

THE RICH HERITAGE OF

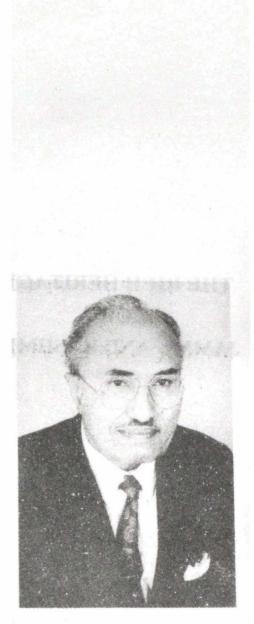
JAMMU AND KASHMIR

STUDIES IN ART, ARCHITECTURE, HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

Prof. SOMNATH WAKHLU

Foreword by: DR. KARAN SINGH





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The Rich Heritage of Jammu and Kashmir

(Art. Architecture, Culture, History, Literature, Religion)

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To
My daughter, Mrs. Reeta Kothidar,
And
My grandchildren, Deepak and Jyoti,
In appreciation and affections.

CONTENTS

List	of Illustrations	9
	eword	11
Pre	face	13
_	nowledgements	15
Intr	oduction	17
	SECTION I: JAMMU	
	ART AND CULTURE	
1.	Folk Art and Craft of the Dogras	27
2.	Basohli: The Fountain head of Pahari Painting	33
3.	Basohli Paintings: The Unique Fascination of Colours	37
4.	Jammu Kalam and Wall Paintings of the Jammu Region	43
5.	Pahari Paintings and the Dogra Rulers of the Jammu Province	47
6.	Sobha Singh: The Legendary Artist and his Paintings in the	
	Amar Mahal Museum	51
7.	Stone-Carving: The Art of Shivaliks	55
8.	Architectural Legacy of Jammu	61
9.	Jai Mata Di: The Holy Shrine of Vaishno Devi	67
10.	Ancient Temples of Krimchi	71
11.	Chenani and the Holy Temple of Sudh Mahadev	77
12.	The Magnificent Old Palaces of the Dogra Rulers	81
13.	Picturesque Amar Mahal	87
14.	Dogra Jewellery and Dress	93
15.	Dogra Dishes and Dances	97
	HISTORY	
16.	Reign of Raja Ranjit Dev (1733-82): Golden Chapter in the	
	History of Jammu	103
17.	Maharaja Gulab Singh: Ulysses of the Hills	109
	Ranbir Singh: Maharaja with a Heart of Gold	115
	Maharaja Hari Singh: An Extraordinary Social Reformer	119
	Maharani Tara Devi of Jammu and Kashmir (1910-67)	125
21.	Dr. Karan Singh: From Yuvraj to Global Citizen	131
	LITERATURE	
	Dogri Folk Songs	139
23.	Prof. Ram Nath Shastri (1914-): A Colossus in	
	Dogra Parnassus	147
24.		155
25.		161
26.	•	165
	Padma Sachdev (1940-): The Renowned Poetess	173
28.	Yash Sharma (1927-): The Poet of Sweetness	175

8	The Rich Heritage of Jammu and K	'ashmir
	Kehri Singh Madhukar (1929-): The Great Poet	179
	SECTION II: KASHMIR ART AND CULTURE	
20	Ghulam Rasul Santosh (1929-97): The Painter of Divinity	107
	Kishori Kaul: The Painter of Past Images and	187
J1.	Present Impressions	191
32	The Holy Cave of Shri Amar Nath	195
	The Sun-Temple of Martand in Kashmir	199
	The Holy Shrine of Kheer Bhawani	205
	Jama Masjid: The Grand Old Mosque of Srinagar	211
	Khangah of Shah Hamdan	215
	Around the Dal Lake: Temple of Shankaracharya,	
	Mughal Gardens and Hazratbal	221
38 .	Legacy of Islam in India and Kashmir	229
	Jewellery and Dress of Kashmiris	237
	Customs and Ceremonies among Kashmiris HISTORY	241
41.	Kalhana: The Great Poet-Historian of Ancient Kashmir	247
42.	Lalitaditya: The Just, Mighty and Magnificent King of	
	Kashmir (724-60AD)	261
43 .	Jyapida (751-82AD): A Great Hero	265
	Avantivarman (855-83AD): A Broadminded King	269
45 .	Sultan Zain-ul-Abiden (1420-70):	
	The Apostle of Communal Harmony	275
46 .	The Legacy of Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla	281
	LITERATURE	
47 .	Kashmiri Poetry: Its Past and Present	289
48 .	Mysticism in Kashmiri Poetry	299
49 .	Ballad in Kashmiri	305
50 .	Kashmir: The Abode of Wisdom	309
51.	Laleshwari (Lal Ded): The Great Mystic Saint and	
	Poetess (1335-87)	315
52 .	Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Wali (Nund Rishi):	
	The Patron- Saint of Kashmir	321
5 3.	Habba Khatoon: The Nightingale of Kashmir	327
54.	Mahjoor: The Wordsworth of Kashmir	335
55.	Rasa Javidani: The Great Poet of the Small Green Valley	343
	Appendix 1 : Genealogical Tree of Dogra House	349
	Appendix II: Chronological List of	
	Kashmiri Kings (601-1148 A.D.)	351

Select Bibliography

Index

355

359

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1. Basohli Painting (Dogra Art Museum, Jammu)
- 2. Krimchi Temple, Jammu (Author's collection)
- 3. View of the portion of the old palaces of Dogra Rulers, Jammu.
- 4. Entrance to the Shri Amar Nath cave (Directorate of Information, Jammu & Kashmir)
- 5. Shah Hamdan Mosque, Srinagar
- 6. Hazarat Bal Mosque, Srinagar (Directorate of Information, Jammu & Kashmir)
- 7. Chrar-i-Sheriff, Kashmir (Directorate of Information, Jammu & Kashmir)

Dr. KARAN SINGH MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT (RAJYA SABHA)



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FOREWORD

Among all the former Princely States of India, surely the most spectacular in terms of topography and diversity is the composite State of Jammu & Kashmir founded in the mid-nineteenth century by Maharaja Gulab Singh. Comprising as it does at least five distinct geographical, cultural and ethnic regions, it has over the centuries made a significant contribution in many fields. In particular the Kashmiris and the Dogras developed a distinct and impressive artistic heritage which adds to the beauty and



diversity of the broader mosaic of Indian culture.

