being made to Pakistan by India and upon Pakistan granting the necessary permission.

Source: **SaffronValley.com**

13.12 DISTRICT SRINAGAR

SHANKARACHARYA

A beautiful Shiva temple exists on the hillock called Shankaracharya hill. Annual festival on the day of Amarnath Darshan is held here.

HARI PARBAT

A hillock in Srinagar city, it has many temples around it. The main temple is of Goddess Sharika, the presiding deity of Kashmir. Annual festival on the first Navratra & Ashadh Navami is held here. This is considered as a 'Siddha Peetha'.

KSHEERABHAWANI

Twenty kilometres away from Srinagar a spring in which a temple is constructed dedicated to Mother Rajna. Annual festival held on Jyeshtha Ashtami.

GANGABAL

A lake situated near Harmakh peak is the most beautiful lake of Kashmir. Annual Yatra is held on the Ganga Ashtami in Bhadra month. People immerse the ashes of their deceased there and also perform Shradha. The journey is most hazardous but much rewarding.

GUPTAGANGA (Nishat)

Just adjacent to Nishat garden is situated the GuptaGanga. On the Baishakhi festival devotees from all over Kashmir have a dip in the spring here. A Shaiva Mathika is also attached to it where Sunday classes on Shaivism were conducted by Shaivacharya Swami Lakshman Joo.

JYESHTESHWARA

A temple attributed to Jyeshtha Devi is located in between Shankaracharya and Chasma Shahi. A pilgrimage to this place on Thursdays of Jyeshtha is considered auspicious.

GANGAJATAN

Situated in tehsil Badgam; on Ganga Ashtami day people go there and have a dip there. It is almost a dry spring but on this particular day at a particular hour water gushes out and devotees have their holy bath.

BADIPUR

Situated in tehsil Chadura near Nagam, it is a miniature Ksheer Bhawani. Annual Mahayajna on Vaishakha Shukla Ashtami is held here.

MAHAKALI ASTHAPAN

Situated by the side of famous Khanaqah of Shah Hamdan; it is believed that a magnificent temple of Mahakali existed here. The annual festival is held here on Pausa Krishan Paksha Ashtami.

VASKUR

Dedicated to a mystic poetess Roopa Bhawani, considered to be an incarnation of Goddess Sharika; Annual festival is held here on Sahib-Saptami.

VICHAR NAG

Situated on Srinagar-Leh Highway at a distance of about 10 kms from Srinagar, the annual festival is held on the last day of the Kashmiri calender i. e. Chaitra Amavasya. The famous Kashmiri Pandit-Shirya Bhat-responsible for the change of heart of Sultan Zainulabidin, later known as Budshah (the Great Monarch), also lived here.

13.13 JAMMU

VAISHNO DEVI

It is as famous as Amarnathji or Ktheer-Bhawani in Kashmir. Thousands of Pilgrims mostly from northern India visit this place. Divine Mother in Vaishnavee form is being worshipped here. The main temple is 11 kms. above Katra, a town on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. Devotees prefer to visit the shrine on Nava-Ratra Days.

SARTHAL DEVI

It is situated in Doda district of Kishtwar. There is a popular belief that mother Sharika (Hari Parbat) shifts during winter to this place. There are other places of pilgrimages in Jammu region also such a Burha Amarnath, Sudh Mahdev, etc.

14 Salient Features of Kashmir Monistic Shaivism

Prof. M. L. Kokiloo

Shaivism of Kashmir has developed between the eighth and the twelfth centuries of the Christian era. This comparatively younger philosophy has tried to explain all such ambiguities which the ancient philosophers have failed to resolve. Like Advaitavedanta it is monistic, like Vaishnavism it is theistic, like yoga it is practical, like Nayaya it is logical as also appeasing like Buddhism. Kashmir Shaivism is, therefore, idealistic and realistic in essence, strongly advocating a pragmatic approach to life.

Tantras have been revealed by Lord Shiva through his five mouths namely Ishana, Tatpurusha, Sadyojata, Vamadeva, and Aghora. These very five mouths represent his five energies namely Chitshakti (consciousness), Ananda shakti (Bliss), Ichhashakti (will) Jnanashakti (knowledge) and Kriyashakti (Action) respectively. When these aforesaid five energies of Lord Shiva unite with each other in such a way that each of these takes bold of the rest simultaneously, they reveal sixty four Bhairvatantras which are purely monistic. This very approach explained in these Tantras is called Kashmir Shaivism or Trika philosophy.

Veda, Shaiva, Vama, Dakshina, Kaula, Matta, and Trika are the seven Acharas (systems) recognised by Kashmir Shaivism. The most popular among the seven Acharas has been the Trika system. What does this Trika mean? Trika means trinity of Nara Shakti and Shiva as is given in Tantras. Nara means an individual, Shakti means the Universal Energy and Shiva means the Transcendental Being. Thus a soul recognizes himself as Shiva by means of the realization of his Shakties - the powers of God-head. Therefore this Trika system advocates the practical path towards complete self-realization. To make it more clear, this three fold science of spirit is based on the three energies of Lord Shiva namely Para, Parapara and Aparapara. Para energy is subjective energy of Lord Shiva and it is regarded as the supreme. Parapara energy is cognitive energy of Lord Shiva and is called as intermediate. Aparapara energy is objective energy of Lord Shiva and it is known as inferior energy. Thus the Trika philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism advocates how a human being, engrossed in the inferior objective energy of Lord Shiva, can be taken upwards viz. towards the supreme energy of Lord Shiva through his cognitive energy. For this journey, undertaken to attain the real Transcendental state of self, Trika philosophy has laid down three means within the ambit of cognitive energy. The first and the supreme expedient is called Shambhavopaya. The intermediate expedient is known as Shaktopaya and the third expedient is called Anvopaya.

14.1 Shambhavopaya

It is a unique way of yoga. All the mental activities cease to exist in it. In Shri Purva-Shastra the definition of Shambhavopaya is given as under

<verses>

Shambhavopaya is a path, shown by the supreme master, in which the knowledge of the ultimate reality comes through the practice of emptying one's mind completely of all thoughts. Thus it is called as Nirvikalpayoga because no vikalpa i.e. a mental idea in name and form emerges in it. It is a way of keeping one's mind completely motionless and calm, yet awake. It materialises by one's strong will, therefore it is called as Ichhopaya or Ichha yoga by Shri Abhinavagupta in his 'Tantrasara' a book, in which the precise summary of 37 chapters of Tantraloka has been condensed in lucid style. By practising this yoga a 'Sadhaka' feels that sudden charge of supreme energy of Shaivahood which remains for a little while in the initial stage and automatically goes stronger and stronger day by day by constant Abhyasamental drill. In this way Shambhavopaya is the direct means to absolute liberation. According to monistic theory of Kashmir Shaivism Shambhavopaya is meant only for those great souls who have developed their awareness of Chit consciousness through the Anugraha of the master to get enthroned on this spiritual height, three ways have been advocated which are as under:

1. Vishwa chit pratibimbatvam
2. Paramarshodayakrama
3. Mantradhayabhinnatvam

By the first way a 'sadhaka' feels that the entire gamut of reciting an incantation, consists of six successive stages namely: varanadhva (syllabic) , Padaadhva (consisting of words) , Mantradhva (incantative) , Kaladhva (Instantative), Tattvadha (contential), Bhavanadhva (peripheric) are reflected in the mirror of one's own consciousness and by this awareness he enters the universal consciousness. After perceiving it, a seeker gets Shambava Samadhi (mental equipoise). By the second way i.e. Paramarshodayakrama, a realizer understands that the entire field or sounds, words and sentences is nothing but the supreme self. By developing this attitude in his own mind, his innate faculties are focussed towards the Shambav Samadhi. By the third way i.e. Mantradhayabhinnatvam an aspirant practises the state at the universal 'I'-consciousness.* By the Continuous awareness of upper consciousness, individual's "I" consciousness automatically vanishes and it is united with God-consciousness- where 'sadhaka' is one with subjective energy of Lord Shiva. Thus Shamabavopaya is that path where 'sadhaka' gets rid of the recitation of Mantras, of different types of 'sadhana' and concentration on particular deity. According to Kashmir Shaivism there is another higher method than Shambavopaya, which is known as Anupaya.

In Shri Malinivijay Shaivagam, it is explained as under:

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*In this context the three stages of a word coming to life-Jyeshtha, Raudri and Amba deserve also attention - Shivasutra, II. 3. (Ed.)

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<verses>

Higher than Shambavopa is another means known as Anupaya. It is effortless effort and method less method. It is named as Anandopaya also. The literal meaning of Anupaya is the means without any means. The negative suffix in this word signifies complete minuteness and not total nothingness, just as in the word Anudara. Shri Abhinavagupta says in "Tantraloka" "atr anudara kanya itivat nanolparthatvam." This Anupaya yoga is the highest, the final and the direct means to liberation. A mere touch or a mere glance of the one who is in the state of Anupaya makes one's entrance pure to the kingdom of Transcendental Bliss. Just as a Poisonous snake emits the venomous effect to a person from a great distance, similarly a great yogi residing in Anupaya state sends the seeker, who has intense devotion for the Lord into the same state owned by him, by his mere glance or touch without making any difference between the master and the disciple. In Tantrasar Shri Abhinavagupta explains this Anupaya in the following words

<verses>

The supreme Lord, is self-effulgent, soul personified of the Real self. what can be the means to attain this supreme Bliss ? Godly unity is no means as Godly-unity is a momentary feature not a permanent one. Knowledge is no means as He is ever luminous. Unsheathing of various covers are no means as it is unthinkable for Him to don any cover. What can be the means to find Him? As the means also are devoid of self - entity without His existence. Therefore the entire 'unique chit' (consciousness) cannot be judged by the time factor, cannot be covered by the space, cannot be limited by names etc., cannot be controlled by the words, cannot be made clear by arguments. Thus from time factor to the field of arguments that Independent Supreme Bliss from 'I' consciousness, by its free will for attainment of godly unity merges into universal consciousness. When a seeker is firmly entrenched in this state he is in continuous harmony with the Godhead without any external means. So there is no need of chanting Mantras, performing various kinds of worship, doing austere penance, or undergoing any other form of meditation for him.

These various forms of means are not sufficient enough to throw light on that unlimited samvit. Can we see the bright sun by the limited ghata (clay pot)? When a seeker having an all-pervading outlook of this kind, contemplates constantly in this way, gets immersed in the Supreme self of Lord Shiva in no time.

14.2 Shaktopaya

It is a yogic practice of thought only. In this the seeker has to develop concentration upon God-consciousness by means of a special initiating thought unfolded by the master. The definition of Shaktopaya is given in Shri Malinivijaya Tantra as under:-

<verses>

When the aspirant concentrates on the particular thought of God-consciousness without the support of Pranayama and chanting of mantras etc, he develops that consciousness uninterruptedly. That state is called Shaktopaya.

The particular thought like 'I am all consciousness', 'I am all', or 'I am Transcendental Bliss', must be firmly adjusted in mind with such an awareness that no other thought comes to displace it. Aspirant established in this state of awareness enters the state of Transcendental consciousness and passes from duality to unity.

Shaktopaya does not involve any objective 'Dhyana' intellectual meditation, or anything of that sort. It is an expedient of very high order and is meant for those who possess unflinching devotion and sharp intellectual acumen. It is solely meant for those who are not capable of undergoing Nirvikalpa yoga of Shambavopaya, because of the deep-rooted mental impressions of the impure vikalpa (thought-aberrations).

This Shaktopaya is called Jnanopaya also, because the mental activities of meditation are the most important factors in it. Thus it is an indirect means to complete liberation.

14.3 Anvopaya

Anvopaya is that expedient which is concerned with 'anu' a limited being, signifying his mental effort to get rid of the ignorance of his true nature. In this means all the faculties of understanding are to be concentrated upon particular objects other than the self, and the self is to be experienced with the help of those particular objective entities. In Shri Purvashastra Anvopaya is explained as under:

<verses>

To understand this definition squarely we have got to explain it point wise. 'Uchhaar' connotes an awareness during inhalation or exhalation, when the consciousness of the realizer flows in between these two breaths in harmonious collusion. 'Karan' connotes that mental practice; which is developed through the grooming of organs of the senses and actions. It is conducted in the actual perception of one's field of activities in daily life. 'Dhyaan' means the experience of one's endless nominal and phenomenal nature through abstract meditation on one's understanding. 'Varna' is the incessant practice based on Dhvani (sound) which comes to the aspirant within hearing at the time of meditation. When a seeker plants his consciousness on the heart, navel or the space between the two eye-brows, simultaneously reciting the mantra through mind only, is known as the practice of 'sthaankalpanaa'. The lowest types of this form are the as the practice Lingam, the altar and the image etc.

This expedient is known as Kriyayoga or Kriyopaya, because concentration on object in this yoga involves sufficient mental effort. Thus action plays phenomenal part in reaching upto this mental stage.

In fact, a seeker with the help of inferior methods like Pranayama or chanting of Mantra etc. has to develop God-consciousness in this third path known as Anvopaya, because he is endowed with inferior capacity of mind and meditation.

Thus this triple action, reaction and interaction of mind and perception with consequent follow-up mental drill in this system of Shaivism has given it the name of 'Trika'.

Acharya Somananda (first half of the ninth century A. D.) has given a historical account about the origin of monistic Shaiva school of Kashmir in his monumental work "Shiva Drishti". He says that in the age of

'Kali' when all the sages left this world and went to some place known as 'kalaapigraam', the teachings of the mysteries of Shaiva faith came to a stop. Then Lord Shri Kanthanatha advised His disciple sage Durvasa to start afresh the system of the practice of Shaivism in the world. He in turn imparted essence of the monistic Shaiva faith to a disciple of his named 'trambkaditya'. In this way fourteen generations passed and this knowledge was spelt out by the respective Gurus systematically. The fifteenth preceptor contrary to the faith in celibacy of previous teachers, married a Brahmin girl who gave birth to a male child namely 'sangmaditya' who was the sixteenth teacher in the line. While on pilgrimage, he came to Kashmir and settled here permanently. Various sages, seers, scholars and authors blossomed in this school after its advent to Kashmir valley. Sangamditya's son and disciple was "Varshaditya" and his son and disciple was "Arunaditya" who carried on this system further. The nineteenth teacher was "Arunaditya's son" 'Ananda' and his son and disciple was 'Somananda', who was the twentieth Acharya in this line.

Shri Abhinavagupta also gives the historical account of monistic Kashmir Shaivism in his extra-ordinary work 'Tantraloka'. He says that three Siddhas (masters of perfection) namely 'tryambak', 'aamardak' and 'srinaath' came to this mortal world under the control of 'Srikanthnatha'. These three Siddhas, who were proficient in the monistic, the dualistic and the monistic cum dualistic Shaiva philosophy respectively established three separate schools of Shaivism; 'tryambaknatha' initiated another line through his will born daughter. This school of thought was known as Ardha-Tryambaka. Monistic system of Kashmir Shaivism is actually the school of Trayambakanatha. In fact Shaiva literature of Kashmir, available at present, belongs only to this very school of Trayambakanatha.

Many centuries after Trayambakanatha, the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism was taught by four great teachers namely Somananda, Erakanatha, Sumatinatha and Vasuguptanatha. These teachers have established four different schools which are as follows:

1. Pratyabhijna school,
2. Krama school,
3. Kula school,
4. Spanda school.

Pratyabhijna means recognizing one's own self once again. This represents a mental act by which one realizes and reunites with the original state i.e. universal consciousness. In 'Shivadrishti' Acharya 'Somananda' explains this pratyabhijna philosophy systematically. Shri Utpaladeva, the esteemed disciple of Acharya 'Somananda' presents vividly this very system in his famous book 'Ishvarapratyabhijna.' He defines pratyabhijna as under:

<verses>

just as a bride who has heard all about her bride-groom and even has seen him many a time, does not recognise him unless he is shown to her, similarly an individual who has read and heard much about his being, which is nothing but Shiva- the universal does not recognize himself unless he is guided by the Master. This sort of recognition is known as Pratyabhijna.

Krama school of Shaivism was expounded by Erakanatha. Its main purpose is to develop such strength of awareness that one transcends the circle of spaces time and form and finally raises himself to the state of universal consciousness. By realizing that state one enters the kingdom of Param-Shiva the Transcendental Being. The discipline of Anavopaya discussed earlier is concerned with this system of Kashmir Shaivism.

Kula school of Kashmir Shaivism was taught by Sumatinatha. The purpose of this doctrine is to rise above individual energy and assimilate the Blissful Energy of totality. Thus it is the highest thought which explains the state of universal Being; from which the whole universe emerges and then merges in it. All practices of "Shambhavopaya" discussed earlier are connected with this system of Kashmir Shaivism. Spanda school was heralded in Kashmir by Vasugupta natha. This system directs the seeker to concentrate on each and every moment in this world, even the Vibration of a blade of grass carries one to

God consciousness. In Shri Vijnana Bhairava a traditional treatise of this school, one hundred and twelve ways are explained to attain the spanda state by meditating on the centre of mental or physical acts. All the practices of 'Shaktopaya' explained earlier, are connected with this system of Shaivism.

In fact these four schools are not different from each other, because all these systems take an aspirant to the universal God consciousness, the goal being the same, even when the ways are varied.

To sum up, the thought of Kashmir Shaivism is great, world affirming and universal. No Philosophic theory has so far presented complete view of the truth as is presented by the monistic Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir. The principle of Svatantrya (self-dependence) called as the principle of highest monism is the main doctrine of this philosophy. The arguments for accepting this mental discipline are so convincing, so satisfying and so appealing that once an aspirant tastes their nectar, naturally disdains other philosophic systems. This philosophy deals with the minutest and subtlest principles of life. It treats problems of man and the universe by the method of analysis and synthesis. The Shaivistic way of arguments is logical and psychological and is supported by all kinds of every day experiences. The greatest quality of Shaiva philosophers is that they invite criticism of opponents and after threadbare discussion they silence them with counter arguments. Like its theoretical side, the practical side of Shaivism is still more palatable, without inflicting any pain on his body, without suppressing the emotions and instincts, without controlling his breath and in that drill suppressing his mind in Dhyanayoga, a realizer has been enjoined to enjoy life within limits as per humanistic laws, and to replenish the taste of spiritual attainments by means of Shaivistic yoga which is simple and interesting. He has been exhorted to attend to worldly pursuits and simultaneously yoke himself to self-realization. Thus the Shaivistic path is a sure and a steady path with very little danger of degradation, because the conflict between matter and spirit has been avoided herein. The ultimate aim of Shaivism is self-dependence in each and every respect, which aim can be achieved in the realization of God-consciousness.

It is very unfortunate that such a complete and developed system of philosophy making a happy compromise between Immanence and Transcendence, Self and Super-self, Finite and Infinite, domain of man and kingdom of Heaven, has not so far become known to the whole of the world. Future shall have to make amends for this inexcusable lapse by propagating this school of thought with pronounced meaningfulness.

15 Mankha and "Sri Kanthacaritam"

Dr. Kaushalya Wali

Mankha's name is among the foremost poets of Kashmir. His other names are Mankhaka or Mankhuka. His birthplace is Kashmir. His father's name is Visvavarta whose name is mentioned with great respect in 'Srikanthacaritam.' Mankha's brother was Alankara. According to Kalhana Alankara was a poet and a minister in the time of the kings Sussala and Jayasinha of Kashmir. Mankha himself has called him Lankana or Lankaka in his work. According to Dr. Stein- "Mankha regards his brother deeply well-versed in grammar and mentions his famous name as Lankaka. Mankha's grandfather is known as Manmatha. Mankha's three brothers were Srngara, Bhanga and Alankara. Mankha was the youngest of all. He and his two elder brothers were not only scholars but were on high posts in the administration of Kashmir. For instance Srngara helped the king Sussala in a war against Harsadeva. It is being said that as a result of this victory on account of defeating Harsadeva, he was given the post of Brhattacharpati. Alankara was, a grammarian and according to Kalhana was a minister or a Sandhivigrahika. Mankha also held a high post-probably either Pargana or Governor. At the end of every canto of his work 'Srikanthacarita', he calls himself Raja naka Mahakaviraja Mankha. Ruyyaka was his teacher, to whom he shows great reverence in his own work. In the world of Sanskrit literature, Mankha is among those rare poets who give details in his writing about himself and his dynasty.

We have no difficulty in deciding the time of Mankha. Mankha lived in Kashmir in the kingdom of King Sussala and Jayasinha. The time of the king Jayasinha is 1127 to 1159 A.D. According to Dr. Buhler, Srikanthacarita was composed by Mankha between 1135 to 1145 A. D. According to Kalhana, the then king of Kashmir appointed Mankha as ambassador. On the basis of these facts Mankha's time may be determined as 12th century A. D. Mankha has mentioned the name of Rajasekhara and Bilhana in his work and declared them poets of repute. The above - mentioned date is supported by this reference.

Mankha's work is known as "Srikanthacaritam". This mahakavya is divided into twenty five cantos. Mankha has composed this work while keeping in view the characteristics of Mahakavya. This work is a proof to the fact that the poet is having command on Sanskrit language and has the full capacity to write the mahakavya which was composed on the occasion of the destruction of Tripurasura by Siva. The beautiful descriptions we come across in 'Srikanthacaritam' the commencement of various seasons of natural climate, the scene of sun-rise and sun-set.

The poet gives in detail in the 3rd canto as to what made, him to write this mahakavya. In the twenty fifth canto, the poet gives the full details of his circumstances. According to the poet, he gave his work to the highest scholars and administrators for their comments. This meeting of the scholars took place in the house of his brother Alankara. The meeting was attended by thirty members

The poet does not make us familiar only with the names of scholars but tells us the branch of knowledge in which each scholar was an expert. This information is of great importance from the viewpoint of the details supplied to us about the then reputed scholars. The information regarding the scholars is as under:

1. The poet Ananda by name was well-versed in Nyaya philosophy.
2. Sambhur's son Ananda was a Vaidya.
3. Alakadatta's disciple "Kalyana" by name was expert in Sahitya-sastra.
4. Garga was an expert in Sahitya.
5. Govinda had specialized in Sahitya.
6. Janakaraja was in know of grammar and Vedas.
7. Jalhana knew Sahitya.
8. Mimamsa Sastra was the special field of Jinduka.
9. Trailokya was the specialist in Mimamsa.
10. Nandana knew Vedanta.

Naga knew grammar and Alankara. Patu was a specialist in Sahityasastra. Padmaraja, was well-versed in Sahitya. Prakata knew Vedanta. Bhudda specialised in Sahitya,

Mandana was the knower of all the branches of knowledge. He was the son of Srigarbha. Yogaraja knew Sahitya. Ramyadeva was well versed in Veda. Ruyyaka knew Alankara-sastras. Laksamideva was good at Vedas. Lostadeva knew Sahitya. Vageeswara was a knower of Sahitya. Srigarbha's son Srikantha was specialist in Sahitya. Srigarbha had depth in Sahitya. Sriguna was in know of Mimamsa. Srivatsa specialised in Sahitya. Sastha's special field was Sahitya.

Besides these twenty seven scholars, there were three more personalities in the meeting who were not scholars but were worthy of honour. Out of these three, two were ambassadors :- (1) The ambassador sent by the king Aparaditya of Konkana was called Tejakantha (2) The ambassador sent by the king Govindacandra of Kannauja was called Suhala. The third person was known by the name of Damodara. All these details tell us the importance of the meeting. The meeting was attended by scholars and critics. These critics were experts in different branches of knowledge and men of repute. It was for the first time that the poetry of Kashmir was submitted for comments to the contemporary critics.

The criticism of poetry by the scholars draws our attention to the fact that the practice of the social and scholarly debate and exchange of ideas was in vogue in Kashmir of Mankha's time. Besides we are equipped with valuable and detailed historical descriptions. First of all a lot of help is rendered to us in determine the date of several poets and scholars. For instance we are helped in determining the time of Ruyyaka. Mankha's owntime is determined also. We become familiar with the names of two ambassadors. The dated inscription of the kings of Konkana and Kannauja are available. Aparaditya's time can be between 1185 to 1186 A.D. and Govindacandra's time can be between 1120 to 1144 A.D. The presence of ambassadors in Kashmir is a proof of this fact that Kashmir had friendly political relations with other provinces. We also infer that Aparaditya's reign continued for a long time. Aparaditya happens to be the commentator of Yajnavalkya Smrti which has an important place in law books.

Srikanthacaritam starts with Mangalacarana in praise of Siva. In the second canto the poet has described the general qualities of poets. Mankha has emphasised the intellectual arguments. There is a hint to the point as to what type of intellectual dialogues are essential for the development of the tendency of poetry."

In the third carto, the poet gives us an idea of life in Kashmir during his time. For instance the description of the firepot is most fascinating."

Mankha disapproves the tendency of his contemporary poets to beautify their poetry with Alankaras. He emphatically declares about his work that was written by him to please Srikantha alone and not to flatter anyone. He seems to be all against court-poetry, Mankha welcomes the destruction of Tripurasura by Siva in "Srikanthacaritam."

Every one of us desires to have a sympathetic and unprejudiced study of the complete true poetry. Mankha supports this view. His own work seems to be full of the qualities that a mahakavya should have. Hence he was immensely praised by his teacher Ruyyaka. At the end of his work, Mankha tells his readers that the team of scholars listened to his work with great attention and with a critical eye and afterwards showed their reaction. Mankha's poetry is lauded by all the scholars uptil now.

At the very outset of his work, Mankha has mentioned "Mankhakosa". The writer of this kosa in Sanskrit is Mankha himself. But this Kosa is not available now. This kosa seems to be popular in Kashmir for a pretty long time.

Mankha's one more work is "Srikantha-sarvasva". Its example is found in "Alankarasarvasva".

While giving the example of "Punaruktavadabhasa," Srikanthastava" is referred to. On Auyyaka's "Alankara-sarvasva" is written a commentary by Mankha, that also is called "Alankara-sarvasva." Besides, Mankha himself has written some Alankarasutras which are referred to by one of his students "Samudra-bandh." Samudra-bandha has written a commentary on "Alamkarasarvasva" and praised the king Ravivarma of Kolamba.

Jonaraja is the commentator of "Srikanthacaritam". He was contemporary of Zain-ul-abudin and writer of second Rajatarangini. He has written a commentary on Bharavi's Kiratanjuniya and several other books.