While many books have been written on the history of the State, its contribution in terms of culture — painting, architecture, handicrafts, music and literature — have not received the attention that they deserve. Prof. Somnath Wakhlu is a Kashmiri who has lived in Jammu for several decades, and therefore is able to grasp the cultural dimensions both of Kashmiriyat and Dogriyat. He has put a great deal of time and effort into studying the area of culture, and has produced a volume which will be of interest to readers and scholars not only in India but around the world. I warmly commend Prof. Wakhlu's work.

New Delhi, January 1, 1998

(KARAN SINGA)

Taianlingh

PREFACE

Since the last more than twenty-five years, I have been broadcasting 'radio-talks' from the Jammu and Srinagar radio stations and contributing articles, short stories, book-reviews and poems in English to various papers and journals, which number about two hundred and fifty. Dr. Karan Singhji, former Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir and former Union Minister, advised me that it would be useful for me to publish a careful selection of this material in a book form. My esteemed friends, Dr. K.L. Choudhary, Professor of Medicine, Government. Medical College. Srinagar, and Mr. K.B. Jandial, Director of Information, Jammu and Kashmir Government, both men of intellect and scholarship, found my essays on various aspects of Jammu and Kashmir quite fascinating and advised me that I should confine myself to the topics dealing with the two regions. As I found my material for the purpose scanty, I did systematic study and research in order to write a book on important subjects dealing with the State. My own son, Dr. Vijay Kumar, too, urged me to take up the task immediately.

Fortunately, Brigadier (Retd.), Joginder Singh Rajput, quite an intelligent person, took the trouble of going meticulously through the typescript and offered me some valuable suggestions. I am sincerely thankful to him.

In my writing I have always been inspired by Dr. Karan Singhji, who exercised a near and remote control over my creative activity. His encouragement to me has been ever so constant. How I wish I had splendid words at my command to appropriately express my gratitude to this exalted man!

It was destined that I should have two advantages. First, I spent nearly half of my life in Kashmir and exactly the same number of years in the Jammu Province and because I was a teacher I had close contact with the youth and intellectuals of both the Provinces. I thus got steeped in the two different cultures. Second, I had a rich collection of books and paintings of Dr. Karan Singhji in the Amar Mahal Museum and Library, Jammu at my elbow so that I could, at ease, suck in knowledge.

Now the volume of literature dealing with Kashmir is, undoubtedly, very large and with Jammu quite small. Then what is the justification for me to add to the plethora of books on an oft-traversed subject? It may be said that I and my friends realized that there was a need of a book whose format is handy and condensed into about 300 pages from which the reader

may find information on all the significant subjects concerning Jammu and Kashmir.

My book contains material on numerous important subjects—art and architecture, shrines and mysticism, religion and culture, history and literature, which are presented at their best in a compact form. I have written only about glorious monuments, important holy shrines, captivating paintings and drawn only those historic figures who wore a halo in their own lifetime and whose lives changed the country for the better. They are timeless. In literature, I have taken into cognizance only the few brilliant poets who have the statures of resurgence.

Visibly, I confess, that there are some gaps and to fill them up would have made the book a work of a prodigious size which was not my purpose. My aim is to do so in the second volume so that both together will be encyclopaedic in range.

Incidentally, as I wrote on, each chapter emerged as a separate essay and could, therefore, be read outside the context of the surrounding material.

May be, the reader will find some repetition in some of the essays which was unavoidable.

I am also immensely grateful to the publisher, Mr. Amit Garg (Gyan Publishing House) for bringing out the book in a record time of a few months and also to the editor. Mrs. Daya Mukherjee, journalist and author for the painstaking job examining the whole manuscript thoroughly and doing amenable editing.

S. N. Wakhlu

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe my great debt of gratitude to Shree Ved Bhasin, the Editorin-Chief of *The Kashmir Times*, Jammu who always encouraged me and readily published my articles, some of which are included in this book, in his highly esteemed and popular paper. I honour him for his kindness to all and sundry.

I am also thankful to S. Narudel Singh, Joint Director of Information, Jammu & Kashmir Government for his help in providing some photographs for reproduction.

I am greatly thankful to Mr. Moh'd Hussain Maqdomi, Deputy Director, Dogra Art Museum, Jammu, who allowed me to take photographs of Basohli paintings displayed in the Museum and also gave me kind permission to reproduce them in my publications.

My wife, Prabha, has stood by me "in sun and storm" is better, for it invokes images and has made my life comfortable. I am very grateful to her.

S.N. Wakhlu

INTRODUCTION

The people of Jammu and Kashmir, torn and tortured by tyranny of the militants at the close of the twentieth century cast wistful eyes upon their past fulfilments, upon the golden age of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir and the golden age of Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu and these splash them with wonder and lead them to hope that the good days of peace and prosperity may return on the swift wings of time! All around they see devastation and desolation but no hand of the tyrant could destroy the characteristic spirit of the people or their heritage of spiritual messages of their Rishis, saints and sages. And even now there is a feeling that the deep valleys are overflowing with the words of Khawja Habib, rendered into English, as follows:

"Whosoever realizes his own true Self Uncovers the vessels of wine, Overflows with joy, is intoxicated And forgets his lower self; He will not know a Hindu From a Musalman."

Thus the symphony of the traditions and cultures still echoes its varied melodies.