16 The Nilamatpuranam and Kashmir

M. M. Karmayogi, J. L. K. Jalali

We have to thank Prof. Ram Lal Kanjilal (my professor in the Shri Pratap College) and Prof. Jagaddhar Zadoo for their joint labour in compiling the present edition of Nilamatapuranam, which was published as far back as 1924. When I used to see my Bengali Professor transcribing the Sanskrit text in Bengali script, so valued by the Bengalis, I was amused. Whenever he would copy out a Sanskrit book or document, he would transcribe it in Bengali. I could not then understand why he did so. Later after 40 years I could satisfy my curiosity, when I came in contact with the late renowned scholar, Prof. Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyaya (or Chatterji) ; who would tell me that he used to recite Bhagvadgita in Sanskrit written in the Bengali script. Prof. Kanjilal and Prof. Zadoo's compilation is admirable although there are inexplicable lacunae in it, which could have been filled in, had a little more labour been put in or effort made to carefully go through the different portions of the Puranam. Though the Editors have themselves referred to such lacunae not all and most important, I as reader and student of the Puranam feel that the Research Department of the Jammu and Kashmir State should have taken it up again and made further search for MSS of the Puranam, which I believe may still be available and have not been known to the department by a non-Kashmiri, least of all by the foreign scholars, without knowing and studying the life, habits, customs, manners, rituals, etc. apart from a thorough knowledge of the land of NAGAS, called Kashmir. To write on metre employed, to infer how men and women lived, who the inhabitants in the past were, does not give the true content of Nilamatpuranam. It is a storehouse, which has to be swept of all excrescences and then made into a running story of historical value of Kashmiri's past of several thousand years, a past in which for more than a milliard it was a Saras (inland sea) bounded by high mountains and inhabited by people living on its shores and on the mountain slopes whom we know as Nagas, ruled over by a king called Nila with his Headquarters at NILAKUNDA (Vernag) fifty miles to the east of Srinagar of today.

Before I proceed further, I consider it proper and an act of gratitude to refer to Dr. Buhler who was responsible for delving the Puranam, out of practical neglect. In the edition of the Puranam, compiled by the two learned professors and followed by others, it appears that what Dr. Buhler has written about the Puranam has been taken for granted and no deeper research has been made. Nilamata is the basic history of Kashmir and the Kashmiris, and it was Dr. Buhler who was responsible for introducing the Paradise on Earth to the scholars and through them to the people of Germany, UK and the world. In Kashmir , occasionally as far as I remember, a learned Brahman for the matter of that, my own family priest, would mention the rites and rituals enjoined on the Kashmiris in the Puranam. I was too young. I could not easily follow what he would say, but my revered mother, Devamali, who though lot conversant with the 3 R'S would avidly try to digest whatever she heard and, repeat to her children during the evening hours after the day's chores had been finished and we were preparing for the warm bed of wintry night a night really reminiscent of the eight of the Pishachas who had been destroyed by the severe frost and snow after they were fought out of the Valley with the help of Vedic Aryans, invited by NILA at the behest of his father Kashyapa, from the plains of Bharat.

Along with this she would recite verses from Sanskrit and Persian too, and other stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata, especially the stories of Harischandra, Nala and Damayanti, Sati Savitri Ahalya, and others. This was responsible for my earnest desire to study what the foreigners called "Myths" and even today a great archaeologist would welcome me "to cherish my myths", perhaps thinking under an obsession that by post dating those "Myths" he could succeed in shaking my faith, or those of other citizens of India in the well established and well pronounced antiquity of my Shastras and scriptures far beyond the 4000 years B. C. creation of the Christian world.

Nilamatpuranam from its very composition does not appear to be a work of the Rishi begun and completed at one long sitting. It has been on the anvil for fears and the strokes of the hammer have not been uniform. So looseness, introducing of general theories, beliefs, stories and mythically imaginal rhapsodies, have found this valuable tome of important information. This has been responsible for some

confusion as well. If the Puranam were taken up and held in the hand and then shaken off all the superfluities, it would give an interesting story of Kashmir, its formation, its original inhabitants, intruders and their outlaw, and consequential inhabiting of the previous race of people called Kashmiri whose ancestors have been the NAGAS, it has clearly to be borne in mind that the author is one well versed in Sanskrit, saturated with Naga words, terms, idioms, expressions, and has a tradition of centuries, of ages, behind him in making this composition. Even the term NAGA itself need not be taken as a Sanskrit but as a Naga word adopted by the Sanskritists. One can never be sure whether the language employed originally has remained intact during the course of centuries to the time the composition has been actually recorded in black and white. These are the considerations which the present day reader has to keep in mind before he comes to a particular conclusion in a particular matter.

We have to be thankful to Dr. Buhler for his labour of love, and I bow to these German scholars first, and then to English and French savants who have made my Kashmir known throughout the world. After all foreign scholars, whatever their country, environments, surroundings, bring-up and outlook have been, born and bread up in an atmosphere different from that of mine, whenever they have come and had an urge to visit India and then my Kashmir, I and my People were not known to them, and they started comparing my land to Switzerland not Switzerland to Kashmir, or comparing me to a Jew and not a Jew to me a Kashmiri, for they had seen Switzerland and the Jews first. This 'liking' was not confined to land and the people only, but to the hoary scriptures, and other literary works and compositions and introduce Hoiner's Iliad or Odyssey to me rather than my Ramayana and Mahabharata to the people of Rome and Greece. It was but natural. And what our Indian authors, scholars and researchers learnt and then produced was nothing but investitured in the thinking of those 'Foreign Greats' because India was a dependency of Great Britain, and whatever the British Masters wanted the slaves to learn and practise was presented to them in the then "modernised" garb. And the wonder is that whenever I would study an Indian "modern" author, I had to learn what lie had copied from a foreign scholar or a foreign periodical, until Tilak, Aurobindo, Gandhi, Tagore, Malaviya, Jawaharlal, Das, Bose, Savarkar, Parmanand and others taught me I-ness and My-ness first to well understand You-ness and He-ness. It does not mean, no, never, that there is nothing worth learning from foreign scholars and researchers, authors and writers, saints and mystics or their ancient scriptures, philosophies and other thoughtful literature.

Dr. Buhler was not a Kashmiri. He and Dr. M. A. Stein did their best to learn and know about Kashmir through the medium of Kashmiris knowing Sanskrit (and Persian too in some cases). But this did not qualify them to be called Kashmiris for the purpose of fully understanding Kashmir as a Kashmiri would. All the same they have done a wonderful and unforgettable service to the Kashmiris for which they are and will be always remembered with a deep sense of gratefulness. Kalhana has mentioned in his memorable Rajatarangini the Nilamatpuranam in these words: "That land is Protected by Nila, the lord of all the Nagas, whose regal parasol is formed by the circular pond (of the Nilakunda) with the Vitasta's newly rising stream as its stick". And these two compositions of intrinsic worth and invaluable information form the base of Kashmir History, its Kings, and dynasties, its people, high and low, their customs and manners, their rites and rituals, their traditions and faiths, their economic condition and administrative structures, and so on. Kashmir was geographically an isolated realm accessible to the few interested either as invaders or as visitors (more political than sight-seers), intent upon knowing the people and their faith and everything concerning them as far as possible, and required for state purposes. The Nilamata has information in regard to the origin of Kashmir, its aboriginal, their beliefs, their mode of living, their general behaviour, occupation and the like. It will be a interesting to find in its hoary pages what the general trend and tone of descriptions is. The most dominant is Manes-worship, then comes worship of gods and goddesses. While dealing with and talking of ancestors (pitris) the author describes how shraddhas have to be performed, what offerings to make not without dakshina, (cash and kind) to priests performing the shraddhas. Even in shraddhas the ceremonies are prefaced with worship (puja) of specified deities & gods and goddesses a thing which throughout the Hindu (brahman) world continues even unto this day and will continue for ever. But there is a demarcation between shraddha functions, and other functions like weddings, birthdays, Mekhlas (Yajnopavita) etc. If any shraddha ceremony falls on

any of these functions, it is not performed; and nothing connected with shraddha is allowed to be done on that day. This is very important. Even though we never forget our manes and manes-worship, such festivals and functions of worldliness are not intermixed with shraddhas of one's pitris (ancestors). The festivity rules out shraddhas.

In the Nilamatpurana as edited by the two professors mentioned above, verses 804 to 808 describe what should be done in the form of Japa, Homa, shraddhas, austerity, charity etc. on Vaishakha Shukla 2nd and 3rd (dvitiya & tritiya) or lunar 2nd and 3rd of the month of Baisakh April and then slokas 817 to 821 give in detail what is to be done on the Purnima (15th lunar day of Vaishakha (April) in the form of worshipping Brahmans with sesame, of Homa (sacrificial offering) with sesame, shraddha, lights in temples with sesame and sesame is be given to 5 or 7 Brahmanas with honey to eat, and so on.

In between the two sets of slokas there appear slokas 809 to 816 which describe what should be done to celebrate the Birthday or Jayanti of Mahatma Buddha, which includes acting, dancing, but which is evidently a contradiction to the observance of tila shraddha, tila eating, tila sacrifice, etc. This contradiction without any doubt leads to the inference that the slokas 808 to 817 are an interpolation in the Puranam inserted to fall in line with the accepted belief in the incarnation (avatara-ship) of Buddha in the rest of India, made by some later interpolator, which has been responsible for the fixation of the date of 7th Century A.D. for the Puranam by Dr. Buhler, and this dating has been accepted by the joint editors of the Puranam, and now by other authors and scholars and writers who have dealt with or written upon this Purana. This is an interpolation and can in no case be taken as the evidence for establishing the date of composition of the NILMATA. On the other hand, there is sufficient evidence in the Purana itself which establishes beyond doubt that this Puranam must have been written several centuries before Christ, and the Nirvana of Buddha. And in support of that are the various rites and rituals, which are still observed at this time in the twentieth century.

As mentioned in the Puranam, there are very important landmarks which confirm that it is of a very old time and not of the 7th century as arbitrarily fixed by Dr. Buhler and followed by easygoing writers. For instance the Purnima of Shravana month (August) nowadays we celebrate as the day of Lord Shiva, and non-Kashmiri Hindus call it RAKHRI. It is the Purnima when the pilgrims to the Holy Cave at Swami Amarnath Ji have darshan of the Holy Lingam, led as they are by the Holy CHHARI every year there. The Chhari is not mentioned, nor the pilgrimage. What is mentioned in the Puranam is that at the junction of Vitasta and Sindhu rivers (which is now called Prayag at Shadipora) people should take a bath and then worship the god of gods "Sharangin" (the archer Vishnu). And how that should be done is described in slokas 853 to 856. It will be marked that it is the Naga custom that is followed viz. that of playing with girls in water. Why Sharingin is mentioned is as far as one can see attributable to the nature of the amorous play after the archer though said to be Lord Vishnu, but correctly speaking the Archer Cupid or Kamadeva is worshipped. And this playing with girls is to be done "Visheshena". This custom must have, been far older, even before Buddha was born, and his name and teachings and later philosophical invasion of Kashmir took place. In Kashmir, Shaivism was also preceded by Shaktism, and if we say that Kashmir is more the land of Shakti than Shiva, we are but within our proper bounds; because even now wherever you go you find the shrines of Devi (Shakti) spread over, these worshipped and maintained more than the temples of Shiva. If Vishnu is not worshipped here in Kashmir, it is because of the same Shakti Puja which the Vedic Aryan Rishi, the author of Nilamatapuranam harmonised with the introduction of 'SATI and SATI SAR' because one does not know what the Nagas called this inland sea in their tongue and making her responsible for the desiccation of this watery abode of Shakti, the Lake or inland Sea.

Again, the custom of celebrating the festival of Chaitra Purnima and the day after, with dance, women, liquor, and Ira flowers indicative of cupidity; things which are of Naga origin and belong to Naga time, and have been faithfully recorded by the Rishi of Nilamata with his Aryan touch. When we come across the festival of celebration of the fall of First Snow, it is a very very old custom, and people are asked to celebrate it with songs, dances, liquor, and what is remarkable is that "shyama devi" is to be honoured or worshipped, which I would interpret as young, beautiful girls whom Shastras would call Shyama, decked in new clothes and adornments, and enjoy the festival with friends, servants, relations, and eat special

dishes on snow covered with heavy cloth (I think it refers to the heavy woollen flooring like Lois). This markedly is to be celebrated with <verse> on this fall of snow. This is definitely a Naga custom of very olden times which has come down to us intact, though with the centuries of Buddhism that invaded in between this custom had lost its fervour, and it was only after the ouster of Buddhism that it regained some of its original charm. We keep it alive by "nav shin kharun" and asking the person tricked to entertain the "tricker" (the use of these two terms may be pardoned) on the occasion. This custom could not have been mentioned in the 6th or 7th century when Kashmir was under the influence of Buddhism and it was a time when there was a struggle between the past and the present, and forces to usher in Lalitaditya and his halcyon days, day of glory for Kashmir, were to make themselves felt all rounds.

In short, when we go through the Puranam and the rituals and customs mentioned very carefully, it becomes clear that the Puranam has an older, much older, chronology than ascribed to it. It is true there are some customs and rites which are not mentioned in the Puranam, those were not then observed, and have come into vogue later. It will be seen that the author of the Puranam does not mention the hill Gopadri, which was known so during the reign of king Gopaditya (369 B. C.). So, the composition must have been made before that date. This Gopadri became known as Shankaracharya after the visit in the 8th century A. D. of Adi Shankaracharya Ji to Kashmir, when both Gopadri hill and the Jyeshtheshwar temple on it were given the new name in his honour. For fear of length, I content myself, and I hope my readers will also remain content with what has been recorded above, which undoubtedly establishes that the Nilamatapuram is of a date much earlier than Buddha, and that the mention of Buddha Jayanti is a later interpolation which does not fit in with what is written about Dvitiya or Tritiya and the Purnima of Vaishakha... KALOHAM (I AM TIME).

17 The Nilamata Purana

A Brief Survey

Dr. Ved Kumari Ghai

The Nilamata is a Kashmiri Purana referred to by Kalhana as one of the sources of the ancient history of Kasmira. Buhler, whom goes the credit of saving its manuscripts, states on page 41 of his Report, "It great value lies therein that it is a real mine of information regarding the sacred places of Kashmir and their legends which are required to explain the Rajatarangini and that it shows how Kalhana has used his sources". But as a matter of fact the Nilamata gives besides, the account of sacred places, a lot of information about the Kashmiri way of living. The picture of ancient 'Kasmira' presented by its study is not complete and compact, still it is significant for its value which is supplementary to that of the Rajatarangini. While the Rajatarangini acquaints us with kings, queens and ministers of 'Kasmira', the Nilamata generally speaks of common men in their homes, streets, gardens and temples. The life of the common people, the food and drinks they took, the amusements they resorted to, the currents of religious thoughts they followed and the rites and ceremonies they performed throughout the year are described therein. If the Rajatarangini is important from the point of view of the political history of 'Kasmira', the Nilamata is no less important for the cultural history of that part of the country.

17.1 Date

Kalhana (12th Century A.D.) refers to it as a work of great antiquity. The absence of the term 'avatara' and the use of the term 'Pradurbhava' for incarnation of gods, non-mention of Kalki, Krisna's consort Radha and the sacred leaf of Tulasi, mention of Buddha as an incarnation of Visnu in a spirit of catholicity and the incorporation of its various verses into the Brahma Purana long before the time of Laksmidhara (1104-1154 A.D.) further indicate its early date. The textual study of the work shows that some alterations and additions have been made in it after the ninth or tenth century A.D. in order to incorporate into it the monistic Saiva Philosophy of Kasmira. Had the Nilamata been composed after the ninth century A.D. there would have been no scope for such change. The lower limit of the date thus may be eighth century A. D. and the upper one about the sixth century A.D. as Buddha began to be regarded as an incarnation of Visnu from about 550 A.D.

17.2 Out-line of the contents

The Nilmata opens with Janamejaya's enquiry from Vaisampayana as to why the king of 'Kasmira' did not participate in the war of Mababharata although his kingdom was not less important than any other in the country. Vaisampayana states that some time before the Mababharata war was fought, king Gonanda of Kasmira had been invited by his relative Jarasandha to help him in a war against the yadavas. Gonanda complied with his request and was slain on the battle field by Krsna's brother, Bala. In order to avenge his father's death, Gonanda's son Damodara went to Gandhara to fight with Krsna who had gone there to attend a Svayamvara. Krsna killed Damodara in the fight but taking into consideration the high sanctity of Kasmira, he coronated his rival's pregnant widow Yasovati. Damodara's Posthumous son Bala Gonanda was a minor at the time of the great war, so he did not join either the Kauravas or the Pandavas.

Vaismpayana points out the importance of 'Kasmira' by referring to its numerous charms and its identification with Uma. He points out further that the valley was originally a lake known as Satisaras. This leads to the question about the origin of 'Kasmira' to which Vaisanipayana replies by relating a dialogue held previously between Gonanda and the sage Brahadasva.

Brahadasva gives at first the account of the divisions of time, the destruction of the world at the end of manvantara, the presevation of Manu and the seeds in a ship, the birth of the land and the lake, of Sati, the origin of various tribes from Kasyapa and Visnu's allotment of Satisaras to the Nagas. Then follows the story of the demon Jalodbbava born in the waters and reared by the Nagas. Having obtained boons from

Brahma, the demon began to destroy the descendants of Manu dwelling in the lands of Darvabhisara, Gandbars Jubundura, the Sakas, the Khasas etc. Seeing this devastation, Nila the king of the Nagas approached his father Kasyapa and prayed to him to intercede with the gods to punish the evil-doer and to save the innocent victims. He requested the gods, Brahma, Visnu and Siva to do the needful. Visnu followed by Brahma, Siva and various other deities, proceeded to Naubandhana to punish the demon. The demon was imperishable in the waters; so Visnu asked Ananta to make an outlet for the waters by breaking forth the mountain-barriers. He did accordingly. Visnu then cut off the demon's head with his disc. Now the dry land being available in the valley, Kasyapa expressed the desire that it should be inhabited by the Nagas as well as by the descendants of Manu. The Nagas, however, flatly refused to have Manavas as their co-habitants. Filled with rage Kasyapa cursed them to live with the Pisacas. At the request of Nila the curse was modified to the extent that the Pisacas would go every year for a period of six months to the sea of sand and the Manavas would live in the land jointly with the Nagas during that period. Visnu further assured the Nagas that the occupation of Kasmira valley by the Pisacas would last for four ages only.

After the passing away of the four ages, the Manavas, as usual, had gone out for six months. An old Brahmana, Candradeva did not accompany them. Troubled by the Pisacas he approached the Naga King Nila and begged of him to ordain that 'Kasmira' might henceforth be inhabited by Manavas without the fear of emigration. Nila complied with this request on the condition that the Manavas should follow his instructions revealed to him by Kesava. Candradeva lived for six months in the palace of Nila and was initiated into the mysteries of rites or ceremonies prescribed by Nila. In Caitra, when the emigrant population of 'Kasmira' came back, he related the whole incident to Virodaya - king of Manavas. The lengthy dialogue held between Nila and Candradeva describes sixty five rites, ceremonies and festivals many of which are similar to those mentioned in other Puranic works and observed in many parts of India, while a few are peculiar to Kasmira only. At Janamejaya's enquiry as to what Gonanda had asked after listening to the teachings, another dialogue between Gonanda and Brhadrasva follows. Gonanda expresses his desire to know the names of the principal Nagas dwelling in Kasmira and Brhadrasva enumerates not fewer than Sir hundred Nigas. He expresses his inability to enumerate all the Nagas, as their number was too great. He further refers to four Nagas, the guardians of directions and relates the story of the Naga Sadangula and the Naga Mahapadma.

Then follows Gonauda's enquiry about the sacred places of Kasmira and Brhadrasva's reply referring to various places dedicated to Siva and other deities. Two names Bhutesvara and Kapatesvara raise Gonanda's curiosity which leads Brhadrasva to relate Bhutesvara Mahatmya and Kapatesvara Mahatmya. Then follows the enumeration of the sacred places of Visnu and other tirthas situated in the valley of Kasmira. Thereafter is given the eulogy of the river Vitasta and the work ends with the remark that, as this treatise in the form of a dialogue between Janamejaya and Vaisampayana was not useful everywhere (i. e. was of local interest mainly), Vyasa did not include it in the Maha Bharata lest that should become too exhaustive.

17.3 Birth of 'Kasmira'

The Nilamata legend of the origin of 'Kasmira' as a result of the draining off of the lake, occurs in Kalhana's Rajatarangini, and in a bit changed form, in the Mahavamsa, the Chinese Vinaya of the Mula Sarvastivadin sect and in the account of the travels of Hiuen Tsang. Whether it was the basin-like shape of the valley of 'Kasmira' which suggested this legend or the memory of some old age when the area of Kasmira under water was more than what it is now, was responsible for it, cannot be stated with certainty; but it is interesting to know that the geological observations made in recent times corroborate the assertion made in the Nilamata.

The lowest point in the valley with high mountain walls on all sides is 5200 feet high above the sea level, and the lowest pass in the Pirpanchal range, forming its outer boundary, is 3000 feet above the valley. The only outlet for the drainage of the valley is the narrow rock-gorge at Baramula.

Now nearly half of the area of this basin-shaped valley is occupied by the Karewas (Flat-topped mounds composed of clay and silt with thin layers of greenish sand) and the present view to quote D. N. Wadia regards "the Karewas as the surviving remnants of deposits of a lake or series of lakes which once filled the whole valley basin from end to end". Of course it will be going too far to suggest that some geological tests were at the basis of this legend. The most plausible hypothesis is that the idea of the great lake was suggested by the basin-like shape of the valley and after this, it was just one step more in the making of mythology to attribute the drainage of water through an outlet in sandstone wall of the western corner of the basin, to a divinity like Ananta.

17.4 Geography

Like other puranic works, the Nilamata also deals with geography of the world and mentions seven Dvipas, namely Jambu, Saka, Kusa, Kraunca, Salmali, Gomeda and Puskara. Of these seven, Jambudvipa as nine Varsas namely Uttarakuru, Ramya, Hairanvata Badrasva, Ketumala, Ilavrita, Harivarsa, Kimpursa and the last one i. e. Bharataversa alone seems to present India proper. More significant is the information about the tirthas particularly of Kasmira, mentioned in four lists occurring in the later half of the work. These lists are of special interest for the geography of Kasmira but it also deserves to be noted that the reference being too brief it is not possible to identify most of the place-names, especially those which are not mentioned in Kalhana's Rajatarangini or some other work of geographical value. It is also interesting to note the similarity of the nomenclature of Kasmira as found in the Nilamata with that of other parts of India. It seems that the people who had come from various parts of India to inhabit the valley of Kasmira named its beautiful spots after the tirthas familiar to them, they thus recognized prayaga the holy confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna in the confluence of the Vitasta and the Sindhu and regarded the area extending from Trikotisangama to Har and from the confluence of the Pavana and the Rajobinduvimala to Ciramocana, as holy as Varanasi. The names like Sarasvati Rsikulya, Ramahrada, Bhrgutunga, Mundaprastha, Citrakuta, Bharatagiri Kamatirtha of Kasmira are also names of various tirthas of other parts of India.

17.5 Tribes

About the inhabitants of ancient Kasmira, the Nilamata has preserved highly valuable information. The original inhabitants of the valley were the Nagas; then came the Pisacas and the Manavas. Being the original occupants of Kasmira, the Nagas did not like introduction of the Pisacas or the Manavas into the valley, but the selection was to be made between these two, they preferred Manavas to the Pisacas. The other tribes which are described occupying the neighbouring countries are the Madras (inhabitants the modern Sialkot and the surrounding regions between the Irava and the Chandrabhaga) the Darvas (inhabitants of Darva identified with the districts of Jammu and Ballavar) the Abhisaras (inhabitants of modern Punch and the area near it) the Gandharas (inhabitants of Peshawar, Rawalpindi etc.), Juhundaras probably same as Jaguda (inhabitants of Afghanistan), the Sakas, the Khasas, the Tarigams, Mandavas, the Antargiris and the Bahirgiris. Indirect mention of Yavanas is also made in the Naga name Yavanapriya.

17.6 Social, Political and Economic Life

Regarding social, economic and political life in~ Kasmira the Nilamata has brought to light a few interesting points. The Brahmanas, especially those who were "Itihasavidah" and "Kalavidah" were highly honoured, but the Sudras too were not considered degraded. The humane treatment meted out to the servants is a pleasant feature of social organisation of Kasmira revealed by the Nilamata. The Nilamata often includes the servants also in the list of the persons in whose company the house-holder feasts and enjoys. The artisans like weavers and carpenters etc. commanded so much respect in the society as to exchange gifts with the higher varnas during the Mahimana celebrations. The very fact that

the Nilamata describes the Sudras as taking part in the coronation ceremony of the king indicates that they were not considered debased.

Another enlivening feature of the Kashmiri social life as seen in the Nilamata is the position of women. Nowhere is she considered "the living torch illuminating the way to hell", or the devourer of the intellect of men. There is no reference to any veil worn by her and she moves quite freely in the society emulating as it were the free moving sparkling waters of the springs of the country. In the moon-lit night of Kaumudi Mahotsava we find her sitting beside the sacred fire in the company of her husband, children, servants and husband's friends, although it is not clear as to whether she is merely a silent spectator or she takes active part in the musical and dramatic performances given during this night. She is present in the common feast which takes place on the next day. Not only in the festivals celebrated at home, but also in the outdoor festivals, she is seen enjoying herself. The peasant's wife is lucky enough to participate in the joyous festival celebrated in the refreshing open fields of nature in connection with the ploughing of the fields and sowing of seed. The Nilamata does not deny water-sports to the ladies of Kasmira. The young maidens, it says, "should specially play in the waters" during the celebrations of Sravani festival. Playing with men folk is allowed to women. "The joyful ladies", it says "dressed in their best attire, perfumed with scents and decorated with ornaments should sport in the company of men on the last day of Mahimana celebrations." The ladies of the home are honoured on various occasions. On the full moon day of Margasirasa, the gift of a pair of red clothes is prescribed for a Brahmana lady, for the sister, for the paternal aunt and for the friend's wife. The mention of the presentation of gifts to friend's wife is quite significant as it could have been possible only in a free atmosphere where women were allowed to move freely with no restrictions on their receipt of gifts from their husband's friends.

As regards their place in the religious life, they are not only allowed to accompany their husbands in the performance of various rites and ceremonies but are also enjoined upon to perform singly some rites specially prescribed for them. The predominance of the Goddesses in the religion depicted in the Nilamata is another factor pointing to the high status of women. The very land of 'Kasmira' is a mother Goddess 'Kasmira', a form of Uma. Numerous references are made to courtesans in connection with the description of festivals. The use of a simile comparing 'Kasmira' with a temple due to the presence of tender ladies indicates the popularity of the institution of Devadasis or temple-dancers.

On the whole, the Nilamata offers a pleasant picture of women of 'Kasmira'. As a daughter she was trained in fine arts and was allowed to move freely in the society. By giving her in marriage, the father obtained religious merits. As a wife she was loved and honoured by her husband and as a mother she shone with her sons who revered her highly. A would be mother could even be installed on the throne on the demise of her son-less husband-king.

This unconventional account of the women of 'Kasmira' is quite different from the account available in other Puranas and so it gives a distinctive character of the Nilamata.

Entertaining of guests is another notable feature of the social life of Kasmira depicted in the Nilamata. Even the king is enjoined upon to honour the immigrants from all the quarters.

The people were fond of music, dancing, drama and other means of recreations, which indicates their general prosperity depending upon agriculture and trade. The general terms used for the musical instruments are Vadya, Vaditra and Vadyabhanda. We find reference to Vina (the modern hundred stringed Santoor of 'Kasmira' is probably satatantrivina or Vana referred to in the Taittiriya Samhita), Venu (flute) Sankha (conch), Pataha (Drum) and Muraja (tambourine). Dances were performed on religious occasions and in social gatherings held in honour of seasonal and agricultural festivals. The words "Preksa" mentioned in the Nilamata refers to the tricol performances. The Nilamata mentions also a peculiar Phrase "Preksadana" literally meaning "the gift of a dramatic performance". It seems to have denoted "a gift made for the arrangement of a dramatic show". There may have existed some dramatic clubs which have such shows on demand and the injunction of "Yathavidhi preksadana" i. e. the gift for the arrangement of a dramatic show made in the proper procedure, may have been made with reference to them.

As regards the art of image-making, the Nilamata refers to images made of stone, clay, gold, silver, copper, brass, wood, sand, straw and ghee. References are made to printings on the cloth, the wall and the ground. The people are directed to decorate the Caityas with beautiful paints on lord Buddha's birthday. A circular pattern is drawn on the ground on which a 'Kashmira' bridegroom had to stand before entering for his marriage the house of the bride. This is a direct descendant of bhumisodha mentioned in the Nilamata.

Of the items of dress, mention may be made of pravara which seems to be the same as pravara mentioned in the Mahabharata as a cloth offering protection against cold. Kashmiri pheran is most probably derived from pravara.

Meat seems to have been a popular item of diet otherwise there would have been no necessity of prohibiting strongly the eating of meat for five days dedicated to the worship of Visnu. Wine is recommended as a drink on new snow-fall day and Iraman Jari Pujana.

In the sphere of political thought, there existed a belief in the divinity of kingship along with the theory that law is superior to the king. It is stated in a verse that the king of 'Kasmira' is a part of Hara and should not be disobeyed. The same verse is quoted by Kalhana with the significant expression "even a wicked one" added to the king. Compared with Bhishma's statement in the Mahabharata that a virtuous king is truly a god, this difference of statement of the Rajatarangini from that of the Nilamata shows a gradual development of the theory of absolute monarchy. The survival of a few republican elements is also indicated by the terms pradhana and ganamukhya.

Concerning religious life it shows not only the other cults adopting the Naga deities but also the Naga cult bringing the deities of other cults into its fold. Bhava Mahadva and Sambhu which are names of Siva, Guha and Kumara which are names of Siva's son, Narayana and the four yugas Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Anirudha and Pradyumna, the epic heroes Rama, Lakshmana and Yudhishthira all appear in the Naga list of the Nilamata. On the whole the Nilamata reveals the spirit of compromise and synthesis in the field of religion. The Brahmanic deities, the Nagas, the pisacas, the Buddha all receive their due share of worship from the inhabitants of 'Kasmira'. The followers of cults are stated to be free to worship their respective deities but the different deities are described as honouring one another and thus creating an atmosphere in which various cults are united.

In the field of philosophical thinking the Nilamata presents the same theistic samkhya which appears in the epics and other Puranas. It would be going too far to suggest that it contains the tenets of the Monistic Saiva philosophy of 'Kasmira'. It is clear that the cult of Visnu, Brahman, Siva, Surya, Durga, Nagas, Buddha etc. flourished side by side in the time of the Nilamata. Vaisnavism no doubt occupies a prominent place in this work but there is no indication of the creator of the creator, illuminating Brahma. Uma is the mother antagonistic attitude towards other cults. In the field of philosophical thoughts the Nilamata presents also a compromise regarding the problem of creation; it uses the terminology of the Samkhya referring to Indriyas, Indriyarthas, Mahabhutas Manas, Buddhi, Atma, Avyakta and Purusa; but it does not accept its atheistic metaphysics. The five gross physical elements-Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Ether - which may stand for the solid, liquid, gaseous, aerial and ethereal states of matter, are stated to be the supporters of the world, but behind these is seen the working of the force of the Supreme Spirit. The epithet "Cause of the causes of the world" applied to Visnu and Brahma indicates that along with the Supreme Spirit, the final cause, there is also Prakriti, the immediate cause of the world. At one place, Shiva's epithet "Saksivat sthitah" sounds like that Sankhya Purusa but unlike the latter He is regarded as the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the world. Three qualities of Rajas, Sattva and Tamas are also referred to and are associated with the power of creation, protection and destruction.

The theology of the Nilamata is replete with numerous gods and goddesses. The trinity of Brahma, Visnu and Siva plays due role but there are others like Indra, Varuna, Yama, Kartikeya, Baladeva; Asvina, Martits, Visvedevas, Vasus, Yaksas, Nagas, Gandharvas, Prthivi, Surabhi, Sita, Saci, Laksmi, Uma, Syama, Bharati, Prajna, Mati etc. The tendency of describing one deity as the highest among others at one time and transferring the same epithet to the other at another time is clearly perceptible in the praises of Brahma, Visnu, Siva, Nila and the goddesses Uma and Laksmi. At some places, Visnu is praised as the

best amongst the gods, unfathomable, the highest, the eternal, the refuge of all gods, the lord of the gods, cause of the causes of the world, the lord of three worlds, worshipped by Siva, praised by Brahma, but at other places Brahma is described as the cause of the causes of the world, the lord of three worlds, the lord of the god of the gods, the lord of all, the omniscient, the real force behind all the elements, the preceptor of the world and the sustainer of the world. Siva is also eulogised as the preceptor of the world, the lord of world, the lord of the gods, the lord of the god of the gods, and the highest lord.

Even the Naga deity Nila is described as the lord of the gods, the creator of the creator, illuminating Brahma. Uma is the mother of all gods, higher than Sarva, and Laksmi is raised to the highest position by saying that all the goddesses are her forms.

The idea that the whole world is God or a manifestation of God is also present in the Nilamata. The whole earth is a form of the goddess Sati. The earth, the water, the air, the sky, the fire, the sun, the moon, and the sacrificer, all these are regarded as eight forms of Siva.

The doctrine of monism, according to which there exists only a single principle from which everything is evolved, is also found in the Nilamata, Brahma in the Nilamata seems to have been identified with the Brahma of the Upanisadas, for He is recognized as the only element in the universe except whom there exists nothing. He is the knower and the thing to be known, the body and the soul, the meditator, the object of meditation and the meditation itself.

He is also of unknown birth. In the eulogy of Nila there is a reference to Brahma in the Upanisadic style. This Brahma is indivisible, imperishable and the highest. Due to its minuteness it is called Ether. The statement that it is minute as well as great, uncreated as well as possessed of limbs reminds one of similar statements found in the Katha and the Svetasvatara Upanisads. Of course, the Nilamata does not give us clear-cut monism; it has just paved the way for the Monistic Saiva Philosophy of Kasmira.

18 Shaivism & Kashmir's Doctrine of 'Recognition' (Pratyabhijna)

Dr. R. K. Kaw



Dr. R. K. Kaw

18.1 Part I

Kashmir Shaivism & Its Three Divisions: Kashmir Shaivism on the whole, represents a particular religious-philosophical school of the valley. There are three main divisions of the school corresponding to the division of its literature into three Shastras : (1) the Agama Shastra, (2) the Spanda Shastra and (3) the Pratyabhijna Shastra. No. (1) Agama Shastra is believed to be of divine origin. To this class chiefly belong the following works : Malini, Vijya or Vijayettara, Svachanda Tuntram, Vijnana Bhairava, Ananda Bhairava (lost), Mrgendra, Matahga, Netra, Naishvasa, Svayambhuva, Rudra-yamala, Vidyarnava, etc. Shiva-sutras which were revealed later by the sage Vasugupta are said to be the most important part of the Agama Shastra. The next two divisions of the Shaiva Shastra emerged as a result of development of human thought concerning the main Shastra of divine origin (Agama Shastra). The line of thought was developed by two acharyas Bhatta Kallata (9th century) and Somananda, contemporary of Vasugupta (850-900 A.D.), in two different directions while Kallata handed down the doctrine as a system of religion, Somananda supplied the logical reasoning in their support and thus founded a system of Advaita philosophy of the Shaivas on the basis of what was at first , taught as a system of faith. Thus there appeared the other two Shastras, (2) Spanda-shastra founded by Kallata and (3) Pratyabhijna-shastra commenced by Somananda. The three Shastras, all together, are generally known as Trika Shastra (a shastra comprising three classes). It is rightly observed that, out of these three, Pratyabhijna only is the 'philosophy proper of the Trika'. There has been a controversy among scholars regarding the name of the philosophical system of Shaiva Shastra. They think that all these names Trika, Spanda and Pratyabhijna are the designations of one and the same system. These scholars seem not only to have not observed the distinction between these different systems, but have failed to notice that Pratyabhijana system only is the philosophical school of the Kashmir Shaivas. The special literature that developed around the two schools Spanda and Pratyabhijna is given in brief as follows :-'Spanda Karika' and its 'Vrtti' by Kallata, Vivrti by Ramakantha, Pradipika by Utpala, , Spanda-Sandoha by Kshemaraja and 'Spanda-Nirnaya' also by Kshemaraja are the main works of Spanda school. 'Shivadrashiti' by Somananda, 'Ish. Pratyabhijna Karika' with 'Vrtti' (gloss) and 'Siddhitrayi' by Utpaladeva, 'Pratyabhijna-Vimarshini' (in two volumes), 'Pratyabhijna-Vivrti-vimarshini' (in three volumes) and 'Paramarthasara' by Abhinavagupta, 'Pratyabhijna-hrdayam' with commentary by Kshemaraja and 'Bhaskari', a commentary on Pratyabhijna Vimarshini', in two volumes, by Bhaskaracharya, comprise mainly the Pratyabhijna Shastra. All these works are

published in Kashmir Series of 'Texts and Studies (KSTS), except Bhaskari, Vols. I and 2 which are published as Nos. 82 and 83 of 'The Princess of Wales Sarasvati' Bhavana Texts, Allahabad, 1938, 1950'.

18.1.1 Distinctive Features & Contents of Trika Shastra (in brief)

Shaivism comprehends all those systems of thought which evolved from Shaivagamas and Shaiva Tantras. A Shaiva system means any system based on Shaiva Tantras or Agamas. Sixty-four systems of the Shaiva cult are mentioned in the Shaiva scriptures of Kashmir which include the Trika as one of them. As said above, Trika is a triad, a group of three divisions of Kashmir Shaivism, Agama, Spanda and Pratyabhijna. These three Shastras can broadly be divided into two systems only, a system of religion or particular faith of Shaivas, which can significantly be distinguished as Shaivism, and a system of philosophical thought grown in Kashmir among the followers of Shaivism or Shaiva cult, which is rightly known as Pratyabhijna Philosophy. It was Pandit Madhusudan Koul the learned editor of KSTS, who for the first time pointed out in his Preface to Ish. Pratyabhijna Vimarshini, Vol. I, that Pratyabhijna is the philosophy proper of the Trika system. The philosophical content of the Trika is first presented as Prityabhijna system by Madhavacharya in his Sarvadarshana-samgraha (14th Century) on the basis of title of the main treatise of the system, Pratyabhijna Karika by Utpaladeva. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also includes 'the Pratyabhijna system' as one of the philosophical systems in his Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, for the apparent reason.

The Kashmir Shaivism as a whole, including the faith and philosophy of the school, is presented in Trika Shastra. It is so called (Trika) as, according to Paratrimshika, it deals with the triple principle, Shiva, Shakti and Anu; or Pati, Pasha and Pashu; or Nara, Shakti and Shiva; or Para, Apra and Parapara. It is called Trika for the reason that its chief authority is the triad consisting of three chief Agamas, Siddha, Namaka and Malini (Tantraloka I, 36), or for another reason that it includes all the three systems, Bheda (dualism), Abheda (non-dualism) and Bhedabheda (dualism-cum-non-dualism). It is also called Trika for the reason that it teaches the threefold method of Agamic realization, viz. Shambhavopaya, Shaktopaya and Anavopsya. It has also been already stated that Trika is a triad consisting of Agama, Spanda and Pratyabhijna schools of Kashmir Shaivas. The terms referred to in this para, which are derived from Agamas, cannot be explained in this short article. (See, K. C. Pandey, Abhinavagupta An Historical & Philosophical Study, 170 ff. and J. C. Chatterji, Kashmir Shaivism, 1 fn. 2)

18.1.2 Agama Shastra

Georally speaking, Agama-Shastra is mostly Sadhana-Shastra; i. e., it mainly deals with ritualistic and mystic practices. Usually, every Agama consists of four sections or Kandas (1) Vidya or Jnana Kanda (Section dealing with secret knowledge), (2) Yoga Kanda (Section dealing with Yoga discipline, processes of concentration and breathing exercises-pranayama), (3) Kriya Kanda (Section dealing with action, viz, ritualistic performances) and (4) Carya Kanda (Section pertaining to forms of worship). The works belonging to Agama Shastra of Kashmir, mentioned above, include in their dogmatic contents certain philosophical speculations also. Some of them are mostly devotional. Some of them give the rudiments of Kashmir Shaivism and teach certain methods, mystical practices (upayas) for achieving lower and higher Siddhis (occult powers) and the glories of liberated life. These methods prescribed in various Shaivagamas are called Shambhavapaya <missing text> Shastra of Trika generally gives an exposition of these three methods or ways (upayas) of realization.

The Shiva-sutras are believed to be a Rahasyagama-shastra-samgraha (a compilation of secret Agama Shastra) being a work of Shiva Himself. They, therefore, form the most important part of the Agama Shastra to which is attributed divine authorship. According to tradition, recorded by Kshemaraja, the sutras were found, by the sage Yasugupta inscribed on a rock at the foot of Mahadeva mountain, about 12 miles from Srinagar. It is said that Shrikantha, an incarnation of Shiva, wishing to do a favour to suffering humanity by the revelation of the traditional sacred lore which unfolds the three means of emancipation, appeared once before Vasugupta in a dream and told him about these sutras engraved under a big stone

and also the way to reveal them. The sutras were thus revealed to Vasugupta who copied them to teach to his disciples. The sutras are divided in three sections, dealing with the three means of liberation, Shambhava, Shakta and Anava. Guru Vasugupta taught them to Kallata and others. Kallata taught them to Kshemaraja who added a commentary, called Vimarshini, to the sutras.

The very first sutra emphatically declares that man's consciousness in its essential nature, is Atman (Caitanyam atma) and the Atman itself is Shiva, the great Lord. Maheshvara (atmaiva shivah). Apart from & few highly philosophical declarations made in the Shiva-sutras as a protest against the nihilistic doctrines of certain schools of Buddhism and against the doctrine of dualism (bheda) taught by some schools, they constitute a practical treatise devoted to the unfoldment of the three ways of liberation (upayas), mentioned above, (upaya-pra- kashanam). They also give the rudiments of Kashmir Shaivism, such as malas (impurities) and pasas (fetters), characteristics of various types of perceivers, transmigratory subjects, Pati (free-soul) and Pasu (soul under bondage), different state of common perceivers and extraordinary states (turya, the fourth state and turyotita, beyond the fourth state) as experienced by the Yogis, and so on.

18.1.3 Spanda Shastra

The original text belonging to this Shastra (Spanda-karika) and the literature that subsequently developed on it, have already been<missing text> seem to be the work of Kallata. The Spanda-shastra lays down the main principles, as enumerated in the Shiva-sutras, in a greater detail and in a more amplified form, without giving philosophical reasonings in their support. In fact, the Spanda system owes its origin to the Shiva Sutras and concerns itself with their elucidation and popularisation. The author describes Spanda as that power of consciousness which infuses life into the physical senses. An object when sensed has no basis apart from consciousness. Spanda Karikas (verses) are 51 in number in which the fundamental principles of Shaivism, as aphoristically given in the Shiva Sutras, are epitomised. The basic idea underlying the Spanda-Shastra is that Shiva's Spanda (energy) out of its own nature manifests on the background of its own pure self the whole universe comprising the thirty-six tattvas (principles or categories of objective reality) from the earth upto Parama Shiva. According to this doctrine, the world is a play of energy force or vibration, which appears to be in confirmity with the modern science. It is not an illusion, the result of error in perception (avidya) as the Vedantins suppose. Their doctrine that 'vishva yan-na tad eva brahma' (what is not the world, that is Brahman) is rejected by the Spanda school.

18.1.4 Pratyabhijna Shastra

It is not necessary to give glimpses of Pratyabhijna Shastra here, as it is separately dealt with in detail in the Part II of this paper which is exclusively concerned with this philosophical school of Kashmir. Here it will be remarked that metaphysical reasoning (tarka) is the essence of a philosophical system. It is this philosophical content of the system that Utpaladeva presents in a bold relief, and in a systematic order, relegating the religious dogmatism of the school to a subordinate position, having devoted only a few sutras of his work (in Agamadhikara) to the latter aspect of the school. Pratyabhijna has been admitted to be a taraka shastra (a system of logic and philosophy).

18.1.5 Tantraloka - a Compendium of Trika Shastra

Tantraloka, by Abhinavagupta, includes the contents of all the three branches of Kashmir Shaivism (Trika-Shastra), viz. Agama, Spanda and Pratyabhijna in a summarised form. The Tantraloka is a most voluminous work of Abhinavagupta, composed in verse, and forms an encyclopaedia of the Trika Shastra. The Tantra-sara, by the same author, is just a brief summary of the Tantraloka, written in easy prose. It is an excellent introduction to Tantraloka. The first Ahnika (Chapter) of Tantraloka is chiefly philosophical. It opens with an explanation of the first two Shiva-sutras and defines the key-word 'Caitanyam'. This Caitanyam is emphatically declared to be the Atman, 'the one nuclear core in every personality, the one

central point of reference in each and every experience, the deepest depth of the sub-conscious in each vividly conscious personal ego'. The same chapter of the work gives also the definitions and explanations of various other terms. The next four chapters of the work deal, in detail, with the same three upayas (methods or ways of realization) which constitute the three sections of the Shiva-sutras. According to Abhinavagupta, the three means or methods described are those of Abheda (non-dualism), Bhedabheda (dualism-cum-non-dualism) and bheda (dualism) respectively. The Pratyabhijna is said to be another way of realization, a way of mere knowledge (awareness) and reasoning (tarka), denominated by him as 'Anupaya marga' viz., requiring no practical performance of any kind, ritualistic, mystic or yogic, or even devotion and worship of any sort. Abhinavngupta says, this last method (Anupaya-marga) is the highest of all the methods, called also Anuttara, i. e. above the first three methods (tato pi paramam jnanam upayadi-vivarjitam..anuttaram ... ihocyate). Various philosophical topics like time, space, the nature and division of the thirty-six 'tattvas' (principles of creation), the principle of 'Maya' and its five offshoots, etc., are also dealt within the different chapters of this work. The rest of the work deals with various ritual practices and forms of worship.

18.1.6 Philosophical nucleus of Trika-Shastra

Trika Shastra, comprising the said three divisions of Kashmir Shaivism, represents, in its philosophical context, a concept of positivism in a theistic outlook in contradistinction to the absolute monism of Vedanta. According to the school, Shiva, the Ultimate Reality, is the prolific cause and 'essence and identity' (Self) of every thing. He abounds in bliss and consciousness (nirvrta-cit) and is endowed with sovereignty of will, omniscience and omnipotence (aniruddha-iccha-pra- sarah prasarad-drkkriya sivah). He is everything and yet beyond everything, or He is both immanent (Vishvamayah) and transcendent (Vishvottirna). Time, form and space do not limit him, for He is above all mutation and change. 'Pashu' (a living being) being the fragment of the inter-related whole is no other than Shiva Himself, but is in a state of limitation and self-forgetfulness. Recognition of the state of Shivahood (divinity) restores the original state of absolute perfection to an individual (Pashu). This is his state of Moksha (liberation). The Pasu has taken on three impurities (Malas) which are responsible for obscuring the divine within him. When these three impurities get dissolved, he realizes the divine within him in its crystalline purity.

18.2 Part II

18.2.1 Pratyabhijna School and its Teachers

In fact, the religio-philosophical school of Kashmir Shaivism is very old. Though its inception or introduction in Kashmir is shrouded in mystery, it was prevalent there long before the time of Ashoka (273-232 B. C.). Eighth and ninth centuries of the Christian era seem to have witnessed a religious upheaval in Kashmir. This followed a philosophic renaissance in the valley. Kashmir was then a meeting ground of the various philosophical currents. It is from the confluence of the then prevailing thought-currents flowing from various schools of Buddhists, Vaidikas, the Shaivas and Shaktas, the Vaiyakaranas (Grammarians) the Samkhyas, the Naiyayikas, the Vedantins and the expounders of the Yoga system, that a monistic school of philosophy, distinctly known as Pratyabhijna Shastra emerged in the valley among the followers of Shaiva cult. The Kashmir Shaivas, the originators of the Pratyabhijna system, have incorporated in it most of the ideas from the said systems and have propounded their various doctrines in a technique of their own derived from the Shaivagamas, which distinguish the system from the other systems.

Somananda was indeed the founder of the Pratyabhijna School which takes its name from the 'Pratyabhijna karika' by Utpaladeva, the disciple of the former. The credit of being the founder of the school goes to Somananda, for the reason that it is he who, for the first <missing text> a treatise (prakarana) on Shaiva philosophy. Utpaladeva was in fact the systematiser of Somananda's thought. Like Shankaracharya, a commentator of Badarayana's School of Vedanta, Abhinavagupta

(another luminary among the celebrities of Kashmiri Shaivism) gets the credit of being the expounder of Pratyabhijna system. We are in possession of his two commentaries? one short namely 'Vimarshini' and the other long (Vivrti-vimarshini), on the 'Pratyabhijana Karika' of Utpaladeva. Somananda flourished in the later part of the ninth century A. D., Utpaladeva in the first part of the tenth century and Abhinavagupta in the last part of the tenth and the first part of the eleventh century.

18.2.2 Inception of Pratyabhijna Philosophy

Notwithstanding his devotion to the secret doctrine of monistic Shaivagamas handed down to him traditionally from his ancestors, Somananda revolted against the prevailing schools of thought, including certain sections of Shaivas themselves. He summarily criticised the various schools of Buddhism, the Jainism, the Samkhya, the Nyaya and Vaisheshika, the Vaivakarana and the monistic Vedanta. It appears that Somananda was against the traditional ideas about the divinity, the meaning and purpose of life, the human activities and behaviours on earth, the real significance of 'moksha' (salvation or liberation) and the like. Somananda seems to have conceived of re-interpreting religio-philosophic thought in vogue in his day and laid the foundation of a new school in its pristine purity, eclectic in its essence and containing the noble truths and glorious spiritual and humanistic values of ancient Vedantic thought. This new school came later to be known as 'Pratyabhijna School' (the doctrine of Recognition) after the title of the main treatise on the system, composed by Somananda's disciple Utpaladeva. The doctrine propounded in this school is indeed a reform and reevaluation or reappraisal of Indian religio-philosophical thought.

18.2.3 Brief Idea of Pratyabhijna Doctrine

The strict sense of the term 'Pratyabhijna' is recognition, but in the system, it comprehends the sense of awareness, consciousness, realization, 'knowledge in practice' or practical use of knowledge. Pratyabhijna school thinks that man is ignorant (unaware) of the very nature of one's own Self (Shiva-Atman), viz. his inner being, the profounder faculty within him, and its power of 'Iccha' (Will), 'Jnana' (knowledge, Thought) and 'Kriya' (Action), viz., man's abilities with which he is endowed by Providence. The school believes that the powers (saktis) or abilities with which man is born in this world, comprise his supreme (divine) inheritance. It is only then, when he becomes aware of his divine inheritance, that he can make the best use of it in making his life successful and felicitous.

Pratyabhijna is, in its essence, a deep and systematic study of man as microcosm and the world he lives in as macrocosm. In it, there is a perfectly scientific analysis of all the human faculties, man's entire physical, mental and spiritual organisms and that of the One Objective Reality (Parama Shiva) into thirty six primary realities indispensable for the constitution of the universe and processes of creation, etc. The system being broad-based, tackles all the problems of human interest and lays great stress on the spiritual values of life. It is thus a school of 'Spiritual Pragmatism'.

Utpala, the second teacher of the system, tells us that the Pratyabhijna philosophy is revealed to him by the grace of the Lord (katham cit asadhya maheshvarasya dasyam), and it is for the good of humanity (janasya upakaram icchan) that he expounds the doctrine. He says with emphasis that man should recognise himself, viz., be aware of his inner being (Self) and his deeper faculties of 'knowledge' and 'action' (drkkriyatmika Sakti), if he desires to make his life all prosperous and blissful (samasta sampat samavapti hetum tat pratyabhijnam upapadayami). Our profounder faculties remain hidden from us due to lack of knowledge or experience and owing to innate forgetfulness (moha) on our part. The Pratyabhijna is directed to removing the veil of ignorance from us and turning our attention towards the deeper faculties within us. The teacher believes that the faculties of thought and action comprise the very life of man (jnanam kriya hi bhutanam jivatam jivanam matam). In the real sense of the term, knowledge in that which is transformed into action, or practical use of which is made in one's life. Pratyabhijna says (hints) with emphasis that knowledge put into action or practice is really meaningful.