I have made voluminous contribution to papers and magazines and have been broadcasting from the radio stations of Jammu and Srinagar for the last twenty-five years. My multidimensional articles on Jammu and Kashmir were admired by many, so I was advised to make a systematic study and research on various aspects of Jammu and Kashmir and write a full-fledged book. The idea stuck with me, took roots and after a decade it has now blossomed in the form of *The Rich Heritage of Jammu and Kashmir*. This is not a book of history, a continuous record of events; it is a collection of essays on the rich heritage of Jammu and Kashmir, art and architecture, history and culture, mysticism and literature. By heritage I do not mean only the legacy of the past but, as Oxford Dictionary defines, "what is or may be inherited."

I have spent my life both in Jammu and Kashmir and I got steeped in both the Dogri and Kashmiri cultures. My strength and originality lies in my intimate knowledge of the people about whom I write. Although I was a Kashmiri by birth and inspiration but I came to know Jammu well. The life here appealed to my mind. Without the stimulus of this atmosphere it is doubtful if I would have been able to write about Jammu with such eloquence. I lived among the people and my direct communication with

them and visits to all the important places, not as a casual visitor but as a keen observer and thinker in quest of knowledge, added to the actuality and originality of my writing. One must live among the people about whom one writes, know their ethos, what they eat, how they dress and their ways of life. The folk songs of Jammu are sweet and melodious. Hear a peasant boy of Jammu, say one Kunjua, playing on his flute and his dear damsel, say one Chanchalu, singing particularly at sunset, for example:

"Do not come to me at midnight, O Kunjua, there are five loaded rifles in my house itching to fire at your heart."

(tr. Dr. Karan Singh)

Then we can write the critical appreciation of these songs, which will come direct from the heart and will be original and spontaneous. One must go to the heights of holy Amar Nath, or the high hill of Vaishno Devi or Crar-i-Sherif, then one can be inspired by the atmosphere pervading all around in these holy places. One must see the glorious mosque of Hazrat Bal in Srinagar or the Kiramchi temples in Jammu which appear dancing towards the sky. Seeing them with the "heart eye" will give one's writing verve and vigour.

There is no dearth of material regarding my subject and I was fortunate in having rich library of Amar Mahal at Jammu at my disposal. The purpose I had in view was that the people should know and feel their rich heritage; it necessitated my utilising much of the material garnered by other men and sifting and gleaning it, in order that I might present a general conspectus of the art, history and literature of Jammu and Kashmir. It was a yeoman's job to study in depth and winnow the turth from falsehood and superfluous details.

JAMMU

For example, Narsingh Dass Nargis's book *Twarikh-i-Jammu* written in Urdu is really a deep mine of information and I have taken much help from it; it is in plain and direct style but the author takes one into labyrithine alleys and one has to wade through the morass of unnecessary details.

On the other hand, Ganesh Dass' book *Raj Darshani*, translated by Dr. S.S. Charak, is a charming composition. For the ancient annals of Jammu territories from the thirteenth century *Raj Darshani* is a worthwhile work. There are some chapters which are burdened with the excessive heats of imagination and an overluxuriant fancy blended with facts, yet to a discerning mind these are the insignia of sweet and thrilling true events.

Then Th. Kahan Chand Billoria's historical works are essential to know the account of one hundred Rajput clans.

None, who wants to know about the Jammu ruling dynasty, can ignore studying Dewan Kirpa Ram's *Gulabnama*. The defect with Kirpa Ram is his idolatrous attitude towards the royal dynasty. Second, he overloads his book with hyperbolic phrases which make it cumbersome.

History of the Punjab Hills States by J. Hutchinson and J. Ph. Vogel is also valuable in many respects.

Moulvi Hashmat Ullah Khan's book is valuable so far as the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan regions spreading from the borders of Tibet in the east to the frontiers of Afghanistan in the West are concerned. I found it interesting as it gives the descriptions of the various Dogra expeditions to Ladakh, Zanskar and Paddar, occupation of Iskardu-Baltistan and the invasions of the Western Tibet. All these expeditions were under the command of Gen. Zorawar Singh. This narration is based on Hashmatullah Khan's personal observation and investigation and, therefore, very important towards the history and culture of Ladakh.

The two scholars of history of our times, Dr.S.S. Charak and Dr. K.L. Kapoor, have written historical works which have a welcome note of distinction and are, in technical power, quite superior to other books of history hitherto written.

From the study of books on history, art and literature of Jammu we know, as Dr. Karan Singh beautifully puts it, "that the people of Jammu seem from early times to have made multidimensional progress with a capacity to assimilate, develop and transmit. The trait of their social character has enabled them to survive countless onslaughts of foreign tribes which unsuccessfully sought to uproot and annihilate them. The flow of history and culture has intermittently pervaded this region, perpetuating the spirit of encounter and adventure so characteristic of a virile and buoyant people."

KASHMIR

According to Dr. Stein, "Kashmir can claim the distinction of being the only region of India which possesses an uninterrupted series of written records of its history, going back beyond the period of Muhammedan conquest and describing the names of real chronicles." I have studied Rajtarangini translated by Stein, followed by Jonaraj, Shrivara Prajabatta and Shukla, translated by Jagdish Chander Dutt into English.

Then Dr. R.K. Parimu's A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir 1320-

1819 was valuable in knowing the Sultanate period, particularly of Zain-ul-Abidin, Bud Shah. It is a marvellous book. Dr. G.M.D. Sufis' Kasheer being history of Kashmir from the earliest times to the government of Maharaja Pratap Singh (died 1925 A.D.) and third ruler of Dogra rule in Kashmir. It is a real treasure of information. Then I could not but make use of Shree P.N. Kaul Bamzai's "A History of Kashmir".

There is the The History of Struggle of Freedom in Kashmir—Cultural and Political: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day by Prem Nath Bazaz. It is neither history of the cultural development nor the struggle for the freedom in Kashmir, rather it is a book of propaganda. All the same, it is in some ways a useful book.

Although I have given a proper bibliography yet I have shown that I have drawn help and inspiration from aforesaid historians. The history of Kashmir is more a chronicle of Kings and courts and conquests than of its organic and social growth. I have, therefore, written about those selected historical personages who have made the conditions of the people better and by their contributions brought about a cataclysmic change in the country; others were useless for my purpose. In the same way, only a few chosen poets of Jammu and Kashmir have been included in the book, for their poetry was epoch-making. I could not write about other poets; it would have made the book unnecessarily bulky. Similarly, only important shrines, mosques have been written about and the rest ignored. This needed a discriminating learning and sagacious practicality.