18.2.4 Supreme Inheritance of Man

Conception of the macrocosm in the Pratyabhijna system is based on a very deep study of the microcosm. The system believes that 'Maheshvara', the Great Lord or Divine Father of all this creation, endowed with 'Mahesvarya' or Svatantrya-Shakti' (Sovereignty or Thought and Action) with which he executed the acts of creation, etc. of this orderly world. This 'Svatantrya-Shakti' or creative power of the Lord is two-fold, comprising 'Prakasha' and 'Vimarsha', viz. power of manifestation and power of perception or concretisation, functioning respectively as Universal Consciousness (Psychical Power) and Universal Energy (Physical Power or Objective Reality), technically called 'Shiva' and 'Shakti'. The former, i. e. Universal Consciousness assumes three forms: Power of Remembrance (Smrti-shakti), Power of Knowledge (Jnana-shakti) and Power of Differentiation (Apojana-shakti). The latter, i. e. Universal Energy functions as Power of Action (Kriya-Shakti) of the Lord. This is governed by three universal laws of Nature - the law of Division (Bhedabheda), the law of Perception (Mana-tat-phala meya), and the law of Causation (Karsna karya). The Transcendental Lord (Vishvottirna) thus concretises or materialises Himself into this created world (becomes Vishvamaya, the cosmos) by evolving thirty-six 'Tattvas' or primary realities from the One Objective Reality, the primordial natural force principle or Prima Materia of all things. As the Lord is conceived to be endowed with Svatantrya-shakti, viz. Sovereignty of will and psychical and physical powers to make Him potent to execute all creative activity which accounts for the emanation of macrocosm with ever-new creations of infinite sentient and insentient beings from His Own Self or Being, so is every individual created being (as microcosm) endowed with its potential powers (faculties) of will, cognition and action, including psychical powers of remembrance, knowledge and differentiation (Samrti-shakti; Jnana-shakti and Apojana-shakti) and its physical powers (Kriya-shakti) as supreme inheritance from his Divine Father-Maheshvara to make him potent to perform all creative activity in his life time. It is 'recognition' or awareness and right use of one's divine faculties (supreme inheritance) with which man is born in this world that make his life felicitous and blissful (evam atmanam estasya samyag jnana - kriya tatha, jnan yathepsitan pashyan janati ca karati ca). The fact is that the Self (being a spark of the divine) is the pivot of one's life and Self-recognition is the means of achieving one's all fortunes and success in life (samasta-sampat samavapti-hetum; janasya-ayatna siddhyartham).

18.2.5 Pratyabhijna Values (human & spiritual)

Pratyabhijna is one of the greatest humanistic movements of Kashmir, which might well be called the 'Philosophy of Humanism'. It is a wonderful synthesis of nearly all earlier systems of India's philosophic thinking, and is completely free from 'negativism' and 'escapism' of certain schools of Vedantins and from the 'nihilism' of some Buddhist schools. It is most realistic in its attitude to life. It is a most dynamic system in which emphasis is laid on what is called Svatantrya, the complete autonomy of thought and action as the goal of life. It may also be called a school of Spiritual Pragmatism, because its doctrines have a practical bearing upon human interests, besides having its main direction to the spiritual elevation of humanity, Pratyabhijna lays emphasis on human values and cardinal virtues as are given, in brief, below:

18.2.6 Spiritual & Moral Values in Pratyabhijna

According to Pratyabhijna, human beings are by nature divine. They are the sparks of the divine, children of God. The whole mankind forms one family (manavah bandhavah sarve). It is by self discipline (culture) and clean moral life that man can unveil the divine qualities in his personality. Love of God in this school means love of human beings, of one's fellow -men. He who loves God, loves everybody and looks on all men as equals. Love of God is to be translated into service of one's fellow - men and into such acts as are conducive to the good and benefit of one and all. Gentleness, righteousness, sympathy, friendliness and honest dealings with one another are qualities or virtues necessary for good life. Pratyabhijna promotes the eternal values of peace and freedom and human dignity beneficial to the

common man in their application to life. These values are stated in terms like 'sarva-shivata' (which signifies that the personality of every human individual is divine or sacred), 'sarva-samata' (meaning that all men are born equal) 'sarva - svatantrya' (i.e. all men are born free) and so on. Thus the doctrine lays emphasis on 'liberty, equality and fraternity' which is the famous motto of 'the civilized world today. Above all, Pratyabhijna directs man to working for peace and tranquility of the world (Vishva-Shanti) an following that as truth which is conducive to the good and benefit of the whole humanity.

19 Sanskrit Chronicles and Sultans of Kashmir

A Resume

Professor K. N. Dhar

The history of Muslim period in Kashmir is as intriguing as it is revealing. Though a sizeable number of chronicles, both indigenous and foreign, contemporary as well as remote, is available for this phase of Kashmir history, yet the conclusions arrived at and the facts enumerated are in no way immaculately objective. These historians, barring a few, have granted their personal dimensions into these. Unfortunately for this epoch, the chroniclers have not been able to extricate themselves from co-coony meshes of personal likes and dislikes. Their subjective involvement has gone a long way in tarnishing the inherent image of this period in Kashmir history.

Moreover, modern scholars have not also been able to provide a dispassionate account of this period in as much as their knowledge of Persian or Sanskrit, in which the chronicles of this period are couched is either scanty or next to nothing. They have usually depended upon the defective translations, more so in the case of Sanskrit chronicles, thereby mutilating the exact import of the events and also drawing wrong and misleading inferences. Even Dr. G. M. D. Sufi, author of the monumental work entitled "KASHEER" has suffered from this lapse. Therefore, the edge this particular period has over earlier periods of history, in terms of contemporary evidence, seems to have been blunted.

This period in Kashmir history only confirms the age-long truth that the transitional ferment rides rough shod over the society when it is turning a new leaf. Old norms and attitudes melt away before the effulgent enthusiasm of the new order. It can never be smooth-sailing on either side. In the Hindu period, as depicted by Kalhana, whenever a change in rule was necessitated by the force of circumstances, it was definitely attended with scourge and death for the values the earlier kings had nursed. Even the vestiges smacking of the old were done away with. The 'new' was enthroned only on the ashes of the 'old' ! Therefore, it should not seem surprising or denigrating that the Muslim rulers got engaged in the crusade of annihilating the old and installing their way of life with unrelenting gusts and fervour. The Muslim monarchs were only repeating the course of history of their earlier periods in Kashmir. There were such emancipated kings like Pravarsena, Lalitaditya, Avantiverman etc, but the majority of the rulers could not rise above their narrow parochial loyalties. The same trend is discernible in the Muslim period of Kashmir history and is therefore neither horrifying nor unnecessarily disheartening. When the dust of this tumult settled the Muslim period also brought out of its womb benevolent kings like "Budshah" and Shahabuddin. Therefore, it does not seem justifiable or fair to dub this period as nihilistic or iconoclastic. More recently when, in the wake of Indian Independence, the political map of our country was redrawn the Rajas and Nawabs being dubbed as the representatives of a dying order were compelled to join the national stream by persuasion, guile or force. Their states underwent a transformation beyond recognition. This kind of friction between the old and the new is a natural phenomenon and the sparks coming out of this should not scare us into building a fallacious or deluding premise. History as such is a faithful representation coupled with detached interpretation of events. It is neither propaganda nor useless kite-flying for imposing own thinking on others. It is also not a veritable substitute for re-orientation or indoctrination. After going through the chronicles of this period, it can be easily conceded that the Muslim kings did not find any time to cool their heels and consequently engage themselves in ushering in a happy compromise between the dying old and the present coming to birth. The vulturous scramble for regal prowess was so intense that brother was after the blood of brother and son wove plots to overthrow his parent. In this pernicious climate of internecine feuds, the king was always expected to look around with fingers crossed, his maximum concern being his personal safety. Therefore, to expect a fair deal for his subjects and society at large, is a misnomer here. They at best could only invoke Islamic Brotherhood to keep their authority in tact. As a corollary to this, they were also obliged to excite the religious propensities of their subjects - neo converts, of course - to make themselves secure on the throne. It was essentially a political strategy and had nothing to do with their actual approach to life. Whenever such

mist of distrust and infidelity cleared for a brief spell, the Muslim kings have rendered yeoman's service to their subject.

In this context, and fortunately for the posterity, the Sanskrit chroniclers have tried to keep themselves at arm's length from the emotional involvement - the bane of this period. They have striven hard to sit on the fence and relate the events in more or less a dispassionate manner. It goes definitely to their credit that they could maintain the balance between head and heart in those hectic days when the links with the past were being broken with venomous acclarity. These historians had every reason to get derailed into the jigsaw of fallacies, in as much as they definitely were the chips of the old block which was being derided under their very nose. To speak squarely, these master-minds wore their profession on their sleeves.

Four Sanskrit luminaries have given an account of the Muslim rule in Kashmir, in succession. The first Jona Raja was followed by Shrivara, who took the thread from him when he (Jana Raja) was cut short by death and could not complete his assignment. The third was Prajya Bhatta whose original chronicle is lost but has been condensed by Shuka in the introductory portion of his Rajatarangini to make it a continuous whole. So this gap has been ably retrieved by the fourth chronicler Shuka, and the loss has been thus repaired.

19.1 Jona Raja

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

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

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

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

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

While describing the vandalism of Sikandar in razing temples and places of pilgrimage of Hindus to the ground, which would have alienated Jona Raja's sympathy for reasons obvious, he like a faithful reporter

does pay tribute to the king's administrative acumen. He does not spare his Sultan from chastisement when it is due. He vehemently chides his co-religionists, the earlier Hindu Kings, for their lack of political foresight and also for being the slaves of lust.

All told, Jona Raja has given an account of twenty three rulers of Kashmir, out of which thirteen are Hindus, one a Bhautia and nine Muslims. This account covers a span of 459 years, He has been the contemporary of Sikandar and Zain-ul-abdin, by virtue of which his description about these two kings is not only lucid but also authentic. The general impression gleaned from the account of Hindu kings is that their hold on the reins of their kingdom was tottering under the irresistible weight of court intrigues, corruption, avarice, lust and sex. These failings were all the more be meared with physical and moral cowardice. Therefore, the occupation of Kashmir by Muslims was a natural culmination of this chaos and confusion. Degeneration of the highest order had already permeated the soul of Hindu society and the astute Muslim struck when the iron was hot. Hindu rulers had to blame only themselves for this catastrophe. Their levity did not even allow them to lick their wounds. Cultural conquest of Hindus had already commenced when Islam entered the valley a century or more before Muslim rule was installed here. Jona Raja treats the reign of these last Hindu kinds in a very cursory and brief manner. He has disposed of some Hindu kings in four or five verses. The brevity he has employed can be assessed by the fact that the description of thirteen Hindu Kings is dispensed within 174 verses out of a total of 976 verses comprising his chronicle. Jona Raja has himself adduced the reason for his lack of sympathy for these kings, as alluded to earlier. The chief cause for this unconcern was that Jona Raja wanted to pick up the thread from where Kalhana had left it, only to induct continuity into his chronicle. His main forte was Muslim Rule, for which alone he was responsible to King Zain-ul-abdin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The third invader, Achala was prevailed upon by Kota Rani not to unleash his sword on the innocent people. He was invited to adorn the throne which was lying vacant, as the king had fled to Ladakh. Achala was taken in and he disbanded his army. Once he did this, it was very easy to see him off. Consequently, when Shahmeer came to the throne, he had a stupendous task of rehabilitation awaiting him. He acquitted himself very well in this field and proved to be a very competent administrator. In the words of Jona Raja "He changed the face of Kashmir." The salient facts come to surface while describing the ascendancy to power by Shahmeer. Jona Raja alludes to the oracle of the great Goddess wherein She predicted to him (Shahmeer), in a dream, that his progeny would rule Kashmir henceforth. By putting this anecdote to pen Jona Raja seems to have reconciled mentally to the change of power in Kashmir and also adduced Divine sanction for it. He has also called Shahmeer as "Kula Natha", the chief of the Muslim population in Kashmir, which could put its counter-weight against the machinations of landed aristocrats, such as Damaras (Dhars), professional fighters like Lavyanyas (Lones) and also Bhatta (the entire Brahmin faction). Perhaps that was the reason why Kota Rani took him into her service and confidence. This very influence with his co-religionists facilitated him to grab power without a single leaf fluttering in the valley. His seige of Anderkot (near Sumbal) proved as the last nail in the coffin of Hindu authority over Kashmir.

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

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

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

Jona Raja does allude to Jamsheed's holding the charge of 'Commissioner of Guards' stationed at one of the mountain passes, leading to Kashmir Valley. Perhaps this very reference of his becoming the 'Commissioner of Guards' has led these learned authors to do a bit of unfounded kite-flying. Jona Raja explicitly lays down that Sultan Jamsheed got fed up with wars, when Ali Sher inflicted a decisive defeat

on his son. Moreover, Ali Sher broke the truce of two months cease-fire, offered initially by him. All these factors prompted him to relinquish the royal authority voluntarily, and during the closing months of his life he did accept an assignment much below his status. Therefore, it is sufficiently clear that he was neither deposed nor killed.

Ali Sher, assuming the name of Alla-ud-din (1344-1356 A.D.) ascended the throne of Kashmir by guile, deceit and statecraft. Despite these defects he was a master-mind in politics and a dauntless warrior. Two great events of his reign have been narrated by Jona Raja. The first being a direct reference to a bevy of Yoginis (females possessing magical powers), whose leader has been identified as 'Lalleshwari'. In Kashmiri tradition, Lalla is not credited with having found any order of 'Yoginis' at all. She lived by herself and also in her own thoughts. Therefore the use of the word 'Chakra' does not confirm the views by Persian scholars. It might also connote the host of eight Yoginis - attendants of Durga, Shiva's consort. Again, Kashmiri tradition makes Lalla-Arifa contemporary with Syed Ali Hamdani (Shah Hamdan), about whom Jona Raja is surprisingly reticent. It may be inferred here that Jona Raja did not mention the name of Shah Hamdan, as he was the sole instrument for transplanting Muslim faith in place of Hinduism in Kashmir. The crusade for mass conversion in Kashmir was initiated by him. Even if he (Jona Raja) would have liked to refer to Lalla, Shah Hamdan's mention would have been a natural corollary to it, as far as Kashmiri tradition goes. Therefore, he chose to skip over both these personalities in Kashmir history. The chief of 'Yoginis' (Nayika), narrated earlier, may be construed to be a female Tantric worshipper, otherwise she would not have offered a 'goblet of wine' to Alla-ud-din. Subsequent Persian scholars have tried to replace 'wine' by 'milk'- as former is forbidden by Islam. But Jona Raja has no such aberrations. Here again, 'Lalla' is never associated with wine etc in Kashmiri tradition like the left-band ritualists. Therefore, to infer from 'Yogini' the existence of 'Lalla', in that period at least, according to testimony of Jona Raja, is not only far-fetched but also preposterous.

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

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

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

One redeeming feature during the reign of the first four Sultans comes to full view. Even though the pace of proselytisation was gathering momentum every day, during this period of only three decades or more,

yet the influence of Hindus at the royal court did not wane. The Hindus occupied the position of counsellors, advisers or ministers. Sultan Jamsheed confided in his counsellor Lakshman Bhatt. Udayashri was probably the prime minister of Sultan Alla-ud-din and Chandra Damar his commander-in-chief. In the company of both these, the Sultan had caught the glimpse of the Yogini, as referred to earlier. Similarly Sultan Shahab-ud-din, when away on military campaigns, depended upon Kota Bhatt for internal administration of his kingdom.

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

In the wake of his illustrious predecessor, Shahab-ud-din also undertook many military expeditions and even went as far as Peshawar and Ghazni. His appetite for extending the borders of his country was unquenchable. It was also necessitated by the fact that the kingdom of his predecessors was shrinking by their incompetence. Several scholars have doubted the veracity of these campaigns and termed these as highly exaggerated. Their scepticism is perhaps based on the misnomer that Kashmiris only knew how to defend and could never venture to indulge in offensive. On the testimony of Jona Raja this assumption is not only unjust but also unfounded. He (Jona Raja) has narrated that the Kashmiri Sultan Sikandar was offered a gift of two elephants by Timur the Lame. Timur, who looted Delhi without compunction and called himself invincible, could not have parted with his two elephants for the King of Kashmir, for nothing in return. It was definitely the scare of Kashmiri army, which the Mongol scourge tried to pamper, so that it did not attack his forces while returning.

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

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

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

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

upon for what they have recorded about Sultan Shahab-ud din. Theirs is only a hearsay or wishful thinking while Jona Raja, from the point of historicity, is more reliable.

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

He also founded a township within the city, after his name, as Qutab-ud-din-pora. Modern scholars have identified it as the tract of land now known as Mohalla Haji Peer Mohmad Sahib, (also called as 'Langar Hatta' bazar near Islamia College to-day). There is a mohalla in Srinagar bearing this name even now. It is situated on the left bank of the Jhelum between Zainakadal and Ali Kadal, some distance below Gurgari Mohalla. I am led to believe that the Sultan was in some way the founder of this locality/habitation. Future research may unfold some relevant information regarding this.

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

Jona Raja does not give all these details. He only refers to the gift of two elephants sent by the "Malchha" King (Timur), while returning from Delhi, to the Sultan. But in this very verse he has also unfolded in one word the cause for this unbelievable kind gesture from this cruel and callous invader. He uses the word "the suspicious Malechha King". Herein this Sanskrit historian would make us believe that Timur feared an attack from the Sultan when his army was returning to Samarkand with invaluable booty. In order to keep him in good humour the Turk sent two royal elephants to him. Jona Raja further extols the towering stature of these beasts which were definitely a rarity in Kashmir. Jona Raja acknowledges the superiority of his Sultan over Timur and in a subdued tone does hint that the latter wanted to buy neutrality of

Sikandar, for which end in view he sent the gift of two elephants to him. Like an astute general, Timur could anticipate Sikandar's sending reinforcements to Sultan Mohd Tughlak of Delhi. In order to forestall these designs he overwhelmed Sikandar with this unique but, all the same, very respectful gift. During the sack of Delhi it was free for all, but Sikandar's intervention would have made a veritable difference. Persian chroniclers, Hindus as well as Muslims, are unequivocal in asserting that it was Sikandar who was actually scared of vandalism of Timur, which seems more probable. Jona Raja has tried to be over-patriotic in delineating this incident. At the same time, he deserves credit also for not skipping over this great event in Indian History, when he refers to the sack of Delhi by Timur.

During the initial years of his rule the Sultan was very forbearing and charitable. Jona Raja has most graphically described this trait of the King. He has recorded "Nobody can describe his charitable disposition; the lotus-hands (of the Hindu subjects) would always feel drenched with water." It is a convention with the Hindus to receive alms or 'dakshina' (fee etc) with hands wet with water so that in return they spray the benefactor with this very water, showering blessings on him. It is therefore clear that Sikandar treated the Hindu subjects also kindly along with the Muslims. Unfortunately the Sultan could not maintain this policy for long. The visit of Syed Mohammad Hamdani, the illustrious son of Amir Kabir, changed his Catholic out-look on life to a large extent. Jona Raja very diplomatically ascribes the reason of this great change in the Sultan to the vices rampant in his (Hindu) subjects. But at the same time he acknowledges the over-all superiority of this missionary from Hamdan. He tells us that "He was a shining moon among the stars; though very junior in age, he was adored as the senior-most in scholarship." The Sultan was in his grip and under his spell and through his exhortations an era of unprecedented proselytisation was inaugurated in Kashmir. Shariat was for the first time proclaimed as the state religion. He appointed the ministers, all of them neo-converts: Ladda Raja, Vaidya Shankar and Suha Bhatta, perhaps with this unflinching belief that the converts are more rabid than the originals, hence will not hesitate to perpetrate every kind of tyranny on their erstwhile co-religionists.

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

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

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

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

Before the account of Sikandar, as given by Jona Raja, is concluded it will be pertinent to refer to the meticulous caution with which the historian has tried to cover up the mis-deeds of the Sultan by keeping Suha Bhatta only in the dock. Perhaps Jona Raja did not like to malign the parent of his benefactor (Budshah) for reasons obvious and consequently shifted all the odium to Suha Bhatta and to Hindus. But at the same time he does say that the Sultan could not wash his hands off these atrocities. His tacit consent must have been obtained by Suha Bhatta through the good-offices of Syed Mohammad Hamdani, who was actually the big boss in those dark days. The Sultan was always at his beck and call and could not go against his wishes. Persian historians have advanced many reasons for Suha Bhatta to wreck vengeance on his erstwhile co-religionists, but Jona Raja has simply written that he came under the magnetic spell of Syed Muhammad Hamdani and at his bidding took to heaping inhumanities on Hindus and their religion.

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

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

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

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

The first point which deserves emphasis is that Zain-ul-abdin was never under the influence of Hindus. He was a devout Muslim and would consult the Shaikul-Islam on every measure he would like to introduce. Perhaps this is also the reason that "Shariat" as the state-religion could not be replaced. In accordance with its dictates, Jazia also was not revoked entirely, but fixed at a lower rate. Zain-ul-abdin could not dare to go totally against the current of public opinion, built brick by brick by his forefathers, so far as treatment towards Hindus was concerned. Fanatics did raise their eye-brows on his attitude towards the Hindus and for this very purpose Syed Sad Ullah came from Mecca with a huge load of books. He tried to cajole the Sultan into reversing this tolerant policy, but the latter did not oblige. Budshah seems to have been more awake than those zealots who would try to foist their faith on others not by persuasion but through coercion. He therefore first of all called upon his own kinsmen to set their house in order. Muslims had multiplied themselves into different sects; Shias, Sunnis, Sayeds, Sufis and were vying with each other to show the other sects down. The Sultan could very well anticipate that once the object of their combined hatred - the Hindu was gone, they would fall out among themselves. Once such a nihilistic propensity is nurtured, it can express itself in any shape whatsoever. Therefore like a true follower of the Prophet he tried to consolidate the Muslim Brotherhood and exhorted them to sink their differences and close their ranks. It would have done more harm than good to the spread of Islam. How prophetically Budshah hinted towards this, can be easily corroborated by the subsequent Chak rule over Kashmir. Therefore, reinstatement of the irritant - the Hindu - did not only do good to him but also made the Muslim society cohesive and viable.

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

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

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

Moreover in the wake of building a network of canals and water feeders, he rehabilitated the Hindus also on the land thus reclaimed. It served the purpose of replenishing the government treasury with the

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

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

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

19.2 Shrivara

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

As has been indicated earlier Jona Raja could not write the account of penultimate eleven years of Budshah's reign. He was snatched away by the icy hands of death. So in all sincerity Shrivara records that

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

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

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

greases from the pines and other forest trees. Above all he enforced moratorium on debts - the agencies of lending and borrowing were abolished.

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

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

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

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

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

In view of the strife amongst his sons, his advisers had suggested to the Sultan that he should name his heir - apparent in his life time. Adam Khan had already revolted against his father and was living at Jammu with his maternal uncle. The youngest Behram was not also looked upon kindly by his father, the Sultan. Even though he (the Sultan) had a soft corner for Haji Khan, the second son, yet he refrained from nominating him as his successor. He simply said, "I will not confer my kingdom on any one of my sons

during my life-time. He, who is strongest amongst them all, will definitely get the throne after I am no more."

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

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

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

Intensity of such atrocities compelled many Hindus to forsake their own faith and dress, and declare that they were not Bhattas. In this connection it may be safely asserted that 'Nabatu', the colloquial phrase in Kashmiri even current today, denoting total annihilation of Bhattas has its origin in 'Na Bhatta Aham' (I am not a Bhatta). This is the second 'Nabatu' in the series on records, the first being in the reign of Sikandar. Adam Khan, the eldest son of Budshah and virtually having an undisputed title to the throne, thought this time most propitious to invade Kashmir and snatch away kingship from his brother Haider Khan. He was not far from wrong in choosing this time for his attack. The king was oblivious to his duties and a sizable portion of his subjects was disgruntled. About the law and order situation prevailing at that time in Kashmir, Shrivara has remarked- "The thieves, the jackals, the cruel, the adulterers, the criminals and the deceitful roamed about during the day even." Adam Khan wanted to invade Kashmir through Poonch. In the meanwhile the Sultan smelling the perfidy and collaboration of Hassan Kuchhi (who had anointed him as the Sultan) with Adam Khan, got him assassinated. On hearing this Adam Khan retreated to Jammu. But he was not destined to live long. While fighting on the side of Manikya Deva of Jammu, his maternal uncle, against the Moguls, Adam Khan was killed. Haider Khan got his dead body to Srinagar and he was buried beside his mother at Suhyar, on the bank of Jhelum between Ali Kadal and Nawa Kadal.

The Sultan had become so weak-minded and suspicious that he did not accord befitting reception even to his son Hassan returning from his victorious military expedition outside Kashmir. His Nero-like disposition has been graphically delineated by Shrivara when the Lakshimpur, a town founded by Shahabud Din (at the foot of Hari Parbat), was in flames and the five annexes of his own residence (as the prince) were burning the Sultan ascended the roof of his palace and felt so much jubilant (on seeing the ravages of fire) that he began to indulge in drinking there and then." While attending a drinking party in his lotus-palace, his foot slipped on the marble floor. He fell down and his nose began to bleed

profusely. He swooned into a coma from which he never recovered afterwards. He breathed his last in the month of Baisakh on Basant Panchmi in 1472 A.D. At that time the Royal power was swinging between his uncle Behram Khan and the prince Hassan, like a person of suspicious disposition not knowing on whom to depend."

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

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

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

The Sultan though a chronic addict would sometimes pass off nights in vigil listening to the Puranas and other scriptures (of Hindus) laying down the guidelines for salvation. He felt very much impressed by these. Perhaps this was the sole reason which prompted the Sultan to entrust his son, Prince Hassan to Shrivara for his all round upbringing. Shrivara would narrate the tales from Brhat Katha to him. Shrivara has for the first time made mention of the Dal Lake, which name persists even today. Prior to him this lake was known by the name of "Sureshwari Sara." He also refers to the floating gardens on its surface and the twin 'lankas' (islands) of 'Ropa' and 'Sona' there. He writes "spread over twelve miles this Dal Lake has for its constant companion the Hari Parvat which in the hope of reaping virtuous reward always

drenches itself with its holy water - (is reflected in its water always). According to Shrivara the bank of Dal Lake was a hub of cultural and social life of Kashmiris at that time. There, on its bank, were the places of pilgrimage, monasteries, palaces, hostels for students and the pennance-groves so more sanctified than Varanasi." Likewise he has used the epithet "Ullol" for "Mahapadmasar" - the name of the Wular Lake then. One glaring fact comes to surface while going through the reigns of Budshah and his son Haider Shah: that is the ascendancy of Sayeds. In a sense this clan, which got power firstly through the magnetic personalities of Syed Ali Hamdani and his son Syed Mohammed and also through matrimonial alliances with the reigning kings, can be safely called non-Kashmiri. They are supposed to be the direct descendants of Prophet Mohammed. Budshah offered his daughter to Syed Nissar and made him the governor of one of the provinces, probably Beerwah, as it is known now. Budshah had even himself married Bodha Khatoon, a Sayed. He also got a Sayed spouse for his son Prince Haibat. Sultan Haider Shah married his son Hassan to a Sayed girl, daughter of Miyan Hassan. In this way, the three Sultans - Budshah, Haider Shah and Hassan Shah, the grandfather the father and the son, had Sayed queens. Therefore, the Sayeds had ample opportunities to come to power over and above the heads of the local factions of Maliks, Magreys, Kuchhais and Yatus. The 'History of Sultans' heretofore is actually a continuous strife between these clans to capture power. At times the helpless Sultan had to surrender to the chief of the victorious faction and appoint him as his Prime Minister.

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

20 The Social Set-up of Kashmiri Pandits In India

P. N. Walie

In 1968, I had an occasion to be associated with a Swamiji in Chandigarh. He had spent forty years in the valley. He was eighty five and of Shankracharya Sect. Radiating a robust health, he had remarkable mental agility and speed in action. His face which was pink looked all the more radiant because of following snow-white beard and hair that reached his shoulders. Spirituality or no spirituality, his very bodily features were enough to draw attention of those who even passed by him. So when he spoke, people listened. What he said about Kashmiri Brahmins passed for authenticity.

By virtue of his long stay in the valley, he had developed an affinity with Kashmiri Pandits. He would even join the meetings of Kashmiri Pandits' association, when I was its General Secretary. Once addressing a Kashmiri Pandit congregation, he remarked, " I am of a firm opinion that whereas Guru Nanak looks after Sikhs in whichever foreign country they happen to be: Shiva, the lord of intellect, education, art, sciences and conjugal happiness looks after Kashmiri Brahmins wherever they are in India and abroad. They are being guided by Shiva everywhere whether they acknowledge this fact or not. I have an evidence to prove my point regarding Shiva's grace to Kashmiri Brahmins. In the wake of 1947 raid, I went round the places which fell to raider's vandalism, in order to find out the state of Shivalings in God-forsaken places. Not a single Shivaling was dismantled."

This statement put me to thinking, and Lo! Among seventy odd men audience I counted eleven who drew four figure salary; ten who were gazetted officers, twenty owned houses in Chandigarh (now there are about forty.) Out of seventy men about fifty were graduates and above. Most of them had come away from the valley after 1947 raid. With heart within and God overhead, they had made room for themselves in a different world outside their own.

When speaking rationally, we do not take cover under religious hypothesis but when reality is taken into consideration, one is amazed while pondering over such statistics. Here I shall refer to 'Illustrated Weekly of India', which, about seven years ago, brought out a feature pertaining to the Kashmiri Brahmins of India. Its statistics showed that this section of Indian Society from Kashmir to Kerala and Gujrat to Assam consists of only one Lakh and fifty thousand men, women and children. But in proportion to this number this sub-clan of Brahmins produced two Prime Ministers, two cabinet ministers, one chief-justice of India, two general secretaries of parliament, one chief election commissioner and four generals ! 'Disproportionate to its population are high-ranking civilian and military officers, diplomats, doctors, engineers, scientists, famous actors, businessmen, men of letters, university teachers judges etc. etc. When I was in active service, the Kashmiri Pandit Officers in the Indian army, after independence, outnumbered the Kashmiri jawans therein. If attainment of positions of any section of Indian society has any bearing on its social set-up then the Kashmiri Pandits in relation to their numerical strength are far ahead as a social group in our country.

Scattered all over India and abroad in small groups they have organised exclusive cultural associations. They publish their own magazines. Observe typical Kashmiri festivals. Hold biradiri elections. Celebrate pleasures of one another and share the pain of the unfortunate among them, wherever they happen to be outside the valley.

Even the last solar eclipse which turned out to be a scientific fan-fare throughout the world threw up the name of Kashmiri astronomer since dead. The fanfare of first Indian Sputnik 'Aryabhata' leads one to realize as to why Kashmiri Pandit, in the valley was, and is, called 'Bhatta'.

Under dispassionate analysis, this reality cannot be relegated to mere coincidence because, this social position in relation to this microscopic section of Indian society with its typical identity has been more or less constant. It was about half a century ago, when as a boy, I read Late Shri Anand Koul Bamzai's 'The Kashmiri Pandit'. I marvelled at the fact that those of Kashmiris who fled the valley as refugees under various pressures, two or three centuries ago and settled in the plains, had made enviable positions for

themselves. Less than five thousand prior to independence these handful of people had produced men of national stature, out of sheer merit and became the very elite of Indian society. Under British rule they earned the status of being the blue eyed boys of the 'Raj'. In administration, under British rule there emerged in the plains Kashmiri Pandits of Knighthood, Rai Bahadurs, Rajas, Rai Sahibs, men of I. C. S. cadre, famous lawyers, professors of repute, scholars, writers and poets. In education and refinement, they were an aristocratic class by themselves. In the field of national politics this negligible society threw up the people of the highest social stature like the Naurus, Saprus, Katjus, Kinzus; and other dignitaries during forty years' time span. In Lahore, Delhi, Jaipur, capitals of the then princely states, Lucknow, Allahabad, Calcutta and large towns then Central India, Kashmiri Pandit was recognised as a man of substance and respectability. Yet he retained his identity. It is because of that we to-day distinguish him from the rest and attempt to analyse intrinsic powers to rise among crores of Indian masses above the level of the average in his social set-up.

So if this trait of Kashmiri Pandit to emerge despite political social and financial handicaps in land outside his own appears to be a constant factor then there is indeed some uniqueness in this sub-clan just as there is God given fair complexion and bodily features. Otherwise how in such a hotch-potch of religions, castes languages, cultures, economic disparities, illiteracy and other myriads of disabilities prevalent everywhere in the plains, this Kashmiri Brahmin is making his presence felt now as before? To find the reason, I have to go back to the times of Martand Ruins.

Archaeology has ceased to be a boring subject for all those whose hobby happens to be general reading even regardless of any special interest in history. From archaeological findings laymen enjoy co-relating affairs of their heritage with what they are at present. So the discovery that Martand Relics are five thousand years old a discerning Kashmiri Pandit straight away connects this Circa to his traditional calendar called in Kashmiri as "Nich-Patri". It shows along with Christian Era, Vikrami Era, Saka Era, the current year as 5056. A Kashmiri Pandit, social and cultural age therefore, is justified in the assertion that his is consistently and persistently as old as the Martand Ruins. Our 'Nich Patris' have been brought out all along the ancient times down to the present day without a break. "The Sapt Rishi Samvat" of 5056 years that appeared to a layman as an astral era has manifested in the background of archaeological research a different meaning in the terms of Kashmiri Pandits' culture and their whole social standing. Thus, he can examine this fact under the much condemned (and justifiably so, Hitlerence theories and analysis of races. In that cult a pure Aryan has God-given attributes commensurate with geographical and biological factors. This valley of Kashmir of temperate zone, eighty miles in length and twenty - three in breadth is peopled by a race which is pure Aryan, not in mere aspects of natives, physique but instinctive behaviour. In the whole of Asia only this area, covered on all sides by majestic ranges of Himalayas, has sustained this purity of Aryan of creativity and initiative. Historically, morally and politically, we are all strongly averse to the claim of racial superiority. But realistically speaking we cannot deny under any pretext that the western world, whose achievements we envy and whose way of life we strive to follow, has been the leader in the progress of making and is currently regardless of our spite. There appears to be no time in the foreseeable future when the process Even Japan is the Jap we admire because for the last hundred years and more she has gone the western way by her own efforts to follow in the foot-steps of Europe and United States where the pure Aryan abounds.

One of the foremost qualities of the aforesaid race is the initiative in its intrinsic ability to turn to its use available resources by its own genius under any environment, hostile or favourable.

Under this analysis, we take into account the people who lived in the valley of 80 miles by 23 miles in a geographical set-up that made communication with the outer world extremely difficult two or three centuries before and almost impossible in the B. C. Era. This state of being cut off and what the average Kashmiri did on his own, within his available resources and by his own genius to live with it proves exclusive characteristics to survive and retain his identity. This becomes all the more pronounced when other classes of Indian society placed in similar conditions and with available natural resources have not been able to turn them to their own use, on their own initiative. When reference is to an average Kashmiri in relation to an average individual of other parts of India, it excludes those who have privileges of birth,

economic well-being, education or any other social distinction. Normally it is a man in the street and a representative sample of millions of illiterate people whose economic condition precludes any special feature in cultural fields.

Here in the valley, right from copper age, the average man has on his own, shown creative instincts, productivity, originality and adaptability. The exploitation of wood, the indigenous water transportation devised so as to take advantage of gently flowing rivers, the crafts, handi-work, weaving, floating vegetable gardens, boat-craft such as 'Doon-gas', 'Khachus' (later house-boats), pottery innovations, the 'Kangri' the type of cooking hearth (Daan), foot wear out of hay, warmth generating fuel out of tree leaves, all have the stamp of creativity and adaptability. And most important of all is the fact that these items are out of available local natural resources.

Even in the art of house - building Kashmir had devised special aspect of construction which is exclusively his own and this has been profusely praised by construction experts because such construction had outstanding features of adaptability to extreme cold and earthquake prone conditions of the valley. Surprisingly the cost was less in relation to durability. For all this type of exclusive requirement of life in the valley since, ancient times, it has generally been the genius and the initiative of the average man that has produced the results which are tenable even today despite mechanical life that has overwhelmed countries all around the world.

The foregoing is just an illustration to prove the point that a Kashmiri Pandit being a pure Aryan has an edge over others who do not have available to themselves the natural resources which, if exploited on their own as did the Kashmiri, would have definitely raised them the level of backward sections of society about which we read and hear day in and day out through the media. I have had the opportunity to assess the quality of the average man in many other parts of India in comparison with average Kashmiri by virtue of my All India Service. This quality of adaptability, creativity and exploitation of resources and situations towards his own good has come in good stead for a Kashmiri Pandit. This is an intrinsic trait. This has been the product of biological and geographical conditions obtaining in the valley over the centuries.

Besides, the Kashmiri Pandit has a psychology which has been nurtured by his religious beliefs of exclusive ritualism. As education and the effects of environments mould the character of an individual so do the religious beliefs shape and formulate a collective behaviour of a section of people which we term as its culture. So in the religious aspect of Kashmiri Pandit's life, a reference is necessary to substantiate this argument. To a Kashmiri Brahmin upto eleventh century A.D. the reality that Vedas were transmitted over 5000 years by 'Shruti' and 'Samriti' from mouth to mouth must have been an inconvenient process. He therefore, applied his quality of adaptability to this aspect of his life. Pandit Vasukura, the Kashmiri Brahmin was, thus the first individual who reduced the Vedas to writing. In evidence of this statement, I refer to para 2 of page 2 of a treatise on "Vedic India" by Louis Renou, the French scholar of Paris University as translated by Philip Spratt in 1957. Apart from this documentary authority I have my personal experience right since my boyhood to have perceived that our religious rites were elaborate and always in the medium of Sanskrit accompanied by manifold symbolisms, figures, diagrams, mudras, improvisations, rice-balls, Kusha grass, copperware, limestone, barley and various techniques like, the "Shokh-ta Punshun" at the time of births. Earlier the whole of this was a 'tamasha' for me but after going through the above named French scholar's work of research in Vedas, I am convinced that Kashmiri Brahmin was meticulous in performance of religious ceremonies. Such process was common in every household and was precisely as laid down in Rig-Veda five thousand years ago. But elsewhere during my forty-five years in plains, I have not witnessed such festidiousness in performance at the function of any non-Kashmiri Brahmin. Even in the process of "Lagna" at the marriage functions the Kashmiri Pandits' technique excels; i.e. the bride and the bridegroom hold each others hands both together go round the fire, whereas non-Kashmiris tie the bride to bridegroom's dhoti who takes her round as an appendage. In Kashmiri Pandits procedure bridegroom and bride moving around fire, hand in hand, appear as equal partners in the journey of life. In the other case the girl is a mere follower with no status of equality in participation of life together.

Besides this aspect, I have had the opportunity to be in almost all British-time provinces of India which include Pakistan and Bangladesh. I worked in Army Ordnance Depots such as the one in Srinagar called Badami Bagh Depot. In those depots throughout India, local civilian labour (average Indians) is employed. From the collective observance of religious function of those average civilians in the country, I have been able to note that whereas Hindus of particular state or region celebrate festivals exclusive to them only, we Kashmiri Brahmins in the valley recognise and celebrate all these put together. Illustrate this point by the mention that in Maharashtra the greatest religious exclusive festival is the fortnight of Lord Ganesha. We also celebrate 'Ganesh Cheturdashi' and a fair is held at 'Ganpath Yar'. In deep south Maha-Shivratri is observed among wider range of Hindu community. Kashmiri Pandit does it over a number of days. In Bengal, Durga Puja or worship of Maha Kali is an exclusive annual feature. We also perform Durga Ashtami 'Havans' during the same period and observe Maha Kali day in December every year. Janma Ashtami, Navratra and Dussehra being most widely celebrated in Karnataka, U. P., Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and H. P; in Kashmir these are the festivals of equal importance. Brahmin's New Year Day in the south is the same as our 'Navreh'. 'Nag Panchmi', a snake worship is in vogue in Central India; we observe 'Ananta Chodah'. Baisakhi is celebrated in Hindi Belt but not in the South. It is a festival in Kashmir. In certain parts of U, P. and Bihar, 'Khichari' festival coincides with our 'Kicha Mavas'. In Assam region, worship of 'Ghar Devta' is common and we also perform puja and offer rice and raw fish to 'Yach' during the same month. In Jabalpure and Andhra where female labour is employed by Ordnance Depots, leave is obtained by Hindu women because of the fast of 'Chandan Shisti'. Kashmiri Pandit ladies observe this accession at a mass scale. Diwali is common everywhere as in Kashmir. In Kerala the thread ceremony is a lengthy affair with the connected 'havan'. It is as elaborate a performance in Kashmir. In 'Shradha' functions rice-made 'Mool Purusha' other than 'Pindas' is a common sight in deep South and the same is the feature of a Kashmiri 'Shradha'. In Eastern U.P. 'Chandika havans' are just like ours in Kashmir. Despite having highest percentage of educated members, Kashmiri Pandit sub-clan is the most ritualistic among all the classes of Hindus, I have had occasion to study in different parts of India in relation to our religious life. All religious proceeding, and temple recitations of Kashmiri Pandits are unwittingly still in Sanskrit even though we seldom wittingly or studied Hindi or Sanskrit as a subject in Schools.

With all the above mentioned religious background the Kashmiri is respected for this trait by Pandit is secular by disposition and other non-Hindu communities in the rest of India. The Muslim surnames are an evidence substantiating non-fanatical attitude of this community. I am both a "Pandit" as well as 'wali' and there are Kashmiri Pandits in India whose surnames are Mullas, Sultans, Mirzas, Durrans and Qazis. They have not changed in Kauls or Dhars so far! There is no feeling of embarrassment whatever even though in the other parts of India than Kashmir such names exclusively identify Muslims.

In the light of all this, Kashmiri Pandits settled in plains after 1947 or earlier are, to my personal satisfaction in this regard, above average, economically and educationally with high sense of hospitality and intellectual disposition when compared with Indian masses in any part of the country and are proud of their heritage. Their power of competition under odds in the various walks of life which are peculiar to Kashmiris such as services of sort professions based on education, modern sciences and technology, is of very high potentiality. Normally Kashmiri Pandits calculating mind which over-rules emotion at the time of scoring over others, is a determining factor in his struggle for survival especially in places and societies where he has landed outside his own state.

In this context, the social set-up of Kashmiri Pandits in India has now manifested a new pattern. There are easily distinguishable two groups of this sub-clan, difference between them has become pronounced because after 1947 a large number of Kashmiri Pandits left the valley and settled elsewhere in India. Almost all of the present generation of Kashmiri Pandits whose fore-fathers have permanently settled in plains over last century or so, do not speak Kashmiri even though they retain much of Kashmiri culture. They speak, Urdu or Hindustani regardless of the local languages of an Indian State in which they happen to live and thrive. They seldom arrange inter-cast marriages, even though recently settled Kashmiri Pandits do without inhibitions even intercommunity weddings. This class of Kashmiri Pandits normally

find matches for boys and girls among the biradari scattered over various states. They arrange matches in towns and cities hundreds of miles away from boy's or girl's home. But the culture, tradition, religious functions, mode of marriages are uniform despite being in different states and far away towns of course other, socialities conform to those prevalent among the class who have settled in plains after 1947. But these are drastically curtailed. In this respect also I have opportunity to study this sub-clan of a sub-clan at their close quarters because I married in 1946 in a family of Kashmiri Pandits who had settled in Lahore, a hundred and fifty years earlier. All relatives on my wife's side and that of my daughter-in-law belong to this social group. So they refer to Kashmiri Pandits who have recently come away from the valley and speak Kashmiri as "Taza Kashmiri" whilst the latter call them 'Purane Kashmiri.' For convenience sake I have coined my own nomenclature. I demarcate the members of either group as 'Typical', and 'Non-typical'. This terminology has been catching up since 1946 as it has obviated confusion in reference. I call a Kashmiri Pandit 'Typical' if he speaks Kashmiri. Those who have settled in earlier times and do not speak Kashmiri, I identify them as 'Non-typical'. My family, therefore, has a composite culture, Typical and Non-Typical put together !

My personal knowledge based on my relationship with this sub-clan of a sub-clan is that those who are highly placed are more or less cosmopolitan, but in many ways have affinity with a Kashmiri Pandit as in early days. In British India it was this tendency to help fellow Kashmiri Pandit that benefited this class by creating social net-work consistently for about a century. If an uncle in Kanpur held a key position he would see that his nephew in Rawalpindi availed benefit of his being a relative. And this sort of help members of this social group gave to one another regardless of relationship also contributed to their sustenance as a class as well as to their emergence of a priveleged social entity in British time. The British rulers were susceptible to their in-born abilities and mastery over English language.

At this present juncture, this social group has three stratas. The first strata has already been referred to. The middle one has retained the family tradition and a cult of ancestors which are somewhat unlike not distinct, except that of a typical Kashmiri. The lowest strata is not distinct, except that it speaks Hindustani or Urdu and the women do not, unlike typical Kashmiri wear Punjabi dresses or that of other states. All the three stratas have no compulsions to stick to certain avoidable formalities as typicals do, which include the art of presentation of hospitality. Against this, the typical Kashmiri copies Punjabis in dowry, dress, other things and above all arranges inter-caste marriages. Among non-typical Kashmiris, inter community or inter-caste marriages, are only the result of a boy or a girl having fallen for a boy or a girl of other community. Parents or relatives do not as a rule arrange such marriages. Even in food habits, they have a creed of their own, which is different from that of typical Kashmiri, a Punjabi or natives of other states where they live. But on comparison with typical Kashmiris who have recently settled in plains the non-typical of middle and lower strata appear, these days, to lack lustre in many fields of competitive life and education.

All said and done, this whole idea of a microscopic distinct class as Kashmiri Pandits in India can sustain its social individuality with its God-given attributes in case it retains by effort, its culture as well as purity of blood. If that is to be an aim, inter-caste or inter-community marriages merrily arranged by typical Kashmiri parents work counter to it. A sub-clan of a lakh or two numerical strength among 70 crore people of Indian Society does not take long to disappear as a group of a distinct set-up. At the present speed, the inter-caste or inter community marriages accelerated by the compulsions of irrational and bad dowry and marriage customs of the typicals as well as love affairs of non-typicals, the social identity of Kashmiri Pandit, in India will be gone and forgotten, if not now, but here-after.

The reader may justifiably observe that I have chanted only the beauties of the good, of the social set-up of the Kashmiri Pandits in India and not barked against the bad; like a pianist, I have only touched the keys that made my tune and have ignored the rest.

21 Tantricism in Kashmir

Acharya Dina Nath Shastri



Acharya Dina Nath Shastri

Nature has lavishly endowed Kashmir with certain distinctive favours which hardly find a parallel in any alpine land of the world. Set in the womb of the Himalayas and gifted with beautiful and inspiring natural scenery, it emerged as a highly advanced seat of learning from very early times, taking its place along with the famous Universities of Taksasila and Nalanda. Ramparts of high mountains and seclusion of the land helped her to preserve the life and conditions of early times which it is rather difficult to resuscitate in regard to other such mountainous regions. To the poets like Bilhana and others it was Sardadesh, the land of goddess Sarda; and it was even believed that goddess Saraswati actually lived here and hence the Sardapitha was also known as Sripeetha for conferring sarvajna degrees. Srichakra worship seems to have originated from this concept of the poets here regarding the characteristic learning of the land. It was only natural that the savants and rishis should indulge in exercises of the highest order of metaptiysical speculation.

The cultural heritage of Kashmir is, therefore, very rich and derives its inspiration and strength both from her natural environs and the rich literature and literary traditions alike. Usually, the literature of a country reflects the unique and most distinctive characteristic of her people and sheds light on the varied aspects of the numerous subjects developed in the language of that area. Thus with the growth of Tantra-sastra that forms one of the important branches of the general sastras like Kavya, Natya, Vyakarana and Vedanta, scholars have put forth their divergent opinions regarding the genesis and growth of this sastra. All are, however, agreed on the point that the Vedas are the source of all these sastras and that Sabda sastra or Vyakarna (grammar) is their expression and basic source material.

Along with the growth of a number of religious sects, numerous treatises were written to expound the basic tenets of a particular religion. The Tantra-sastras also were composed to solve the knotty riddles and secret esotericism of Dharma. There are many manual, of tantras on the diverse religious sects still extant, though some are no doubt lost to us. The date of composition of these manuals cannot be determined with any certainty. The internal evidence, however, reveals that these are anterior to the treatises on Indian philosophy and posterior to the Vedas. Some would, however, even attribute a much earlier date to tantras in comparison to the Vedas. It may safely be assumed that whatever was evolved in the form of religious literature seems to have been first developed in the form of Tantra-sastra. A few scholars would go even to the extent of saying that in view of the complexity of the issues and problems discussed therein, these hold a place alongside the Vedas. This is so because the essence of the mantras of the Tantra-sastra is not in any way inferior to those of the mantras or hymns found in the Vedas, Some of the religious principles

of India are based upon the Principles of Tantra-sastra and in the Tantric-base there occur glimpses of philosophic doctrines. Among the extensively ramified aspect of India's speculation 'the Tantras are characterised by a catholicity of outlook and are free from all personal, communal or race restrictions'. They assign a very important place to women in religion and account for the growth of the Sakta cult. Justice Sir John Woodruffe (whose pen-name is Arthur Avalon) was the first to point out the philosophical and practical value of the Tantras and how the worship of Shakti as World Mother gradually displaced Vedic ritualism.

Bengal, Assam, Gujarat and Kashmir were prominent centres of Tantric cult and theories. Even in Buddhism Vajrayana Saktha had its basis in Tantra sastra. The Tantric cult was current in Tibet, and also in Kashmir. The Tantra is referred to in the works of acknowledged Vaisnava sastra; the Deve Bhagvata in the ninth skando speaks of it as a Vedanta and Saivism got ascendancy over Buddhism. The experiences gained in the Sakta cult and Saivism find a clear exposition and manifestation in treatises on Tantras. Most of these are now lost. Nevertheless, the rituals bear a clear imprint of these tantric influences. This is amply justified by Nilamata-purana where certain rituals and sacrifices are prescribed for all the people of the valley. Khitsari amavasya etc. are the case, in point. In fact, certain calamities in the post-Kushana period were attributed to the giving up of these practices and accepting Buddhist philosophy. The adherents of the Sakta and Saiva cult today are the direct descendants of the Tantric group of followers. With the decline of Buddhism, the Sakta cult came into prominence and even the Vajrayana branch of Buddhism found expression in Baudha-Tantra. It developed along with the Tantric cult which had already taken deep roots in the soil. This is supported by a study of Saivism itself, the rise of which is held by consensus to be the 6th century of the Christian era. The Baudha-tantra (Vajrayana branch of Buddhism) also flourished along with the Tantric principles in Kashmir. A study of the Saiva-sastra reveals that the Tiantic literature that had developed much earlier in the 6th century was based upon the main principles of Isvaraduyavada. These principles have been explained at length in different forms in Saivasastra and have been rightly characterised as Trika-sastra. It took the name of Trika as it included the elements of Agama, Pratyabhijna & Spanda Sidhanta. Agama Sastra is included in the Tantra-shastra which implies the description and analysis of a particular sectarian sastra. Etymologically it has its roots in 'tanu' with the termination : 'tra' and gives the exposition of a particular religious cult or esoteric character of the rituals. Agama-sastra was in use much earlier than Tantra-sastra and the noblest principles stated therein have found expression in a masculine form through the mouth of Lord Siva, whereas the Tantra-sastra confirms the expounded subject in the form of a male-female dialogue, viz. the akhyanas dialogue between Siva and Parvati. The Tantra sastra which concerns itself with the subject through Para-sakti is called Sakta-tantra and the same Para-sakti is known as Tripurasundari in Tantra-sastras. All that was regulated in the world in three different manifestations was called Tripura and the collective energy of Brahma, Visnu and Mahesh was known as Tripura or Sri Tripurasundari which is also variously known as Mahasaraswati, Mahalakshmi and Mahakali,

During the mediaeval period in Kashmir much stress was laid on Bhairava-yaga and Bhairava worship. These are closely related to Tantra sastra. But the texts dealing with them are now no longer available. Anandeswara, Mangaleswara, Hatkeswara, Purnaraja Bhairava, Turska-rajha bhairava, Visvakshina, Jayakshina and Mahakala-the eight Bhairavas etc. and their worship was Tantric in nature. Bhairavayamal Tantra, Anandabhairava Tantra, Utsusma Bhairava and Hatkeswara Samhita etc. that are known to us through stray references only and could confirm the prevalence of the eight Bhairava cults are also not available. The Rudrayamal grantha that deals with the source of hymns and thousands of names of the various gods and goddesses is available only in a fragmental form. A fragmented but defective edition of this book has been published from Calcutta and a few incomplete Mss are preserved in the archives of Nepal, Varanasi and Kashmir. Like other Pauranic parvas (festivals), the Kashmiri Pandits had a number of Tantric parvas too which are now not existing. These included Bhairavparva, Matsyabali, Vastusupatibali, Margasirabali etc. A study of the Rajatarangini reveals that other tantras were also prevalent in Kashmir but the Pandits did not hold them in high esteem. The main subject of these was

maaran (To kill), mohan (To hypnotize), uchhaTan (To apply witch craft). The Satakapala Akhyana of Chakropala of Akahara was Tantric in character.