In addition to the numerous sources of Jammu and Kashmir history, I had to take into cognizance the oral traditions which have been handed over from generation to generation.

No doubt, Jammu and Kashmir has an extraordinary charm. In Kashmir and the upper regions of Jammu there are magnificent woods, limpid lakes, the snow-capped mountains, and one is really enchanted by the myriad brooks happily murmuring in the cool air. Yet to consider Jammu and Kashmir simply a great natural beauty would mean a failure to appreciate its other great achievements and its many-sided character.

The special charm of both Jammu and Kashmir lies in its graceful and majestic temples and the marvellous buildings in a romantic setting. The holy shrines are found on majestic mountains and one can see sublimity there at its zenith. At the holy caves of Amar Nath and Vaishno Devi the very breezes seem to whisper divinity or spirituality close to one's ears. Then the mysticism of Kashmir, the poetry of Jammu and Kashmir, the sweet folk songs, the fascinating paintings of Basohli and the various

Introduction 21

ceremonies and customs of the delightful people are a sumptuous and delicious feast for the mind. All this I have delineated in detail in this work.

Speaking of history; the Dogras ruled over the State for a century. They conquered the warring Chieftains of the different parts of the region and formed and consolidated the united and compact state of Jammu and Kashmir. These Dogra rulers were men of valour and wisdom and so no Satan could dare to enter the Paradise and bring about destruction and desolation during their rule.

But, however, virtuous and benevolent a feudal king may be, the feudal system has its own defects and vices. Then emerged Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla whom people lovingly called Sher-i-Kashmir (lion of Kashmir) who roared like a lion against the feudal system. But he was not infallible, as no man can be, and I have undauntingly described his strengths and weaknesses.

The place of honour, however, is reserved for Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, called Bud Shah (the great king). Of all the rulers of Jammu and Kashmir, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin was the most illustrious. He was the apostle of secularism and brought about a cataclysmic change for good in social, political and economic life of the Kashmiris, the details about which are given in the text.

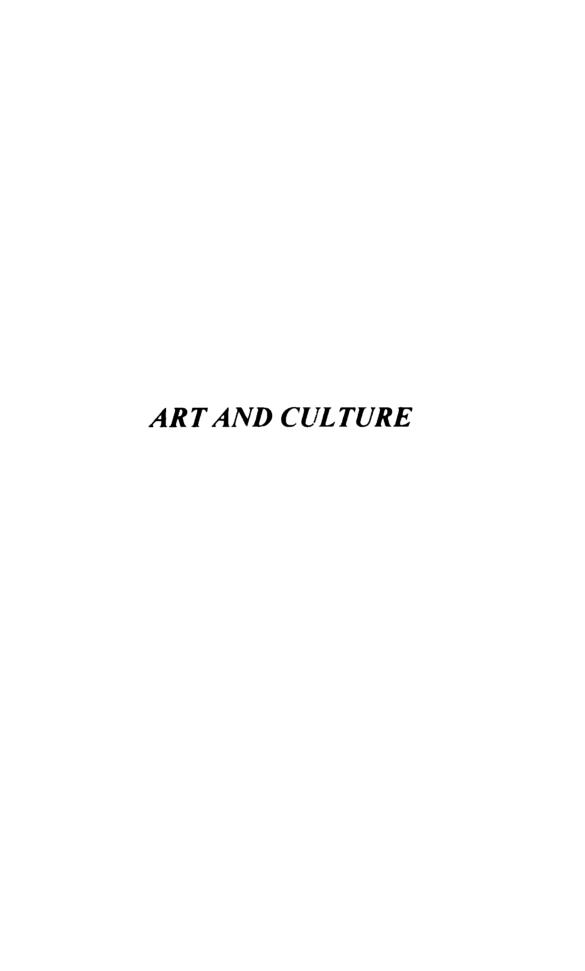
I may, in the last analysis, say that it is today something of an anachronism to speak of Kashmiri culture or Jammu's culture. Until now cultures, no doubt, were sharply divided, but now when Kashmir is one hour's journey by air from Jammu, cultural divisions are beginning to disappear. No doubt, in spite of the progress of science and technology, the Bhagavad Gita and Ramayana will not cease to inspire the people of Jammu. Much that was useless in ancient Hindu culture has already perished. Similarly, a Muslim will daily recite the holy Quran but he will become more tolerant and sophisticated in his manners and ways of life.

Section I

JAMMU

Beauteous and bright is the land of Duggar,
Sweet its speech and lore;
It's a treasure, brethren,
Mine of diamonds and gold.

-Rughnath Singh



1

Folk Art and Craft of the Dogras

Couched in the lap of north-western Himalayas and overlooking the Punjab rests, like a crescent, the Shivalik region of more than 35,000 square miles known as Duggar or the Dogra region. The land by and large is a virtual arcadia—a land of plains, meadows and valleys, watered by crystalline streams where the landscape is broken by hills crowned with tall trees under which, after a day's labour, a man may stretch himself and blissfully contemplate and a woman may lie on a *charpoy*, gaze at the starspangled heaven and dream. Their dreams seem wrought out of:

The dreams the drowsy gods

Breathe on the burnished mirror of the world

And then smooth out with loving hands and sigh.

And when the night falls, serious occupation with art takes the place of their day's jobs as a means of varying the monotonous existence.

From this attitude of mind was born the exquisite Dogra folk art and a period of incubation which culminated in the magnificence of Basohli and Kangra paintings, the grandeur of Krimchi architecture, the splendour of Babur's sculpture, the joyously glistening temples soaring up to kiss the skies and dexterously block-printed sheets of kaleidoscopic designs on which softly fall the soft feet of a Dogra damsel.

No, not that a Dogra spent his days in *dolce entente* but he had heterogeneous occupations. He was a farmer and an artist by choice, hunter by compulsion and by force of circumstances a fierce warrior. He followed Bhakti creed and ingrained in himself the passion for freedom and a zest for living and beauty.

Folk art and craft is a vast subject which embraces folklore, folkdance, folkmusic, folk handicrafts, etc., and these can be taken up here only synoptically.

Stone Carving

As one strides across this "Good Earth", one finds countless images and statues, one image near a spring (bouli), other reposed in a temple and yet another perched on a high hill. Some of them may be crude and rough while many are of high craftsmanship and these are of different styles and periods. Most of these objects of art are dedicated to Hindu religious. Therefore, the artists have strained every nerve to achieve abstract perfection of the form that is calculated to inspire devotion. While the statues of Krishna and Vishnu have affirmed compassion and serenity, in the case of Shiva, the artists have stressed the mysterious calm and vigour. But in all of them, as we find near the boulies, the folk artists have tried their best to depict the cosmic grandeur of the deity.

In the Dogra Art Gallery of Jammu there is a tableau of sandstone on which is carved in relief an affaire d'amour, a man and a woman mutually kissing their mouths, while the Kama Deva, the god of love, is shown darting his amorous arrow at them. The eyes of the pair brimming with tenderness and love, gaze at each other ardently. Another statue in relief is on a slab of grey sandstone; it is that of a wrestler whose pose and gesture is delightful and comical. All these stone carvings are folk in character and there is absence of formal aesthetics which, though artistically disadvantageous, ensures freedom and enables the artist to display graphic physical beauty. Some specimens of terracotta and fragments of pottery, too, have been unearthed at Ambran in Akhnoor, R.S. Pura and Man Talai. These are quite old. There are three terracotta heads fashioned from the local clay got from Akhnoor, displayed in the Art Gallery which are examples of impeccable skill. There is one head of a woman in ecstasy and another of a man in agony. The raised brows and freckles on the face of the man make us feel that the man is writhing in pain. It is an example of an extraordinary dramatic effectiveness and superb realism. The coiffure of the woman with a mass of ringlets is marvellous. The face is round and chubby glowing with self-satisfaction while a little smile plays on her mouth.

Nowadays earthenware pots are also made in Jammu and these are of a high quality and gilded decorative pieces like Pahari *la belle dames* are simply alluring.

Dogri Folklore

Dogri is a mellow and melodious language. The Dogri literature is now also quite rich. Thakur Rughnath Singh sings:

"Beauteous and bright is the land of Duggar, sweet its speech and lore; 'its a treasure, brethren, mine of diamonds and gold".

(tr. from Dogri)

Dogri folk tales are richly varied with a marked flavour of their own. They have a homely quality and on the whole have a background of pastoral life, rather than the glitter of the palaces and guile of the market, although these too play a part in giving these Dogri stories their unique character. The way in which fancy and imagination are allowed full reign, is indicative of the delightfully leisured way in which they must have been told and re-told down the centuries. Most of the stories are didactic and teach lessons, for example, the famous folk tale of Shiva in which fate overrides the desire of the deity or the story of an idle son and his father which reveals the peculiar idiosyncrasies of character.

The main characteristic noted in the Dogra folk songs is an instinct for the elemental simplicities of life and these very well dwell upon the transcendental power of love, divine and human. The folk songs of love and devotion are a symphony of the deep note of feelings of the common people of Duggar.

Folk Dances

Dogra folk dances are an expression of simplicity, gaiety and gallantry of the brave Dogras. The dances are *Chaiga, Bhangra, Kudd, Phumian* and *Ras Leela*, performed in merry moments in full *Joi de vivre* to the accompaniment of flute, dolkhi and drum.

Dogras are adept in painting. Actually, The cradle of Dogra paintings has been rocked by the womenfolk. They decorate their walls, enclosures and even floors with colourful figures on every religious and social occasion. At the folk art level, Dogra's imagination is simple, strong, clear and intense though later, as the art grows, it becomes iridescent and exuberant. The folk art of the Dogras has emotion, ornamentation, colour and most of the pictures show the impact of religion. In some of these paintings flashes of imaginative brilliance shine them.

Dress-making and Embroidery

The Dogras have been weaving *khadi* and other kinds of clothes by hand and prepare their dresses in variety of manner. Artistically brocaded and embroidered bodices, tight fitting trousers and circular skirt which are long and loosely flowing called "Ghagra" give a Dogra lady her natural grace and modesty and, while walking, a sort of gliding air. The embroidered

attire of a Dogra bride has a haunting charm as portrayed by the painters of Basohli, Guler and Kangra.

In embroidery, even an ordinary woman has dexterity. The Dogra women would invariably embroider their dress with golden and silver threads which impart it a glamorous and shimmering sheen. The embroidery of Dogras is a painting with a needle, they have picturesque geometric pictures or floral designs embroidered on covers of tables, pillows and beds. In the Dogra Art Gallery at Jammu are two long pieces of cloth dyed in red and immaculately embroidered. This cloth called "Salu" is given along with the dowry of the daughter. It has the designs of beautiful blossoms and geometric patterns on them.

Jewellery

The Dogras prepare fine specimens of ornaments, jewellery and provide their womenfolk liberally with ornaments like *chowk*, *nam*, *magar*, *karanphul*, *Jugni balu*, *arsi* and *panjeb*, etc. Even pearls are used and diamonds and sapphires are studded in the gold ornaments of the rich. A captivating miniature painting of Guler clearly depicts a youthful lady going to keep a tryst with her lover decorated with necklaces and bright bangles, as if saying:

For love, I adorned my arms with jingling bangles

Gold necklaces studded with stones I got made

For love of thee, my beloved,

I decorated my person.

Block-printed Sheets (Masnand)

These, generally on a white background and splashed with bold motifs, are a feast for the eyes and are mostly made in Samba.

The toys for interior decorations are skilfully made by the women. These are so beautiful and sophisticated that the brides take these with their trousseau.