The Tantric cult was in vogue in Kashmir before the spread of Buddhism, Savism and Vaisnavism. Its literature is now not procurable. There is no gainsaying the fact that even before the prevalence of the Vedic religion, the Tantra cult was a dominant creed and this explains the existence of Tantricism in the various activities of Vedic rituals. The sixth century saw the emergence of Siva philosophy which had its roots in the contemporary Tantric literature and Baudha Tantras. In course of time it led to the development of a refined and highly evolved Saiva-advaitavada. The main Tantras which fall under the group of Agamas are: Svachhanda Tantra, Mainivijaya, Netra Tantra, Vamakesvari, Rudrayamal and Vijnana Bhairava. The subject matter of these is closely related to the exposition of the Trika cult. Of these the Svachhanda Tantra, Malinitantra, Netra Tantra, Mrgendra Tantra, Vijnana bhairava, Vamakesvara tantra have been published by the Kashmir Research Deptt. Besides tantraloka based on Advaita Saiva-sastra has also been published by the same department in 12 volumes. A brief description of the published tantras is given as follows. The unpublished Tantra literature preserved in the Kashmir Archives is : 1) Munimatamanimala (Vamadeva), 2) Subhagarcharatnam, 3) Agamakalpalata (Yadunath), 4) Siva-nrtya, 5) Kaula Kantahala, 6) Sakti-Sangam, 7) Yoga-ratnavali (Nag-arjuna), 8) Saubhagya Ratnakara. In Svachhanda Tantra a clear exposition of Tantra-sastra is given in all its aspects of 'diksa', 'asana' 'panchakrtya', 'panchamukhas', mandala rudra, bhuvana, nari, guru- disciple, mantra, sadadbvarnan etc. These are Agamika Tantra sastras which have been published in six volumes by the Kashmir Research Deptt. The contents of Agamika-tantra deal with Parmasivaswarupa Bhairava. Like Tantraloka, Svachhanda Sastra is an encyclopaedia of Saiva-sastra and is in itself a standard manual. Vidyarnava Tantra as written by Vidyaranymuni, the disciple of Pragalbhatracharya (the disciple of Vishnu sharma). Their tradition has come down to us from the Jagatguru Shankaracharya. Vidyarana Tantra was a composition of Vidyarana. A description of Tripura or Tripurasundari is given therein: the three main activities of creation etc. Parmasiva has been eulogized and this represents the energy of Brahma, Visnu and Rudra. These, as mentioned above, are manifested in Mahasaraswati, Mahalakshmi and Mahakali. Thus in the form of a 'male-female', dialogue a very apt description is given of Siva-Sakti worship. Tripurasundari is not only the Sundari of three worlds but is also the sole directing force of the activities of the Trinity and of the five different kinds of forces to the east, west, south and north and the higher regions in the form of Unmani, Bhogini, Kumbika, Kalika and Maha-Tripurasundari of the upper regions. The said 'grantha' is in the form of hymns in worship of Maha-Tripurasundari. It has too large sections dealing with the numerous mantras etc. in praise of Maha-Tripurasundari, in Her twenty different forms.

The date of composition of Vidyarana Tantra is fixed at 1130 of Vikrama era corresponding to 1073 A. D. It is a huge compendium which draws freely from the following tantras, most of which are not available now : Agastya-Sainhita, Phetakarini Tantra, Dakshinmurti-kalpa Yogasasta, Vamekesvar, Sarda, Kalimata, Tantra-rajya, Dakshinamurti Sainhita, Bhairavi Tantra, Sidha-Saraswata Tantra, Uttar Tantra, Kularanva, Pingalamata, Sivayamala, Brahayamala, Rudrayamala, Kulaprakasa Tantra, Narada Pancharatra, Yogini Tantra, Vayani Samhita, Aksa-sastra, Sarada-Tilaka, Nila Tantra, Srikrma Narayaneya, Brhat Narayaneya, Satatapa-samhita etc, regarded as an encyclopaedia of Tantra-sastra and its literature. It was once published by the Kashmir Durbar but is now completely out of print. The original copy of it was available in the private library of Maharaja Harisingh and the MSS Library of Jammu Rughnath Mandir. I too had purchased a copy of it for the Research Library, Srinagar, under the kind patronage of Shri P.N. Pushp.

21.1 Devi Rahasya

This is also a huge grantha of a kind of specific Tantra-sastra. Along with it has been published Udharkosa, a grantha for mantrodhara, quite unique as a type. The first half includes 25 patalas (paragraphs) and has been composed in the form of adhyayas (chapters) deal mainly with the bhijamantras of gods and goddesses, worship of the crematorium, madya suddhi purification of wine and

madyapan vidhi, (drinking method) maesamskara etc. The other half known also as Rahasyayiya, contains 35 (adhyayas) chapters. Panchangas mentioned therein are: Jawalamukhi, Sarika, Maharajna, Bala, Tripura, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Tara, Bhvaneswari, Matangi, Bheda and the bijamantras related to these goddesses and six other mantras of other goddesses. These are : Bhadrakali, Turi, Chhinamasta, Dakshina, murti, Svama, Kalaratti. All these goddesses are included in the pantheon of the Hindu goddesses. In the third section Varahi, Vajra-yogini, Kameshwari, Gauri, Annapurna, Sarada etc. are included along with basic mantras and bjamantras. The mantras of Ganesa, Vatuka Kumara, Mrtyunjaya, Kartaviryarjuna, Sugriva, Hanumana, and those of navagrahas are also included. Similarly, the basic mantras of Varnamala and the mantras of navagrahas as also those of Bhvani, Baguemukhi, Indrakshi, Khechari too find a place therein. The dhyana-dharana of these goddesses and grahas are also included. It appears to be a large section of Rudryamala Tantra. Udharkosa is in the form of a dialogue between Daushinamurti and his disciple Akshyaya. It is a publication of the Kashmir Research Deptt. (1941)

21.2 Brhat Nila Tantra

It is so called because it supplies every information in connection with the worship of Nila Sarasvati. The eleventh chapter of the Tantra describes at length how the Goddess of Wisdom became Nila (blue).

The Tantra is written in the form of a dialogue in which Mahakalabhairava appears is the speaker and Mahakali as the listener.

It contains twenty-four chapters. Contents of these are briefly mentioned in the first chapter. The Tantra is evidently later in composition than the Gandharva-Tantra to which it refers and the Durgasaptasati.

In this Tantra the Devi requests Dhairava to reveal the Nilatantra as promised at the time the Kalitantra was revealed. The Bhairava redeems the promise and declares that the Tantra which he is to reveal should be duly preserved and concealed, as that leads to many blessings. Firstly, he briefly mentions the important topics of the Tantra and then begins the description of Tara in all her forms with the way in which She is to be worshipped.

The mantra of Nila Saraswati, consisting of five syllables, reads Om, Hni, Stri, too, fut of this Vasistha is the sage, Vrhati the metre, Nila Saraswati the deity and the object acquisition of poetic power. Practitioner of the mantra is advised to perform the bathing etc. in the right manner according to both forms, vedic and tantric.

This chapter describes the piya or worship of the Nila Sarawati. It is to be done in out-of-the-way places, such as deserts, cremation-grounds, jungles, hills and hillocks. Worship of the deities: Ganesa, Kshetrapala, Yogini and Vatuka with Bhaam, kshaam, yaam, vaam comes at the beginning. While entering the altar Brahma and Vastupurusha receive their worship. Devi is to be meditated upon as occupying the seat of jewels at the foot of the desire-granting tree. Water required for worship is to be purified with the mantra of <verse>.

21.3 Gandharvatantra

It gives, with elaborate details, instructions in ritualistic worship purifications, mantras, yantras, mudras, asanas and the like. It also provides, in eleventh chapter, forms of meditations on Kundalini and prescribes Pranayama as almost the panacea of all ills. This Tantra is extremely rich and predominately Shakta in nature and philosophically of trika outlook.

21.4 Vijnana Bhairava Tantra

This is commented on partly by Ksemaraja and partly by Shivopadbyaya. This is a text of the Tantra Shastra of Agamic nature being a conversation between Shiva as Bhairva and Shakti as Bhairvi. The

theme of the text is explained by Shiva himself. Main topic of the text is 112 yoga dharmas; the forms of Dhyana are elaborately mentioned therein. It is based on the famous Rudrayamala Tantra.

21.5 Uddamareswara Tantra

This Tantra is a book of magical formulas and practices and also prescribes a number of medicinal drugs.

21.6 Vamakeswari Mata Vivarana

This is Agama Shastra. It deals with philosophical thought as well as rituals, mainly the latter. It gives a clear explanation of Shakti as Tripura-Sundari, whose worship, in various forms, it prescribes.

21.7 Malini Vijaya Tantra

This work belongs to Agama Shastra and according to Abhinavagupta is the most important Agama treatise for trika system of Shaiva philosophy. It is a conversation between Shiva and Shakti.

21.8 Malini Vijaya Vartikam

This is a running commentary of above work by Abhinavagupta and is written in simple Sanskrit in the Anushup meter.

21.9 Netra Tantra

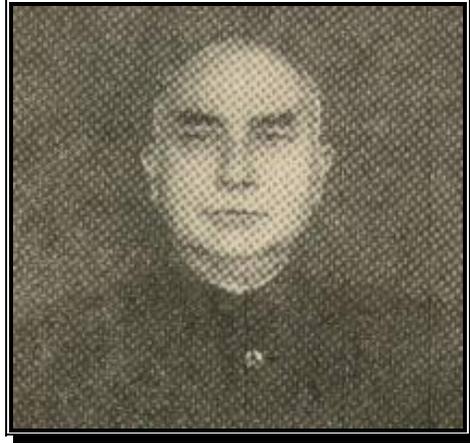
This (with a commentary of Kshemaraja) is published in two volumes in a dialogue form between Shiva and Shakti. The conversation introduces a question from Shakti that all the eyes are full of water, how is that from Thine eye, Thou Divinelord, there sprang forth the great fire which burnt every thing ? The whole book is mainly an answer to this question.

21.10 Mrgendra Tantra

It deals with an Agamic nature of Tantra. There is a dialogue between sage Aanta and his disciple. It is depicting the pluralistic thought of Saiva School.

22 Kashmir Tantrism

Justice Shiva Nath Katju



Justice Shiva Nath Katju

Tantra Shastra is one of the most misunderstood subjects not only in India but throughout the world. In popular thought and imagination a Tantrik is a person who dabbles in strange, awful and mysterious rites involving visits to cremation grounds and use of wine and women. He is feared also because he is credited with powers of inflicting harm as also of bringing relief and good fortune. The so-called Tantriks run a flourishing business catering to the needs of politicians, men in trade and industries and in other walks of life. Very often most of such Tantriks, after acquiring some powers by elementary Tantrik practices, use them for petty monetary gains. For a time they show good results but they are side - tracked from the path of spiritual advancement and have to content themselves by giving magic shows and demonstrations of cheap miracles. As a matter of fact, an earnest Tantrik practitioner avoids being caught in the mesh of sidhis and keeps his eyes fixed on his spiritual objective very often preferring anonymity.

Tantra Shastra is part of the Dharma Shastra of the Hindus and has its roots in the Vedas. Western scholars in their anxiety to put the age of Hindu Civilization later to the Greek Civilization have attempted to put the age of Rig Veda to 2000 B.C. and this too seemingly has been done reluctantly and out of generosity. The tragedy is that Indian scholars who take their inspirations from their western teachers and masters have toed the Western line of thought. If Rig Veda goes back only to 2000 B. C. then the period of Shri Ramachandra and of Mahabharta have all to be squeezed in between 2000 B. C. and the birth of Gautam Buddha. A more glaring instance of the western myth is the Aryan invasion of India. Every text book of history starts with that myth which has no basis. It is assumed as a geometrical maxim that Aryans were not Indians and they entered into India from some country other than India. The question then arises as to where did they come from. Then the hunt begins and we are confronted with different theories about the original home of the Aryans and here the wise and pompous scholars are not agreed at all. We have the Central Asian, Caucasian & Lithunian theories, regarding the original home of the Aryans. Even such a profound scholar like the late Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was so overwhelmed by the weight of western opinion that he too propounded his Arctic theory on the basis of the long drawn twilights indicated by some Rig Vedic Richas on 'Ushas' and said that the Arctic Region was the original homeland of the Aryans. It has to be categorically stated that the Indian tradition as also the Vedic literature clearly supports the view that the homeland of the Aryans was Sapta Sindhava viz. the land covered by the River Sindhu Indus and its tributaries.

It is now admitted that in some remote past the land south of the present Punjab and Haryana and the north of the Vindhya was covered by sea. The Rajputana desert has the Sambhar lake which has salty water indicative of its marine past. It is now well recognised that the Himalayan mountain ranges are,

from a geological angle, of comparatively recent origin and marine fossils have been found in its rock stratas. History is silent as to when did that happen. Sahara and Gobi deserts were in times past cradles of human civilisation and as a result of intensive grazing the soil became barren and ultimately turned into deserts wiping off the old civilisation of which no traces are left. Again, due to geological changes land between Europe and Africa which connected the two continents got submerged under water when the Atlantic ocean broke through the strait of Gibraltar. We know nothing of these dead and past ancient civilisations.

The Red Indians of North America use Swastika as a symbol. The surprising fact is that they also pronounce it as Swastika as we do. It is said that the American Red Indians are descendants of Asian Tribes who entered America through the Behring strait in some remote past. History is silent as to when that happened. Our known recorded history hardly covers three to four thousand years.

We go further three thousand years back for our sketchy information about Ancient Egypt. The Egyptian pyramids still remain a mystery. Results of archaeological excavations in Sumer Akkad and Mohenjodaro have thrown some light, though dim, on the history of those regions. Beyond 4000 and 5000 B. C. is the era of darkness which is sought to be penetrated by the valiant efforts of anthropologists, archaeologists, and we hear of such phases in human history as stone age and copper age. It is now said that human beings first appeared on our planet five million years back. How they, evolved is still a controversial subject. Some say that we evolved from a type of sea fish which had a verbeta like ours. Another widely believed theory is that apes were our ancestors. McGlashan, one of the renowned psychologists of the world, in his recently published book, "The savage and beautiful country", which deals with the working of human mind, has suggested that just as we are now sending human beings in outer space similarly by a reverse process the human species, on our planet came from some planet of our galaxy. Madame Blavatsky, the founder of theosophical movement has propounded the same view.

In short we are so dazzled by the scientific and technological advancement made during the last three or four centuries that we faithfully believe that ours is the most progressive era of our world history and the human beings who inhabited our planet six or seven thousand years back were savages and primitive men. Our self-conceit makes us unable to realise that we are totally ignorant about the past beyond the aforesaid limits. McGlashan says:

"A time will come once more when the whirling machinery will grind to a halt, the harsh music cease and the roundabout riders step down stiffly from their apocalyptic beasts. Looking round for his friends of the inner world, everyman will, see them, too, in troops of gray shadows, slipping silently away. One by one the lights of the fair ground will go out, and every man will be left at last, as at the shadowed close of so many earlier civilisations, to find his own way home, by himself, in the dark".

So civilisations have grown and blossomed and then faded away on our planet. We hear now of continental drifts; shifting of land masses breaking old continents and forming new ones. No one knows the history of the people who lived on land that has now been submerged under seas. Time has devoured them all. In this respect the Hindus are unique. Their memories, thoughts and traditions go back to the dawn of creation itself and the time when man first appeared on this planet. The Rishis heard the Vedas with the appearance of human beings on our Earth. Today the Hindus are not those people whose history may be sought to be built up on inferences drawn from ancient ruins and relics of the past. With all the ups and downs that the Hindus have faced in the then history they have gone on marching in tune with KALA, the devourer of all, still chanting the primeval songs that were passed on by the Rishis from generation to generation. The Hindu does not begin from any popularly known starting point of era such as B. C., A.D., Vikram or Shaka. He calculates his day from the beginning of creation itself viz. the start of Brahma's day. The universe which we call Srishti begins and lasts till the close of a Brahma's day and there is Pralaya at night. The creation restarts from the dawn of the next Brahma's day. After hundred such days of Brahma there is the Great Dissolution - Mahapralaya. After its end srishti starts again and so the cycle goes on and on.

<verses>

**"Those yogis know the essence of time who are aware of the fact that Brahma's day extends to a thousand Mahayugas and similar is the extent of one night of Brahma's day."
- Geeta VIII-17**

The four Yugas viz. Satyayuga, Treta, Dwapar and Kaliyuga make one Mahayuga. This concept is not any hidden or secret doctrine. On the other hand, every Hindu who performs the daily Sandhya recites the following Sankalpa at the start of his worship:

<verses>

"Today, the first half of the second Prahar of Brahma's Day in Vaivaswat Manvantar and Shvetvarah Kalpa in the land of Aryas in the holy Bharat-Khand of Jambudweep and the first charan of Kaliyuga, in so and so Samvatsar, Month, Paksha, Tithe, Day, I of such and such Gotra and name....."

One day of Brahma is equal to a Kalpa and 14 Manwantars make one Kalpa.

Kali	1 x 432000 human years
Dwapar	2 x 432000 human years
Treta	3 x 432000 human years
Satya	4 x 432000 human years
Total	43.2 lakhs of years = one Mahayuga

One day of Brahma or 1 Kalpa, is $100 \times 43.2 = 432$ crores of human years.

One Manwantar is equal to $432000000/14$ human years = 30.858 crores.

We are at present in the seventh Manwantar Vaivaswat after the elapse of 27 Mahayugas and in the beginning of 28th Kaliyuga of the presently running Brahma's Day. The current Kali year is 5081.

Manus change in every Manwantar and they have particular names. The manu of the presently running manwantar is Vaivaswat and the manwantar is named after him. Since one Kalpa is one day of Brahma's life there are thirty Kalpas in every month of his life which have separate names.

The late Shrimad Upendra Mohan, the great scholar, sage and savant of Bengal has said in his remarkable book "Reason, science and shastras":

"The same Yugas, the same Manus, the same Kalpas, the same Brahma constantly return through time eternal, therefore the calculation of the creation, of its age, its life and its destruction is constant in correct to the minutest fraction of the time, unlike stupid modern science which does not know what it talks and flounders on from statement to statement through a quagmire of ridiculous falsehoods. Now which is right? The changeless shastras or the ever changing science....."

The Hindus know according to the calculation of the shastras that the present age of the earth is 198 crores of years. This calculation is changeless and unchangeable - it is God's spoken word and therefore the truth which is

<verses>

[That which remains the same at all times - the past, the present and the future, that which is permanent and unchangeable under all conditions, that which is eternal is called truth. It admits no ebb nor flow]

In the sombre and awe - inspiring dance of time the origin and flow of Tantra Shastra and Shiva Shakti upasana has to be seen. It must be, stated at the outset that "Tantricism in Kashmir" is not any separate system which is distinct from the general frame-work of Shakta Agams. On the contrary, it is a part of it.

Kashmiri savants and sages however made important and lasting contributions in interpreting the Agam Shastra and more so in expounding the world famous Shaiva Darshan (Shaiva Philosophy). According to our Shastras the Vedas are revealed to the Rishis in every Satya Yugas and they are gradually withdrawn in the succeeding yugas and very little of them is left in Kaliyuga. There are 21 branches of Rigveda, 109 of Yajurveda, 50 of Atharva veda and 1000 of Sam veda. Only 2 of the 1000 branches of Sam Veda are now extant in this world and the rest have been withdrawn. Rig Veda, Atharva Veda and Yajur Veda have similarly been depleted. It is not possible for men of Kaliyuga either to perform the long-drawn vedic yagnas or derive benefit from it. So Mahadeva in His infinite mercy revealed the Tantras for the men and women of our age. But the principles of Tantrik worship, particularly Shakti worship, were known to a section of spiritual practitioners even in the Yugas preceding Kaliyuga and they ran parallel to the vedic sadhana system. Tantric rites are 'kriyatmak' and have to be practised. Having their roots in the Vedic system they are comparatively short and easier to perform than the Vedic Yagnas and they are highly potent and give quick results and raise man to godhood. Even in Satayuga, Treta and Dwapar the Tantric practitioners were frowned upon by those who followed the orthodox form of Vedic rituals. These differences gave rise to the cool relations between Daksha Prajapati and Mahadeva. At that time the daughter of Daksha was the Divine consort of Mahadeva. Shrimad Bhagwat (3rd Skandh, 4th. Adhyaya) refers to the strained relations between Mahadeva and Daksha Prajapati. Their relations had been so embittered that when Daksha Prajapati decided to perform a big Yagna he did not invite either Mahadeva or the latter's consort. The episode is described in enchanting language in Puranas and by poets.

Mahadeva and Sati, as she was called in view of what happened later, were sitting on Mount Kailasa, when Sati observed the Devas going with their retinues in Akash (sky). She enquired from Shiva as to what was happening. Mahadeva said the Devas were going to her father's house to join the yagna there. She was pained to hear of the yagna of which she had not been informed. She asked as to why Mahadeva was not participating in the yagna. Mahadeva said that her father was annoyed with him and they had not been invited. She insisted on going to her father's house inspite of the fact that she had not been asked to come by her own father. Mahadeva tried to persuade her not to go saying that even a daughter should not go to her father's house when she had not been so asked. Sati persisted and when Lord Mahadeva was not inclined to accede to her wish to go uninvited to her father's house She projected Her dazzling form as Mahamaya in all directions, 4 in four directions on surface, 4 upwards in four directions, one above and one below, ten in all Her aspects of Kali, Bagla, Chinnamasta, Bhuvaneshwari, Matangi, Kamala Dhumavati, Tripursundari, Tara and Bhairavi. They are the Ten Mahavidyas and the Tantrik worship of Shiva-Shakti in its upper reaches revolves on them or any of their other aspects. In fact they are the different entrance gates around the base of the mountain on which a Tantrik practioner starts on his climb to the summit where the Mahavidyas all merge into one and he worships at the alter of the Creatrix of all who keeps on creating, preserving and dissolving the Universe. She has three forms viz. Para Rupa which no one knows, Mantra Rupa which is Her subtle form, and lastly, Her physical which are described in Her strotras in Tantra Shastras and Puranas.

She is very graphically described in "Durga Saptashati" by Rishi Medhas. Commonly called the "Chandi Path" its recitation is believed to be very effective and the Hindus all over India and also, in other countries recite it individually as also collectively. All its Mantras are Siddha Mantras. It is the story of Emperor Surath and Samadhi Vaishya which cuts the barriers of Time and Space. Both of them were in distress and seek the refuge of Medhas Rishi. It describes Surath as:

<verses>

In swaroch manvantar (the second Manvantar in the cycle) born in Chaitra vansh was Emperor Surath who ruled on Earth. Having been defeated by his enemies he entered a dense forest and came to the ashram of Medhasa Rishi. While the Emperor was in the Rishi's ashram Samadhi Vaishya, who was a prosperous merchant but was in adverse circumstances, also came in the Ashram. They related to each other their tales of woe and misfortune and eventually met the Rishi and put questions to the Rishi and asked the cause of their acute mental distress. The Rishi spoke of Devi Bhagwati who is the cause of all;

<verses>

She, the Mahamaya, forcibly puts the minds of even the wise into haze. She creates the Jagat and when she is pleased. She grants liberation to men.

"Astonished, Emperor Surath asked who is that Devi whom you call Mahamaya How did she come into Being, what is Her sphere of working, what is Her form and character. I want to hear all about Her.

The Rishi replied:

<verses>

"Even though She is ever present, personifies in Herself the entire Jagat, is the cause of all, She manifests Herself in different forms and now that you have come to me - so listen".

The Rishi spoke of the appearance at the time of 'Deluge' when Brahma sitting on a lotus, which had its roots in the navel of Vishnu who was asleep, saw himself being furiously attacked by Asura Madhu and Kaitabha. He prayed to the Devi to save him. The famous ode of Brahma begins thus:

<verses>

He prayed the Devi to free Vishnu from Her mesh of sleep. The Devi thereupon released Vishnu from sleep and the latter fought against the two Asuras and killed them. Here the Devi did not fight Herself but acted through Vishnu.

The second chapter of the Saptashati refers to the powerful Asuras led by Mahishasura who had subdued the Devas and had himself become Indra. The Devas led by Brahma approached Shiva and Vishnu for protection. Plight of the Devas greatly infuriated Shiva and Vishnu and their anger caused effulgence to burst out from their faces and similarly the Teja of the Devas also appeared and the entire effulgence uniting produced the form of a Dazzling Lady whose radiance spread to the three lokas (triloki)

<verses>

The Devi fought several Asuras of the legions of Mahishasura and killed them. Finally Mahishasura came in person to fight the Devi and after initial encounters assumed the form of Mahisha and attacked the Devi. The Devi became furious and refreshed Herself by superfine drink-wine:

<verses>

and said -

<verses>

"Shout, shout, boastfully you fool ! till I take madhu (wine).