Blanket Making

In places like Kishtwar, Baderwah and Kalu making of blankets has been a very popular occupation as much as sheep breeding. Coarse and fine blankets of beautiful designs are very popular.

Paper making is an old art with the people of this region. Before the Persian type of fine paper came, plain paper was made at different centres of Kangra, Guler, Jammu and Basohli and was used for writing and painting. This was made from old rags which were soaked in caustic soda

and beaten into pulp and then spread into sheets. Sanskrit manuscripts written on this paper is still extant and one such manuscript is exhibited at the Dogra Art Gallery.

Manufacture of shoes, chappals, metallic utensils are the arts which flourished in this hilly area since ages and brought to light the talents of the people of his region. The place is also famous for production of delicate baskets, mats, ropes and weaving strands of different material.

Towards the end, I may quote from Van Loon's "Arts of Mankind":

"...All I know is that whether we are going upward or downward, we are also moving forward and that is the thing that counts. That and our ability to keep the boat on an even keel while courageously steering for the land of our ultimate desire—a world that shall create beauty out of the sheer joy of being alive".

Basohli: The Fountain Head of Pahari Painting

The rapt contemplation of Basohli paintings arouses hallucinatory perceptions in a man—one hears the dancing steps of the milkmaids, the transporting melodies of Krishna's flute; one is bewitched by the graceful figures of the damsels dimly discerned through their diaphanous drapery and the lovers happy in their dalliance under the greenwood trees; gentle breezes laden with fragrance of the flowers and the foliage enter into one's nostrils and one is simply inebriated with the enchanting aesthetic beauty.

A Basohli painter displays an extraordinary skill in drawing and fuses his tints and lines with unique dexterity and directness, securing an effect of delicious simplicity and purity. After a long eclipse Basohli paintings have now been universally considered as one of the most glorious productions and a landmark in the Indian art, and have also occupied a place of honour in the world museums. Art critics throughout the world have lavished enthusiastic eulogy on them.

People must approach pictures in different ways. In the words of Douglas Barett, "The value of individual statement is a personal assessment: the eye of taste may rest where it will". I would approach these paintings in the technical, philosophical or thematical and analytical ways.

In the 17th century there were two main styles of painting in northern India. One was the Mughal style, found on the Islamic and the Persian style, which was based on naturalism, and the other was based on the traditional Hindu style, which was marked by simplicity, passionate colour and symbolism. These two styles often influenced and even mingled with each other. The painters of the hill-kingdoms bordering the western Himalayas were proud Hindus and they stuck to their traditional Indian style for long.

The Basohli painters resisted the onslaught of the Persian culture and art to a greater extent than the painters of other hill-states, particularly those of Kangra and Guler. P.N. Sinha opines that Basohli painters were uninfluenced by the Mughal school. They have distinctive features and an individuality of their own.

The painting art was cradled in Basohli long back in the misty past but was rocked by the loving hands of Raja Kirpal Pal, Raja Medini Pal and Raja Amrit Pal, who ruled over the tiny State during the 17th and early 18th centuries. According to Randhawa, "It is a style of painting characterised by vigorous use of primary colours and a peculiar facial formula prevailed in the 17th and early 18th centuries in the foothills of the western Himalayas in the Jammu and the Punjab States. The earliest painting in this style originated in Basohli from where the style spread to the hill states of Mankot, Nurpur, Kulu, Mandi Surket, Bilaspur, Nala garh, Chamba, Guler and Kangra. Thus, Basohli was the spring from where the aesthetic waters flowed and irrigated the fertile minds of other hill states.

The Technique of Basohli Paintings

The miniature paintings were done mostly in the same manner at the various centres of India. These were painted in water colours, a gouche on a paper, already coated with special plaster-like substance. Robert Reiff explains the process of the Indian miniaturist and says, "The miniaturist, first put his drawing directly on the paper, usually with red paint. He made correction with lamp black paint and then once he was satisfied with the drawing, he coated the whole with a thin wash of the plaster-like substance. The under-drawing was visible but it was reinforced with opaque water-base paints, some composed of ground-up minerals and semi-precious stones like lapis lazuli, others of a vegetable origin, such as indigo, etc. These were mixed with a water soluble gum". The same process with indigenous modifications seems to have been adopted by the Basohli painter.

The Basohli painters were technicians par excellence. Their colours have such a great vitality of preservation that even after two or three centuries they look as fresh and brilliant as when painted, while the famous paintings of the great masters like Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Raphael and others have faded and even cracked, in spite of all the fostering care bestowed upon them for their preservation.

The Philosophy and the Themes

In north India, the Vaishnava movement began in the 11th century but it was in the 16th century that Krishna and Rama cults became popular.

The poet Vallabhacharya, born in 1478, preached that "God was to be sought not in the barren asceticism, nakedness, hunger and solitude but in the enjoyed life. He popularised the worship of Krishna. Love was developed as a religious theme and the new religion was a delightful amalgam of sensualism and mysticism. Grierson writes, "The first threw a mystic glamour over these amours of God. The young Krishna represented to him the Supreme Deity, the creator for whom all creation was but a sportive emancipation and full of love." George Lawrence also says, "Krishna is above all the divine lover and his love for the milk-maid Radha symbolises the mystic union of the soul with the divine...Radha, though mortal, is yet the Soul of his soul and in some sense his very divinity seems to be incomplete without her".

Much of the Hindu religious philosophy is weighed down by liferenouncing metaphysical speculation and the very reality of the phenomenal world is thought to be doubtful. So to the common man, particularly to the Hindu rulers, who delighted in music, dancing, bathing and love making, this cult of Krishna was most attractive as Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu, symbolises much that is gay and happy and creative in Hindu religion.

So this movement of Bhakti and love inspired the painters of Basohli. To them love was the essence of creation and so formed the main theme of their paintings. The main paintings of Basohli are portraits, illustrations of the Bhagwat Purana, Gita Govinda, Ramayana, Rasmanjar Ragmala, and Baramasa, etc. But the Basohli painters put various religious themes in the crucible of their own imagination and gave them a pictorial situation which goes beyond the storyteller.

The Analysis of the Paintings

According to each painter's aim in different proportions, a picture is composed of various elements. These are line, space, mass, lights and colour.

In general Basohli miniatures are mostly based on drawing, although its use of colours often showed independent attempts at innovation. The earliest paintings depict harshness in the line but later on they became smoother and more flowing. The Basohli painter sought constructed composition and his line was strong and well balanced but it lacked the charm of rhythmic line as found in the Kangra painter.

The enchantment of Basohli essentially lies in its colour appeal. The vibrant, brilliant and glowing colours with the Basohli artists, used so liberally, delighted the senses and also penetrated the mind. Browsing on

colour in its primal rawness, the Basohli painter found the source of rhythm in them and the strange charm of its colour eludes the power of words.

There is no doubt that colours are used symbolically. In Hindu tradition yellow represents the warmth and joy of spring as also sunshine. Therefore, the vast spaces bathed in sunshine are yellow coloured. The red colour symbolises love and passion and so it aptly suits the themes based on rapturous love. The rainbow colours of yellow, red, blue and green have a mystical charm in Basohli paintings. Gold and silver are used for ornaments and paintings on pillars, windows and some dresses.

All great pictorial artists have been close observers of the life of their time, and have drawn inspiration directly from their surroundings. To a Basohli painter, Radha or a heroine was a woman or a princess of his race and time. Even to a casual spectator it is quite apparent that he has seen her with his own eyes. She is a Basohli belle relaxing amidst the surrounding which the painter judged aesthetically appropriate.

These men and women or Radha and Krishna have a romantic quality that transcends religious anecdotes and sentimentality. But there is nothing of the lewd or the frivolous passion in them. They are before us in a state of innocence. The women appear beings in a paradise. Something of the paradise remains about her when she puts on the dress of a young Basohli belle. At the same time she very much belongs to the period in which they were painted. Nevertheless, these maidens passed through the minds of the Basohli painters and emerged ennobled to haunt the dream-like vision of that warm, mysterious and peaceful land which lies at the bottom of the western Himalayas. Basohli painters drew men and women with spirit, tenaciousness and lucidity and expressed with emotion.

Basohli painters give a sensation of music and poetry. They did not deliberately strive to transport these feelings from the words to the colour. It would have been a weakness. Actually, these qualities flow from their visual observation and expression. They, by instinct and extraordinary natural gifts, perceived the primal beauty and movement of life. They caught hold of the life-force and absorbed themselves in the sublime task of creation. Colour to the Basohli painters is not superficial appearance but a thing of depth and an expression of internal force.

Nevertheless, the work accomplished by these painters will forever remain an oasis of exultant joy and peace for men at large and be a fountain-head of inspiration and mental succour to the Indian artists.

Basohli Paintings: The Unique Fascination of Colours

"To understand any great art one has to view it as an organism with its soul, forms of expression and conventions. Art is the symbol of the colour to which it belongs, acquiring its style of expression in relation to it. Every culture thus has its own style of art and one must know the culture to understand its phases of development". Thus says Dr. M.S. Randhawa, the well-known art critic. This is also true of Basohli art. Colour to art, especially to painting, is blood to the body and blood of the people of Basohli is passionate and bold, and colours used in their paintings are, in the same way, passionate and bold. They fascinate the eyes and captivate the soul. The Basohli paintings are a riot of colours which have a magical effect on the viewer.

Basohli paintings did not sprout suddenly nor were these brought by the outside skilled painters to plant in the fertile soil of Basohli but the art was born out of the womb of the folk art of Basohli itself. On every social and religious occasion the people of Basohli painted their walls and enclosures with beautiful figures. These figures have a wonderful simplicity, gorgeous and passionate colours. The reason which kept the Basohli art alive was the inseparable relationship that was established between the arts and festivals, social works, *pujas* and *parbs*, etc. The people of Basohli are virile, vigorous, passionate, frank and bold people, who earlier lacked delicacy, refinement and sophistication and, therefore, reflect their character by using the passionate, sensuous and bold colours as against light, soft and subtle ones.

The Vaishnavi movement with its emphasis on love, particularly love of Krishna and Radha, gave an intense churning to their mental culture and in their paintings they used beautiful colours to symbolise love and passion. They lived in the lap of Nature and imitated the colours of

Nature—the rainbow colours: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red in various shades. We must remember that the painter of Basohli was also the manufacturer of colours which he made by skilfull combination of the primary colours.

The fascination of Basohli paintings lies in their colour appeal, rather than in the dexterity of the line. Basohli painters used red and yellow colours in abundance, and these impress and move us deeply.

The borders of the Basohli paintings are deep and hot red, and yellow is rarely used. But the colours are not used impulsively for decoration alone. They have a symbolic significance. Yellow is the colour of spring and mango blossoms. It symbolizes the warmth of the Indian spring and the passion of the lovers. Vast spaces bathed in sunshine are coloured yellow. Lord Krishna and the Rain God are coloured blue, while red is the colour of the God of love. The red colour is quite fit for passionate themes of the Basohli paintings.

Basohli paintings depict the magic of colour, and produce a turbulence and turmoil of the emotions and feelings in the minds of the people. The magic of colours transports the viewers in a land of dreams full of beauty and inspiration. The art of the artist of Basohli has symbolic emotion and passion which are conveyed through the media of colours and their exquisite kaleidoscopic combinations. The contrast of primary colours, particularly blue and yellow, red and blue, which are used in Basohli paintings, thrill us with joy. The colours shine like enamel and are used with dexterity to establish the plains. The plains of yellow, red, blue, grey, green and brown seen in the paintings of the *Gita Govinda* series are truly remarkable.