Superfine drink and wine has, relevance to the use of wine by Tantrik practitioners on special occasions. After a grim fight with Mahishasura the latter was slain by the Devi;

<verses>

"The Devi by Her great sword cut off the head of Mahishasura. Delighted to see Her victorious, the Devas prayed to Her as Sura Devi

<verses>

The hymn in praise of the Devi by the Devas is soul stirring. It pleased the Devi who was in the form of Bhadra Kali, and She granted the Devas prayer to come to their help whenever they were in trouble.

The last Act in the Drama starts with another deadly combat between the Devas and the Asuras when two mighty Asuras - Shumbha and Nishumbha overpowered Indra as also Surya, Chandra, Yama and Varuna. They again prayed to the Devi to save them. This is another famous hymn in Durga Saptashate. While the Devas were praying to Her she passed by in the form of maiden-Parvati-and asked the Devas as to whom

they were praying. As soon as she put that question there emerged Shiva from Her own body and said that the Devas are praying to Us;

<verses>

Having come out of the body of the Devi She is known and venerated in the universe as Kaushiki;

<verses>

As a result of Kaushiki's separation from Her body the complexion of Parvati underwent a change and became dark and stayed in the Himalyas and became known as Kali;

<verses>

Apart from the fact that Durga Saptashati occupies a very important place in Tantrik worship I have referred to it at some length because the aforesaid change in the complexion of Parvati and Her being called Kali appears to have a direct bearing on Kashmir Tantricism and the form of our Ragnya Bhawani. A notice board in the courtyard of Kheer Bhawani Kund in Tulmula says, so far as I recollect, that the Devi was Worshipped by Ravana in Lanka and was brought from there and installed in Tulmula after the defeat of Ravana by Shri Ram Chandraji. In the shrine in the Kheer Bhawani Kund Devi Ragnya Bhagwati is sitting on the left of Her Bhairava, Bhuteshwara, and Her complexion is dark. Kali is Krishna-Varna and has dark complexion. But as mentioned in the dhyana of Ragnya Bhawani Her complexion is very fair, like fresh snow;

<verses>

Has the change, as seen in Her image in the Tulmula Shrine and the description in Her dhyana, any bearing on the aforesaid narrative in the Saptashati which transformed the Parvati into dark complexioned Kali ? I met the famous sage and scholar, Swami Lakshman joo Maharaj in the summer of 1979 when I was in Kashmir. I pointedly referred to the aforesaid description of Ragnya's complexion in Her Dhyana and Her complexion in Her image in the Kheer Bhawani Shrine and asked him whether Ragnya Bhawani is Kali and if I remember rightly he said it is so. The point is interesting and requires clarification. It is generally believed that Ragnya Bhawani is Tripura Sundari. But if She is Kali also then She combines in Herself the aspects of two Mahav dyas.

I resume the narrative of the Devi's encounter with Shumbha and Nishumbha which again has an important bearing on the form of our Sharika Devi.

Parvati of dazzling beauty was seen by Chand and Mund and they reported to their Master Shumbha that a maiden of unrivalled beauty was residing in the Himalyas and she was fit, to be his queen and he should have her;

<verses>

Shumbha thereupon sent a messenger to Parvati who spoke to her about the prowess of his master and asked her on his behalf either to marry Shumbha or his brother Nishumbha. Parvati said that she was aware that Shumbha and Nishumbha were masters of the three regions - Trilok but while in a fitful mood. She had taken a view that she will marry only that person who breaks her pride in combat and proves that he is more powerful than herself;

<verses>

The messenger was astounded to hear the Devi's reply. How could a maiden like her think of defeating the powerful Shumbha and his legions in fight. He conveyed the Devi's reply to his master. Shumbha was enraged on hearing the Devi's reply and asked his general Dhumralochan to go to the Devi with his legion and bring her to him by force. When he attacked the Devi the latter burnt him by her powerful hissing;

<verses>

Her lion destroyed the asuras who had come with Dhumralochan. Then Shumbha sent the two demons Chanda and Munda to fight with her and bring her back to him by force. The two demons were well armed and had a big force with them. Seeing the force arrayed against her the Devi was enraged and Kali emerged from her forehead,

<verses>

Kali fought furiously and killed Chanda and Munda and what remained of their troops ran away. The Shumbha decided to go himself with Nishumbha with his legions and fight the Devi who had Kali by her side. Seeing the huge force of Shumbha the Devas could not remain aloof but this time the Shaktis of Brahma, Shiva, Kartikeya, Vishnu, and Indra emerging out of them joined Parvati and Kali in the fight against Shumbha. The fight raged furiously and the Devis decimated the forces of Shumbha. The fight against Shumbha's general Raktabeeja was deadly. Whenever blood flowed from his body, thousands of other Demons appeared. Parvati asked Kali to open her mouth wide and drink the blood flowing from Raktabeeja's body. Kali was addressed by Parvati as Chamunda and acting accordingly she drank the blood flowing out of Raktabeeja's body until he was slain dead by Parvati. Nishumbha resumed fighting and he was also killed. After the death of his brother and his generals, Shumbha himself confronted the Devi and said:

<verses>

"O Durga ! do not boast of your strength because fighting with the support of Devi Shaktis has swollen your pride."

The Devi replied:

<verses>

Thou wicked person ! who else besides me is there in this Universe (Jagat) ? I am one; see all these aspects of Mine re-enter in Me. On saying this all the Deva - Shaktis including Brahmani merged into Her and Ambika stood alone;

<verses>

The fight between the Devi and Shumbha was bitter and lasted for long and ultimately Shumbha was slain by the Devi. The Devas prayer to her is another stirring hymn in her praise. As mentioned earlier every Shloka in Durga Saptashati is clothed in highly esoteric language and describes the constant struggle which goes on in the astral plane between the forces of virtue and evil which the Shastras refer to as the fight between the Devas and Asuras - Devasurasangrama. It is reflected in our world as also in mankind inhabiting it.

The interesting question arises, particularly with reference to Shakti worship in Kashmir, whether the Devi referred to above who annihilated Shumbha and Nishumbha and their legions is represented in any of her aspects still existing in Kashmir and worshipped by the Kashmiris. Can it be our Sharika Bhawani !

The Deva - Shaktis, which came by her side when Shumbha himself came with his forces to fight her, were:

<verses>

Brahmani, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Narsingh, and Indrani emerging out of the Devas came by her side. The remarkable coincidence is that in the Yantra Puja of Sharika Bhagwati all the aforesaid Devis are worshipped as Matrikas;

<verses>

The names of some of the aforesaid matrikas appear in the Avaran Puja of the Yantras of Ragnya, Jwala and Bala also but not in such remarkable sequence as mentioned above.

Another remarkable coincidence appears from the following lines the Sharika Stotra in

<verses>

As mentioned above Dhumralochan, the general of Shumbha was reduced to ashes by the hissing of the Devi:

<verses>

In Sharika Bhagwati's dhyana she is shown as sitting on lion and in blood red garments with her Bhairava Vamadeva by her said

<verses>

In another dhyana of Sharika Bhawani she is shown as having eighteen arms. Do they symbolise the aspects of Kali with 10 arms and Lakshmi and Saraswati having 4 arms each, of uniting in Her. Is She the Durga of Durga Saptashati who fought against Shumbha and Nishumbha? The question has to be answered by the Savants of Kashmir.

The principal Kula Devis of the Kashmiri Brahmins are Ragnya, Sharika, Jwala, and Bala Tripur Sundari. The Shrines of both Sharika and Jwala do not contain any Murtis but are rocks (Shilas) and are not man made. They go back to hoary past. Thus it can be inferred that the Devi was worshipped in her aspects of Ragnya, Sharika and Jwala and others since time immemorial and before the epic war of Mahabharata and the dawn of Kaliyuga.

The worship of the Devi existed in the Vedic Times and prior to Kaliyuga as would appear from, the vedic Devi Sukta and any number of references in Puranas and Itihas apart from what is said in the Durga Saptashati and it so existed in Kashmir as in other parts of the country. Thus the Devi was generally worshipped as the creatrix of the universe from the very dawn of human civilisation side by side with the vedic rites which were performed by the people. The hidden Sadhana of the Devi was also known to some elite practitioners before the advent of the Kali era.

The Mahabharata was fought towards the close of Dwapar Yuga. In the conversation between Yudhishthira and Sanjaya before the start of the war the time mentioned was the prevailing Dwapar Yuga. (Bhisma Parva, Chap. X)

Calculating from the present Kaliyuga year 5081, Kaliyuga began in 3101 B.C. which is a crucial and turning point in human history on our planet.

"It is said that Kaliyuga could not begin as long as Lord Shri Krishna was touching this Earth with His holy feet and it was only after He left this mundane world that Kaliyuga commenced. [Kaliyuga Raja. Vrittantam, Bhagwat III Chap. III]

According to the tradition, It has and Puranic literature of the Hindus the Mahabharata War took place in about 3136 B. C. viz about 36 years before the commencement of Kaliyuga.

The Mahabharat is full of references to Shiva and Devi. When the rival forces were arrayed on the battlefield and before the Start of fighting Lord Krishna asked Arjuna to pray to Durga for victory

<verses>

and then Arjuna prayed to Durga in a soul-stirring hymns the opening of which is

<verses>

In this hymn the Devi is addressed in all names which occur in the Durga Saptashate and in the Puranas. Similarly there are any number of references to Shiva and Several Odes and hymns in which He is addressed in hundreds of names along with His Divine consort- the Devi in Her various aspects. Veda Vyas himself describes the glory and attributes of Shiva. He is also described as Pashupate and His worship in the form of Shivalinga is mentioned by Ved Vyas. Similarly in the Sautik Parva of Mahabharata there is the Stuti of Shankara by Ashwatthama (Chap.7) and the description of the Mahima of Shiva-Parvati and Shankara (Chap. 17). There is also the Sahsrnama of Shiva in Chap. 284. The

Anushasana Parva of Mahabharata again describes the Mahima of Shiva. The Meghavahan Parva is again full of the description of Shiva and His Stotra (Chapters 14 to 18.)

It is clear that during the time of Shri Krishna the worship of Shiva and Devi was, well known and was performed by the Hindus all over the country including Kashmir. Vitasta is mentioned as one of the Rivers of Bharat Khanda and Kashmir as one of its regions in the Bhishma Parva of Mahabharata (Chap. 9). Bhishma Pitamaha while lying on his bed of arrows after the close of the Mahabharata War told Yudhishtira about the then existing forms of Dharma in Bharat Khanda. He described them thus:

<verses>

[e.g. Sankhya, Yoga Panchratra, Veda and Pashupat]

The destruction and loss of life in the Mahabharata War was colossal. The weapons used were more lethal than what may appear from the use of bows and arrows. There is specific mention of several weapons such as Brahmastra and others which were highly destructive and very likely some kind of arrows with unclear heads were used. A large number of tribes from behind the frontiers of United India took part in the fighting. Drona Parva of Mahabharata specifically mentions the "Shaved headed" Kamboj soldiers, the Yavanas, Shak, Shabar, Kirat and Barbar tribes who took abroad part in the fighting (Ch. 19.) The influx of people from abroad caused a great social confusion in the country. And then also began the Kali era. The vedic rites became difficult and beyond the capacity of men. There is another incident on the record. Janmejaya organised a great yagna for avenging the killing of his father Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna, by Takshak Nag. The yagna started and snakes from all regions were drawn and started falling in the burning sacrificial pits. Then a Rishi, the protector of the Nagas appeared and stopped the rites. The interruption infuriated Agni Deva and he gave a curse to the Brahmins saying that hence onwards the Vedic Mantras would be ineffective to them like a poisonless snake. Then began the age of the Tantras.

The Mahanirvana Tantra is one of the Agamas which are ranked with the shrutis. Agamas are in the form of a dialogue between Shiva and Parvati. The latter questions and Shiva replies. In Nigamas Shiva questions and Parvati answers. In other Tantras such as Damaras and Yamalas only Shiva speaks, there being no conversation between Him and Parvati. There are several Upa-Tantras and commentary on the Mul Tantras by Rishis and savants.

The Mahanirvana Tantra has a dramatic opening, Parviti says

<verses>

The Devi said : "At present Kaliyuga holds sway and causes the destruction of Dharma and prompts people to commit wicked deeds, immoral and false acts. Now influence of Vedas has gone, Smrites have also been drowned in forgetfulness and the names of various Puranas which are full of history and point to various paths will not remain known and consequently the people will turn against virtuous acts. The people of Kali will become rudderless, vain, full of Sin, voluptuous, greedy, cruel without feelings of pity and will become haughty and accustomed to using unkind words. The people of Kaliyuga will keep company of low persons, will try to acquire the wealth of others, speak ill of others, act viscusly and will become wicked. In trying to forcefully get another's wife these people will have no fear of sin. These persons will always remain poor, dirty and diseased. The Brahmins will not perform the daily Sandhya and will act like Shudras. Prompted by greed they will try to earn their living by performing forbidden acts and commit sins. They will be liars wicked persons vain, have evil tendencies and sell their daughters and will be opposed to tapas and vrat. They will flout the rubes with regard to eating and drinking and will always denounce the Shastras and virtuous men. O ! Lord of jagat, who among these people will read stotras and understand yantras and under the Kaliyuga perform Purashacharans. Men of Kaliyuga will be of very evil tendencies and will be sinful persons. How will they be reduced?" Sadashiva replied:- "Devi, you are blessed, merciful and kind and you are the well wisher of people of Kaliyuga. Whatever you have said about me is true". Then Sadashiva revealed the forms of worship which leads to liberation from bondage.

Tantra shastra has a wide connotation and it covers the Panchadeva upasana which came into vogue after the Mahabharata war with the start of Kaliyuga. The Pancha-devas are Ganesh, Vishnu, Surya, Shiva and Devi and there are separate sets of Agamas for each of them. Thus there are Ganpatya, Vaishnava, Saura, Shaiva and Shakta Agamas. In popular parlance Tantriks are supposed to be those who are worshippers of Shakti (Devi). Shakti is never worshipped alone. Every aspect of Shakti has Her Bhairava and both are worshipped together. Every Mahavidya has Her corresponding Bhairava. The same is the case With the Kul-devis of Kashmiri Brahmins. Ragnya's Bhairava is Bhuteshwar, Sharika's Bhairava is Vemdeva, Jwala's Bhairava is Mahadeva and Bala Tripura Sundari's Bhairava is Karneshwar. Similarly Shaiva's cannot ignore the consort of Shiva- the Devi and Shaiva and Shakta Upasana cannot be separated.

There are two broad forms of Shakta worship viz the Sbri Kul and Kali Kul. Kularnava Tantra is the authoritative Agam for Shri Kul and the Mahanirvana Tantra for Kali Kul. The Sammohan Tantra (Chap. VI) mentions 64 Tantras, 327 Upatantras, and several yamalas, Damaras, Samhitas and other scriptures of the Shaktas and 32 Tantras, 125 Upatantras and Yamalas, Damaras and other scriptures of Shaivas. The number of known Tantras is much less than the number mentioned and they have been either withdrawn or lost.

The question is raised as to the value and worth of the teachings of Agamas. It is answered by Sir John Woodroffe in the following words:

"In the first place there must be a healthy physical and moral life. To know a thing in its ultimate sense is to be that thing. To know Brahman, is according to Advaita, to be Brahman..... But to attain and keep this state as well as progress therein certain specific means, practices, rituals or disciplines are necessary. The result cannot be got by mere philosophical talk about Brahman. Religion is practical activity. Just as the body requires exercise, training and gymnastic, so does the mind. The means employed are called sadhana. Sadhana is that which leads to Siddhi. Sadhana is development of Shakti. Man is a vast magazine of both latent and expressed power. The object of Sadhana is to develop man's Shakti, whether for temporal or spiritual purposes. But where is Sadhana to be found. Seeing that the Vaidika Achara has fallen into practical desuetude we can find nowhere but in the Agamas and in the Puranas which are replete with Tantrik rituals."

The sway of Tantra Shastra after the Mahabharata war extended beyond the frontiers of India and included Iran, Afghanistan, Tibet, Burma and nearly south eastern Asian countries and Tantrik literature divided them into three zones viz Vishnukranta, Ratha Kanta and Ashwa Kranta. The North eastern zone came under Vishnu Krant, North western zone under Ratha Kranta and Southern zone under Ashwa Kranta. The dividing point of the aforesaid division was the eastern end of the Vindhvas. The three Krantas (schools) of Tantrik Sadhana prevailed in each of the aforesaid zones viz Kashmir Krama in Rath Krant; Bang or Gaur Krama in Vishnu Krant and Kerala Krama in Ashwa Krant. The Shakti-Sangam Tantra speaks of the aforesaid three schools:

<verses>

Eighteen regions of North East beginning from Nepal and going upto Orissa come under the sway of Gaur school; Nineteen regions from Aryavarta upto the seas come under Kerala Krama and the Kashmir Krama. Kashmir occupied remaining eighteen come under a prominent place in the field of Tantrik worship during the past Mahabharata period. Its scholars and savants were treated as authorities for the Kashmir Krama in the regions North-West of the Vindhvas. As in the parts of India there were votaries of Vishnu, Ganesh and Surya, so were they in Kashmir also but Shiva Shakti worship had a place of its own in Kashmir.

It was in Kashmir that the Adi - Shankaracharya realized the full impact of Shakti. There is controversy with regard to the age of Adi Shankaracharya. According to one view he was born in 740 A.D. while according to the Kanchi Math history the year of his birth is said to be 509 B.C. The present Shankaracharya of Kanchi Math, Jagatguru Shrimad Chandra Shekhar Sarswati Maharaj, the greatest savant of present day India, is sixty eighth in line of spiritual descent from the Adi Shankaracharya. The Kanchi records give the chronological table in the of all the Shankaracharyas of Kanchi Math together

with names and dates of assumption of office by them. In spiritual descent, on an average there are usually three holders of the office in a century. Very often a holder of office takes a boy disciple in the later period of his life and the successor if he does not meet a premature death may continue in the seat of his office for a long span of years. Among the Shankaracharyas of Kanchi Math as many as 11 Shankaracharyas including the present one have held their office for more than 60 years. Out of them the second Shankaracharya presided over the Math for 70 years, the fourth for 96 years, the sixth for 81 years, the eighth for 83 years and the fifty - third for 81 years. The present Shankaracharya has been holding his office for 68 years.

The Adi Shankaracharya dividing the country into four zones founded four Maths; Jyotir Math at Joshimath near Almora district of U. P. ; Govardhan at Puri (Orissa), Sharda at Dwarka (Saurashtra) and Sringeri in south. After installing his disciples in each of these Maths, who were also called Shankaracharyas, the Adi Shankaracharya retired to Kanchi where also he had a Math, the fifth, and another disciple of the Adi Shankaracharya became the Shankaracharya of the Kanchi Math. The Kanchi parampara also finds support from the history of the Gaudapadacharya Math or Kaivalya Math now called the Kavale Math of Saraswat Brahmins. It was founded by Swami Vivarnananda at the same time when the Adi Shankaracharya founded his Maths. Sri Gaudapadacharya's disciple was Shri Govindacharya. The latter had two disciples the Adi Shankaracharya and Swami Vivarnananda. The headquarter of the Kavale Math is near the city of Goa and the present head of the Math Shrimad Sacchidananda Sarasawati Maharaj is seventy-sixth in line of descent from Swami Vivarnananda. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of Kanchi records which give the date of Shri Shankar's (Adi Shankaracharyas) birth as 2593th year of Kaliyuga era which corresponds to 509 B. C. The aforesaid date of Shri Shankar's birth is also supported by some Jain compositions and the "Brihat Shankara Vijaya" by Shri Chitsukhacharya who was also a disciple of the Adi Shankaracharya. It would appeal that the Maths founded by the Adi Shankaracharya and the Kavale Math are the oldest monastic institutions in India. All the aforesaid Shri Shankara Maths have Shri Yantras installed therein and the worship of Shri Yantras is performed according to Tantrik rites as prescribed by the Parashuram Kalpa Sutra.

Kashmir was the centre of Tantrik as also of Sanskrit learning when the Adi Shankaracharya visited Kashmir. Perhaps the Sanskrit University in Kashmir in those days was located near the shrine of Shardaaji near the banks of Krishna Ganga-now in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The Saraswat Brahmins who left their homeland more than two thousand years back and settled in Saurashtra, Maharashtra, Gujrat, Karnataka and Kerala, have a tradition that their homeland was Kashmir. They hold Sharda Devi in great veneration. I visited the Sharda Devi shrine alongwith my late grand father-in-law, Dr. Balkrishna Kaul in the summer of 1935. My late wife Girija and members of Dr. Kaul's family were in the party. The shrine is located on a hill top like the shrine of Jwalaji. The steps leading to the top of the hill appeared to be twisted as if they had been battered by an earthquake. The question as to when did the University township cease to exist requires investigation. It was in the Shrine itself that I first met the late Pandit Shridhar joo Dhar who had become my guide and philosopher in the closing years of his life. He was the greatest living Shakta Sadhak of his days and his death last year was a great loss to the Tantrik World.

Swami Vivarnananda, founder of the Kavale Math was a Saraswat and very likely a Kashmiri Brahmin. Even in Adi Shankaracharya's times the sway of Kashmir School had extended to far south. The famous temple of Kanya Kumari is a gift of Kashmir Krama to the country. The rites performed in the temple are in accordance with the Kashmir Krama.

Hindusim, as it emerged after the carnage of the Mahabharata war, has the fullest impress of Tantras on it. In the words of Shri Aurobindo modern Hinduism is ninety percent Tantrik. It influenced Jainism and Buddhism also and there are Jain and Buddhist Tantras. Gautam Buddha denounced the Vedas and also the Tantriks. There are any number of Buddhist Jataks in which the Tantrik Brahmins are badly criticised. It appears that by that time some degenerate Tantrik Cults had come up and so-called Tantrik widely practised black magic and indulged in drinking, womanising and senseless animal killing. That led to a reaction in society and genuine Tantrik Sadheks retired in their shells. What happened then is happening even now. We hear of miracle performing Tantriks whose services are openly offered to those who pay

handsomely. One also hears of weird rites performed by Tantriks or persons belonging to so-called Tantrik cults where sex plays a part and all sorts of immoral acts are performed. Such cults are not peculiar to India. They are also to be found to a larger extent, in Europe, America and other countries of the world. There are groups and societies in Europe and America which worship Satan calling him by his old name Lucifer and in their rites every accepted norm of decent behaviour is flouted. The truth of Shastrik way has to be judged by what it lays down and not by what is twisted or degenerate aspects show. Sir John Woodroffe says:

"I refer to the well known division of worshippers into Dakshinachara and Vamachara. The secret sadhana of some of the latter (which I may say here is not usually understood) has acquired such notoriety that to most the term "the Tantra" connotes this particular worship and its abuses and nothing more. I may here also observe that it is a mistake to suppose that aberrations in doctrine and practice are peculiar to India. The west has produced many a doctrine, and practice of an antinomian character. Some of the most extreme are to be found there. Moreover, though this does not seem to be recognised, it is never-the-less the fact that these Kauli rites are philosophically based on monistic doctrine. Now, it is this Kaula doctrine and practice, limited probably, as being a secret doctrine, at all time to comparatively few, which has come to be known as " the Tantra Nothing is more incorrect....."

Here I shortly deal with the significance of the Tantra Shastra which is of course also misunderstood, being generally spoken of as a jumble of "black magic," and "erotic mysticism," cemented together by a ritual which is "meaningless mummery". A large number of persons who talk in this strain have never had a Tantra in their hands, and such orientalist, as have read some portions of these scriptures, have not generally understood them, otherwise they would not have found them meaningless. They may be bad or they may be good, but they have a meaning. Men are not such fools as to believe for ages what is meaningless. The use of this term implies that their contents had no meaning to them. Very likely; for to define as they do, Mantra as "mystical words", Mudra as "mystical gesture" and yantra as "mystical diagrams", does not imply knowledge. These erroneous notions as to the nature of Agama are of course due to the mistaken identification of the whole body of the scripture with one section of it. (Viz. Vamachara doctrine and practice). Further this last is only known through the abuses to which its dangerous practices, as carried out by inferior persons have given rise. It is stated in the Shastra itself in which they are prescribed that the path is full of difficulty and peril and he who fails upon it goes to hell. That there are those who have so failed, and others who have been guilty of evil magic, is well known."

The Sadhana of Shiva - Shakti in Tantra Shastra is graded. Initially it has two forms viz general and special. The general form is open to all. People read from scriptures, recite stotras, go to shrines and ship the deity according to Panchopachar rites or shodashopachar rites. In Kashmir the people recite the stotras of Ragnya, Sharika, Jwala, Bala, Shiva, Ganesh, Vishnu, etc. and offer worship at their shrines. They perform the rites peculiar to the Kashmiri Brahmans, such as Herat during Shivaratri, Pan for Lakshmi and worship Vatuk Bhairava on Khecher Mavas day besides performing the rites and rituals which are common among the Hindus. All these come within the category of general worship. Only after initiation in the mantra of any Devata or Devi the form of worship becomes different and acquires a special character. The aforesaid grades are described as follows in Kul Pradeep:

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They are Vedachar, Vaishnavachar, Shaivachar Dakshinachar, Vamachar, Siddhantachar, and Kaulachar in order of their graded superiority, Kaulachar being superior to all. There is nothing above Kaulachar. It is most secret and subtle and this only is the Sakshat Param tatwa which travelling from ear to ear remains always".

The aforesaid first four are paths of Pravriti and the rest from Vamachar onwards lead to Nivriti. In the first four the practitioner is in Pashubhava and from Vamachar and onwards he assumes the Veerabhava. In Vamachar worship the five makars are used viz meat, wine, fish, fried cereal and communion between man and woman. It is the use of the five makars by the shakta sadhaks which has been subjected to criticism since long as has been mentioned by Sir John Woodraffe. The shakta practioners have never

shown any anxiety to meet ignorant criticism because they were always anxious to keep their highly powerful mode of worship a close secret. The veerabhava is not meant for all. It is Raj Vidya, princely knowledge Guhya Vidya, secret knowledge which is meant only for the elite, the select few. It is full of dangers and pitfalls and even Yogins cannot easily be admitted into its secrets.

Only that person is admitted in Veerachar who has sufficient self-discipline and control over his body and senses and who would not be tempted to misuse his powers. Such misuse leads to the cultivation of Siddhis and black magic and hinders spiritual progress. The person who is qualified to handle this highly potent sadhana should be free from avarice and blind to the wealth of others, impotent for women other than his wife, dumb in talking ill of others, and should have mastery over his senses. Only such a person can safely handle the stages of Sadhna from Vamachar to Kaulachar.

There is nothing obnoxious in meat, fish and fried cereal. The Kashmiri Brahmins freely use meat and fish in 'Herat Puja', on the occasion of 'Khechir Mawas' and these are used during the Navaratri by those whose Kul Devis are Sharika and Jwala and in Shradhpuja for a departed person. Most of Kashmiri Brahmins are non-vegetarians and meat and fish form part of their diet. Wine taken in measured dose is tonic and medicine but its misuse is disastrous. There are strict injunctions of the shastra that wine should be taken only in the course of sadhana and in a restricted manner. The practice of shakta sadhana in its upper reaches awakens the dormant centres of energy in the body and raises ferment in it. During such phases the use of wine, meat, and fish becomes necessary to sustain the body lest it should break. Further, the Tantrik practitioner uses the very things which rouse sense and passion in order to subdue them. Poison is used to eliminate the poison itself. The Kularnava Tantra says:

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As for the last M, it symbolises the cosmic process of creation. It is the adaptation of the sansl-ar of the Hindus - the Garbhada Sanskar. The Mahanirvana Tantra makes the emphatic assertion that in the "fifth tatwa" the participant should only be a Swakiya, the lawfully wedded wife and no one else;

<verses>

O Consort of Shiva ! in this strong Kaliyuga which has an enervating effect, for the remaining fifth tatwa viz 'maithun', only the lawfully wedded wife should be made the participant as she alone is free from all blemishes. [Mahanirvana Tantra Chap. VI- 14]

The Veerachar Sadhana and the subsequent stages leading to Kaulachar can only be safely performed by a householder. In such worship it is necessary for the practitioner to have a female partner as his shakti and the wife is the safest shakti. Solo efforts in shakti worship are always fraught with risks and dangers. Wife as shakti acts as a shock absorber and safety valve and provides a shield against adverse currents which often come in his way besides helping him in his sadhana. But Shakti worship with another woman who is not the wife - a parkiya -is fraught with great dangers which may unhinge the practitioner's mind or may even prove fatal. It may be frankly stated that the worship involving sex union with wife is always in privacy of the two and any suggestion that such acts are indulged in groups is patently absurd and needs no comment.

Lastly, the sadhak arrives in the Divya Bhava where he no longer needs the use of meat, wine etc. and the crutches of makars are discarded. Non-vegetarian diet is no longer necessary. Sex union with his shakti assumes the shape of cosmic union that takes place when the Kundalini rising from her seat in the base of the spine, the four petalled Muladhar Chakra, goes up piercing the upper Chakras viz Swadhishtan Manipur, Anahat, Visshudha, and Agya and meets her Lord in the uppermost thousand-petalled chakra, the Sahsrar. The union of the two symbolises the setting into motion the creative process in the universe. The practitioner, and such exalted sadhaks are few, reaches the top of the Everest in his spiritual climb and becomes a Kaul, an Aghoreshwara. He has burnt all his Karmic bonds, there is no death or rebirth for him, neither Mangal or Amangal, nor pain or pleasure. While he is in his mortal body he is a Shiva and when he leaves his body he remains on the astral plane as long as he likes having become a sun of a solar system of his own. He carries on his wishes from the astral plane through the medium of other persons.

The shastra is full of praise for Kaulas. The line of such Kaulas has continued unbroken in Kashmir since times immemorial and they along with the few advanced Sadhaks have been directing the Kashmir Krama while the people in general carried on their general Kulapuja.

The Kashmiri Brahmans who are the only remnant left of the Hindus of Kashmir, the rest having been converted to Islam, have shown an amazing tenacity in sticking to their Vedic and Tantrik heritage. Their shakha is Kath and their veda is Krishna Yajurveda. Their grihya sutra which controls their rituals is Laughakshi, which certainly goes back prior to the Mahabharata era. I doubt if there is any other section of the Hindu community in India which has kept up its Vedic and Tantrik heritage in all its purity unaffected by the tidal waves of Jainism, Buddhism and the later equally strong Vaishnava movements led by Rarnanujacharya, Ramanand, Madhavacharya, Vallabhacharya and Nimbarkacharya. Some individuals might have been influenced by the teaching of the aforesaid Acharyas but the community as a whole firmly stuck to its old moorings.

Buddhism made a great impact in Kashmir during and after the period of Emperor Ashok but he last ditchers among the community stuck to their guns and remained steadfast.

For nearly 300 years beginning from the IX century A. D. till the commencement of XI century A.D. Kashmir remained under the spell of the brilliant sages and savants who propounded the Kashmir Shaivism and Trika Shastra. Their unbroken chain beginning from Shri Kantha and followed by Vasugupta, Kallata, Somananda, Utpalacharya, Lakshmana, Abhinavagupta, Khsemraja and Yogaraja raised Kashmir Shaivism to sublime heights. After the Adi Shankaracharya, no other sage or savant occupies such a dazzling place of honour among the Hindus than Mahamaheshwara Abhinavagupta.

Sir John Woodroffe says:

"Unsurpassed for its profound analysis is the account of the thirty - six Tattwas or stages of cosmic Evolution (accepted by both Shaivas and Shaktas) given by the Northern Shaiva School of the Agama....."

"In fact Shakta literature is in parts unintelligible to one unacquainted with some features of what is called the Shaiva Darshan."

The Trika Shastra also lays down the practical forms of Sadhana. While the culminating points in Shakta Sadhana and the Trika Sadhana are the same but the starting points are different. For a Shakta Kashmiri Brahmin his form of Sadhana is well chalked out in the Prescribed forms of worship of Ragnya, Sharika, Jwala etc. but the Sadhana mentioned in the Malinivijayottara Tantra (which lays down the Trika Sadhana) is different though there are common points. I have considered the aspects of Shaiva Darshana and Trika Shastra as also the forms of Shiva-Shakti worship at some length in my Review of the Biography of Bhagwan Gopi Nath ji of Kashmir and in a letter which I wrote to Swami Lakshman ji Maharaj, the famous Shaiva philosopher of Kashmir, which have been published in the form of a booklet.

I have tried to avoid repetition of what I have said in my "Review" and in my letter to Swamiji. But the teachings of Shaiva Darshan and Trika have raised a conflict among the Kashmiris whether, particularly in their special Sadhana, they should follow their old traditional path or giving up their Ragnya, Sharika and jwala, should follow the path as prescribed by Trika Shastra. Swami Lakshman ji Maharaj has yet to answer this question.

The advent of Islam in Kashmir wiped off the Hindus leaving only 11 families, some say 9. It is a tribute to their amazing tenacity that the few who remained blossomed again. They had occasional periods of respite particularly in the reign of Zainul-Ab-din and in phases after the Moghul conquest of Kashmir. Their plight worsened again during the Pathan rule and then improved again during the Sikh and Dogra regimes. Now again they are in low waters. Their economic condition is bad and they are facing unemployment. The younger generation, though highly educated has lost its religious moorings and has become rudderless. Kashmir is no longer the famous seat of Sanskrit learning as it was in former days. There is no Sanskrit Department in the Kashmir University. Members of our priestly class who are our traditional teachers and custodian of our religious and cultural heritage are leaving their vocations and their children are taking to other professions. The perennial source of ancient Kashmir-Krama seem to

have dried up. This has caused grave concern to shaktas all over India. The weakening of the Kashmir Krama is creating a great imbalance in Shakta worship. Sometimes back the matter was considered by the executive committee of the All-India Shakta sammelan and it expressed its serious anxiety over the prevailing conditions in Kashmir, and I as the president of the Sammelan was asked to go to Kashmir and assess the situation. I have been to Kashmir several times during the last five years and even though what I have seen has pained me but I have not lost hope. Things could not be worse than what they were when we were only 9 or 11 families left. Then we rose as if from ashes. I have not met initiates in our Kaul Sadhana besides a very few. But there are quite a number of eminent Sanskrit scholars. It is indeed a matter of regret that nearly 4000 Sanskrit manuscripts pertaining to Shakta worship and Shaiva Darshan were lying uncatalogued in some almshouses of the Research Department and Archives in Srinagar. I wrote about them to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir as also to the Union Government. Now they have been removed and handed over to the Kashmir University, which does not have a Sanskrit department. I do not know how the Kashmir University proposes to deal with them.

Tantricism and Kaulachar in Kashmir, having a hoary past, has gone on, facing ups and downs and will continue to go on. A letter which I received from late Pandit Shridhar Joo Dhar is instructive and interesting. It runs thus

AUM

S. D. Dhar

Retired Conservator of Forests.

My dear Shriman Shivaji,

Many thanks for your so affectionate letter of 27th July. Your contact with such an elevated Shakta Yogin as your Gurudev Maharaj could not be accidental. Apparently you have been carrying the seed of your spiritual Sadhana from many past births and you seem destined to be a torchbearer of our highly inspiring ancient Kaulachar. You are now in the hands of Bhagwan Gopi Nath ji Maharaj who will raise you to the highest pinnacle of self-realisation in due course. Our Kaulachar has received a great set-back in Kashmir. There is however a redeeming feature. I have come across some young aspirants who are collecting all available connected literature and conducting research in its sadhana. Their efforts will not go in vain and our spiritual resurgence is only a matter of time.

The "Trika" philosophy has its own charm. I have not studied it critically but I feel that it appeals more to the present day youth as it does not involve much of practical kriya such as Yantra Puja and all its usual rites and is mainly based on "Vimarsha". I am however confident that it will not eclipse our "Kaulachar" which has so far survived the onslaughts of Buddhism, Shaivism and Islam.

It is a well - established fact that a tree grows best in its own habitat i.e. natural environment. So it is with every human being. One's "Jati-dharma" is its natural environment and so long as he remains within fold and limits he is sure to flourish well. This is what our Avatars have stressed by example and precept. Our effort should naturally be to uphold our jati-dharma on which one's Kul-dharma is essentially based. It is very laudable that you are so determined to uphold our 'Kul-dharma' and I pray that your efforts may succeed in the renaissance of your "kaulachar". OM TAT SAT.

I am well. I trust this finds you in the best of health along with your wife and others.

With all best wishes,

Yours Own

S. D. Dhar.

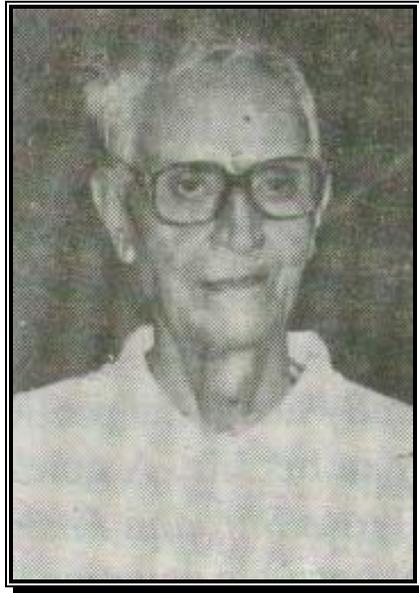
There are followers of "Kashmir Krama" all over India and some of them are persons of high standing in spiritual field. But the "kashmir Krama" has to be directed by savants who spring from the soil of

Kashmir which is the natural habitat of the Directors of the "Kashmir Krama." Our Kula Devis--Rajnya, Sharika, Jwala and Bala Tripurasundari will soon fill the void.

23 Fundamental Aspect of Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism

A comparative view of the two Philosophies

Jankinath Kaul "Kamal"



Late Shri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

The six systems of Hindu Philosophy are Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Saankhya, Yoga, Mimaamsa and Vedanta. There are also many other schools of thought in India, but all are the variations of these six systems termed the Hindu Philosophy. To understand this clearly, we have to realize that the basis of all the schools of Indian Thought is the same which we call the Ultimate Reality, Supreme Consciousness, Brahman, Siva, Allah or God. All these schools of thought several conclude on common concepts which are :-

- i) All accept the central cycle of Nature, which is without beginning or end. This consists of vast phases of Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution.
- ii) All accept that life and death are but two phases of a single cycle to which the soul is bound. This is because of the ignorance of the true nature of things.
- iii) All accept Dharma as the moral law of the universe that accounts for these central cycles of Nature, as well as the destiny of the human soul.
- iv) All agree that knowledge of the self is the path to freedom and that Yoga is the method to attain final liberation.

All the schools of thought are, thus, but the fundamental interpretations of the Ultimate Reality. They are so inter-related that the hypothesis and the method of each is dependent upon that of the other. They are, in no way, contradictory to one another, as they all lead to the same practical end, the knowledge of reality and liberation of soul.

<verses>

'To get rid of evil and to attain permanent and supreme bliss', is the innate desire of every creature in the world.

Here is an attempt made to study a comparative view of the two schools of Indian thought, namely the Advaita Vedanta of Shankara and the Kashmir Shaivism, as these have great affinities with one another. Both advocate monism. Fundamentally, they have a single conception, but each develops it individually to suit particular minds. The physical reason for their individual development, apart from that of the mental, may be due to Historical background and Geographical situation of each.

Badarayana, probably, founded Vedanta in the plains of India while Durvasa expounded Trika Shaiva in the Himalayan ranges, the two being sober and sentimental respectively. Vedanta is an enquiry into the nature of the Ultimate Reality while Shaivism discusses the nature of this ultimate Reality and explains the cause of the initial impulse in nature. The sources of Vedanta are Vedas and those of Shaivism are the Tantras, which give supplementary explanations to Vedic thought. Both are said to be of divine authorship. No doubt, they are the revelations favoured to great sages and seers of this ancient land. But neither objects the postulates of either of these.

Both of these evolved philosophies seem to have had prevailed in this beautiful land of Kashmir since the very early times i.e. the first century A. D. or earlier. This is evident from a keen observation of the performances of daily and occasional rites and rituals by the Kashmiri Pandits even upto this day. Hymns from the Vedas and recitations from the Tantras are included in all kinds of such performances, simultaneously. Even later hymns like Mukundamala- a hymn to Lord Vishnu, and Sivamahimnastotram- a hymn to Lord Siva - the supreme deities of the two philosophies, are recited and worship offered simultaneously by devotees in traditional way. By this we understand that people in this land of Kashmir have from the very early times been accommodating perhaps because of their gift of intelligence from Nature. They always assimilated what came their way. According to Dr. Aurel Stien, "the Brahmins absorbed Buddhist Faith and lived in harmony with their brethren who were converted to this faith in the valley. Thus the old religion here seems to have been polytheistic, of course, with special inclination towards ritualistic Shaivism.

Kula system of Shaivism, advocating the highest form of Siva had been introduced here in the fourth century A. D. Krama system of Shaivism, connected with Raja-Yog, and Kundalini Yoga, which stress that vital air and mind are interdependent, also had been introduced here early.

Then, Sankaracharya (788-820 A. D.) visited this valley in the first two decades of the ninth century. He only re-established the true faith of Upanishads called the Vedantas. To check further deterioration caused by the split in Buddhism, he explained the Upanishads in a system on the basis of Brahma Sutras in his commentary. He gave Vedanta Philosophy the right footing when he wrote his valuable commentaries on the ten principal Upanishads and the Bhagwadgita. He composed a number of hymns to different deities like Saraswati, Krishna, Skanda and so on, to give the unilateral direction to multi-farious faiths in the whole country. He gave practical instructions that worship of different deities leads to the same goal, the Ultimate Truth on realization.

In his hymn to Dakshinamurti, Sankara's conception ultimate reality is the same as that of Pratyabhijna, reintroduced by Somananda and Utpalacharya, in Kashmir. To examine a comparison, let us study the following:

<verses>

"He, in whom this universe, prior to its projection was potentially present like a tree in a seed, and by whom it was wrought to its multiform by the magic, as it were, of His own will or in the manner of a great Yogi out of His own power, to that Supreme Being, embodied in the auspicious and benign Guru, I offer my profound salutation."

And

<verses>

"By His own will the Supreme Lord, the essence of Knowledge (Supreme Consciousness) projects causelessly like the Yogi into this multiformal world."

Again, in the first stanza of the Dakshinamurti Stotra, Sankar, says:

<verses>

which means: "Who, by Maya as by dream, sees Himself the universe which is inside Him, like unto a city that appears in a mirror, (but) which is manifested as if without."

In the commentary to this stanza in his book entitled 'The Hymns Of Sankara', Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan points out: "It is to be noted that in this hymn Sankara employs certain key-terms and concepts of the Pratyabhijna system known popularly as Kashmir Shaivism. The illustration of the mirrored city is found in the pratyabhijna works". Thus the people of Kashmir seem to have been influenced by the Vedanta Philosophy of Sankara as well as by the ancient Shaivism which later developed into Kashmir Shaivism.

Earlier two great Shaiva families of Sangamaditya and Atrigupta had migrated into Kashmir, when King Lalitaditya (699-736 A. D.) ruled here. They practised Tantric Shaiva rituals. These had already influenced the thought of people here when Shankara's Tantric Philosophy spread and influenced the Trika also. This leads us to think that Shankara must have had personal touch with some founder-writers here. To illustrate this we quote the following passage from the book entitled 'Abhinavagupta - An Historical & Philosophical Study' by Prof. Dr. K. C. Pandey :

"On the authority of the Rajatarangini (Ch. V, 66) we know that Bhatta Kallata, the pupil of Vasugupta, was a contemporary of Avantivarman, King of Kashmir (855-883 A.D). There he is referred to as 'Siddha.' It is, therefore, evident that at that time he was an old man of established reputation. Vasugupta, the teacher of Kallata, therefore, it is natural to suppose, belonged to the preceding scholastic generation extending from about 825 to 850 A. D. We shall, therefore, not be wrong if we say that Vasugupta gave a systematic form to the philosophical ideas of the monistic Tantras in his Siva Sutras in the next decade after Shankaracharya's visit to Kashmir towards the end of the second decade of the 9th century A. D." - (Page 154)

Thus, the mixed faith that the people of Kashmir had professed so far developed into a philosophical system when Vasugupta and Somananda gave Spanda and Pratyabhijna thoughts during the middle and latter part of the 9th century respectively. The Trika system of philosophy which had appeared on this earth through Durvasa, was in this way re-introduced by Siva's will, for the welfare and spiritual development of the people of Kaliyuga. Srmat Swami Lakshman Joo, in one of his lectures on Kashmir Shaivism says, "Like Vedanta, this system endeavours to remove the innate ignorance that separates the individual from the universal."

Then, what are the points of difference between these two established philosophies?

There is no difference so far as the aim of both is concerned. Both the monistic philosophies aim at the realization of the Ultimate Reality, which one calls Parabrahman and the other calls Parama Siva. So Paramasiva or Parameshwara is that ultimate Reality, which the Vedas declare as "This world came out from the Eternal Existence which is one, the only and without the second."

<verses>

But there are points of difference in so far as their composition is concerned. On the basis of Sankhya, the two philosophies hold that the universe comprises of tattwas (or categories).

Twenty three are common in both:

Five Bhutas - (Elements)

Five Jnanendriyas (Organs of cognition)

Five Karmendriyas (Organs of action)

Five Tanmatras (subtle elements)

Three Antahkaranas (internal organs)-Mind, Intellect & Ego.

The points of difference are:

i) In Vedanta the twenty-fourth category is Prakriti and the twenty-fifth is the Purusha, which is known as the Supreme Being (Parameshwara). He is ever pure and is not tainted with the stain of worldly corruption, just as no amount of dirt can ever alter the chemical purity of gold in a gold ring. Therefore, soul or self in Vedanta means the universal Soul, Paramatman or Supreme Spirit. This is identified with Purusha, the efficient cause of the manifest world. It brings all change by its mere presence as the sun brings forth the spring flowers.

Trika, on the other hand, adds thirteen more tattwas to the twenty-three of Sankhya. These are:

Prakriti - the world of difference which has the quality of being affected,

Purusha - the limited individual,

Six Kanchukas or sheaths - They are the limiting adjuncts on the individual in respect of space, Knowledge, interest, time and authorship.

So far this is all impure knowledge.

Five more tattwas are considered to be in the field of Pure- knowledge. These are the five energies Parama Siva called consciousness, bliss, desire, knowledge and Action. Kashmir Shaivism postulates the single reality of Siva with two aspects - one Transcendental and the other Immanent like two sides of one and the same coin. The first is beyond manifestation. But both are real as the effect cannot be different from the cause. It is said:

ii) Vedanta discusses the relationship of God, Matter and World. The central theme of the Vedanta Sutras is the philosophical teachings of the Upanishads, which concern the nature of these three relative principles. This includes the relation between the universal soul and the individual soul. Shankaracharya explained, for the practical purposes, this union in his monumental commentaries in the 8th century A. D.

The system of Kashmir Shaivism deals with the three-fold principle of God, Soul and Matter, which gives it the name Trika. Vasugupta (9th century A. D.) received the Siva- Sutras by inspiration and explained these to preserve for man the principle of monism which existed in the Tantras, also known as Agamas. This revived an understanding of truth in its ultimate form.

iii) In Vedanta, Maya, is a means of operation. It is not a substance. It is the force which creates illusion of non-perception in nature. It is the dividing force or we may call it the finitising energy which creates form in the formless. The world is known as Maya because it has no reality. It is only an appearance of fleeting forms. The real is never affected by the unreal as the ground is never made wet by a mirage. Maya is ignorance (avidya) when it operates the individual mind. It vanishes when the knowledge of reality dawns just as the morning mist dissipates on rising of the sun.

In Kashmir Shaivism Maya is the power of contraction of the five universal modes of consciousness, called the Kanchukas or sheaths. The power of contraction works thus:

Eternal Existence contracts into time

All-pervasiveness contracts into Space

All-completeness contracts into desire

All-knowledge contracts into limited knowledge

and, All-powerfulness contracts into limited power

Maya-shakti, as it is called here, produces Purusha and Prakriti which together establish the dual world of mind and matter. Here it is termed Maya-Granthi, as it becomes the cause of bondage. As un- divided power of Siva, Maya is not separate from the reality either. As the gross power of consciousness it is called Maya-Shakti, which grants liberation to the contracted soul. The influence of Maya is evident in the law of Nature. Every period of action is followed by a period of rest just as sleep follows action.

iv) In Vedanta we are required to pass through the four-fold discipline which consists of: viveka - Discrimination vairagya - Dispassion shat-sampat - Right conduct (six-fold) :- a) Mental quietness; b) Taming the mind; c) Abstinence; d) Endurance; e) Confidence; and f) Steadiness.

mumukshutwa - Desire for liberation. (Tattwabodha of Shankaracharya) 2(b).

There are also three kinds of students who advance towards self-realization. They are those :

- i) who act with zeal and faith,
- ii) who act for the good of humanity,
- iii) who are immersed in meditation.

But in Shaivism it is said:

<verses>

There is no consideration of first being worthy of it. There is no restriction of caste, creed or colour for getting admission to this shaiva order. This naturally must mean that it is the intelligent who can grasp this advanced philosophy, being the latest development on all the others. For the fine intellects no restriction is imposed. But there are grades in Diksha-initiation. They are :

1. Samayik - when the disciple is given the training of proper discipline.
2. Putrak - when spiritual knowledge is imparted to the disciple.
3. Acharya - when the disciple becomes Acharya (preceptor) and imparts knowledge to other disciples.

And

4. Siddha- - The perfect being. (vide Tantraloka) 3 (c)

v) Divine Grace is anugraha in Vedanta and shaktipaata in Kashmir Shaivism. Both the philosophies understand it to be unconditional. They are in complete agreement on this point. Vedanta says that intellectual power, study of the Vedas and even spiritual instruction are persuaded by divine grace alone :-

<verses>

'It is by Lord's grace that one is led to monistic practices.'

Again, the Upanishads declare:-

<verses>

'Atma can be realized by him whom He favours and to whom He reveals Himself.'

In Shaivism also it is Shaktipaata that makes self- recognition possible.

<verses>

'One is directed towards the preceptor as if tethered with a rope' .

<verses>

'There is no human effort to earn shaktipaata'.

It is the independent will of Lord Siva to grant shaktipaata or divine grace to any one at any place and at any time.

vi) Badarayan's viewpoint is the outcome of the various schools of thought of his day, as there existed Ashmarthya, Audulomi, Kaashakritsna and others who had held different views previously. His is the accepted classic of the Vedanta system to-day. It was endorsed and expanded by Gaudapada and Shankaracharya through Maandukya karikas and Prasthanatrayi respectively. Vidyaranya held the same view in his Panchadashi.

Likewise, we find that the polytheistic faith with greater inclination towards Shaivism developed into Kashmir Shaivism or Trika philosophy with the advent of Vasugupta and Somanandanatha. This peculiar philosophy developed in Kashmir and includes almost all the previous thoughts. It was further adored by Kallata, Utpalacharya and later by Abhinavaguptapada. Siva-Sutra, Sivadrishti, Spanda, Ishwara-pratyabhijnavarshini need special mention in this context. Besides this, Abhinavagupta's Tantraloka and Paratrimshika Vritti form the encyclopaedia of Kashmir Shaivism.

To sum up, if we study both these philosophies with interest and zeal, we shall find that both lay stress on the practical aspect, which is realization of the Self. Both enable all to realise the teachings during one's own lifetime. Their individual developments lead to the common goal - Realization of the Supreme

Reality - where there is no experience of dualily and hence no sorrow. It is the state of absolute bliss. It is the stateless state. The vedas declare :-

<verses>

'Truth is one but the wise give it in many ways'.

Although Kashmir Shaivism can hardly be grasped until all the six systems of philosophy are comprehended, yet no such system of India will be complete without this. No doubt, Tantras suffered a great criticism from the western and eastern scholars, due to their esoteric or symbolic character. But thanks are due to Sir John woodroffe (Arther Avalon), who was the first to defend the outraged Tantras. In the foreword to his book entitled 'The Garland of Letters', Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan (professor Emeritus, Centre of Advanced study in philosophy, University of Madras) writes :-

"The decent Indian mind that had developed a deep-rooted prejudice against the Tantras became awake to their excellence after the pioneering work of this great foreigner."

He made their meaning clear and helpful for understanding the culture of India. Therefore, it is imperative that this line of traditional literature should properly be understood. Then it will be convincing to the common man that Kashmir Shaivism gives the detailed analysis of the ultimate Reality, which Vedanta already explained on the basis of Saankhya Philosophy.

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