Mineral colours like gold and silver are used profusely to paint embroidery or ornaments; silver in particular is used for painting dresses, windows and pillars of the pavilions. Pearls and necklaces are sometimes shown by raised white paint. Decorative treatment of the landscape and the high horizon are the important characteristics of Basohli paintings. Dr. Randhawa, introducing Basohli paintings, has quoted Ajit Ghosh in this connection. He observes: "In these paintings the landscape is treated as decoration. The drawing of the trees is distinctive. The forms of the foliage and the play of light through them and their colours produce a subtle decorative effect. The bright sunlight is shown by a sweeping wash of deep yellow which fills the entire background leaving only a fringe of white-frilled cloud shapes in the deep blue strip of the evening horizon which appears above. The high horizon is a convention of the painter and

intended to give an idea of space and depth". Clouds, rain and lightnings are often depicted in Basohli paintings which also enhance their beauty. Clouds are shown as thin wisps and curls on the horizon in grey and light black colours. Heavy clouds are shown in layers topped by snake-like flashes of lightning painted in gold. This has particularly been done in Rasmanjari paintings. Pearl-like strands represent rain and straight white lines formed with clouds stand by heavy rain. Water is light blue colour in lakes and rivers are decorated with the painting of circular lotus leaves with pink buds painted here and there among them. In some are shown beautiful flamingoes or egrets in white colours.

In the architecture, turrets, panelled doors, latticed windows, stone trallis work and wooden pillars figure in Basohli paintings and are generally grey and white coloured. The pavilions, decorated richly in yellow, red, green and blue colours are furnished with carpets and plinths ending in grotesque heads, are painted in variety of colours with precision and smallness as if needle has been used as a brush while painting. Wine, flasks, tumblers, rose-water sprinklers, bouquet of flowers in vases are seen in alcoves in bedrooms and pavilions where men are making love to their sweethearts. The pairs of pigeons and parrots are painted to depict the zeal of love and passion. These are found mostly in Nayaka Nayiki themes. All these items are painted in passionate colours and are formed by the various combinations of the primary colours.

The painting of trees in the pictures has become a necessary convention in the Basohli paintings. Most of these trees are found in Jammu, such as pomegranate, flame of the forest, Baheras, and mangoes. "Rhododendron arboreum which bear branches of red flowers with clusters of lanceolate leaves and grows at an altitude of about 6,000 ft. in the western Himalayas", says Randhawa, "seem to be particular favourite of Basohli painters and is shown in number of paintings". Willows, horsechestnuts and cypresses are also there. All these trees are based on actual models and found here are also trees painted from imagination and all have colours green and dark-brown as found in nature, but they are painted with a meticulous regularity and symmetry, as if not a leaf stirs. The imaginary trees have most fascinating foliage and blossoms which produce a wonderful decorative effect with their fascinating colours. This is to be found in Ramayana series of paintings.

Symbolism is the keynote of Basohli paintings and trees are also used as symbols. The lovelorn ladies are depicted under the weeping willows. Randhawa says: "Ripe mangoes are a symbol of the physical charm of women and in Dogra folk songs we find mention of the love-sick heroines

writing to their soldier-husbands to return home when the mangoes ripen in the delightful month of July. Trees with pointed spire-like crowns surrounding the leaf-strewn trysts of lovers in *Gita Govinda* paintings, are symbolic of desire and are particularly appropriate to the great Sanskrit love poem where the forest itself is a symbol of the yearning of lovers. The ripe mangoes are yellow and forests dark-green in colour.

Cattle in the Basohli paintings are painted from the types as are found in Jammu: grey, white and black and sometimes red.

The figures in Basohli paintings wear many ornaments. The crowns of gods and ear-rings are painted in gold and sometimes decorated with beetle wings which enhance their decorative effect.

The dresses of men and women of Basohli paintings are characteristically an enchantment of colours. The costumes of women in Rasmanjari paintings are usually tight-fitting pyjamas (suthan), often striped and often yellow and red and sometimes blue and a flowing garment of silk or muslin (pesval) often crimson and light blue or green, fastening in front. Sometimes women are shown wearing a flowing skirt (ghagra) of red-green or yellow colours. The head is usually covered with a thin and transparent dupatta of pink and crimson colours. In Gita Govinda paintings the dress of women is ghagra, choli and dupatta, covering the head and tucked in front of the ghagra.

Basohli painters used light colours for the face, generally white colours to depict the fairness of complexion. The almond-coloured Gangi (Gangi badam rangi) is a favourite heroine in Dogra folk songs and it is the almond-coloured and almond-eyed Dogra women of Jammu who have provided the model for Basohli painters. It surely requires dexterity in colouring the shapely figures of women with their eyes blazing with passion. What fascinating colours beautify the glamorous ladies of Basohli paintings adorned with ornaments with their passion—filled eyes, hurrying to the tryst during rain and storm and the eternal symbols of the love of a woman for man!

The colours of Basohli paintings show that it is frankly a sensuous art of a love-obsessed society which was burdened with the puritanic ethos. This art with rainbow colours offers feast not only for the eyes (sight) only but also indirectly and imaginatively for all the five senses, — ear (sound), nose (smell), tongue (taste) and skin (touch) of man and woman.

But then Basohli colourful paintings did not remain static and stagnant. In it flowed the Mughal and Persian influences with their light, delicate and

sophisticated blues and greens and it also flowed out into the dry pools of Guler, Chamba, Kangra and Jammu. The region kissing the feet of the Himalayas depicted a riot of colours in the paintings, delighting the souls through the eyes.

We must bear in mind that the Indian paintings were born in the Ajanta caves and then grew in Jain style. Later this was cradled by the Sultanate of Deccan. It received Persian influence and culminated into Mughal style which, nevertheless, was Indian in spirit.

But it was Coomarswamy who felt that the paintings of northern India called Pahari paintings were of a different genre. The Basohli art in this genre was the fountainhead, and about the same colours of these paintings Mulak Raj Anand says: "Red hot vermilion, browns, blues, yellows and greens burst from these pictures. The profiles of the figures are fierce, with sharp noses and big fish eyes. The heavy jewellery in small blobs of white is superimposed in relief. The squares and cubes of architecture are emphasised. The treatment of Nature is simplified, but plains are common, intensifying the outlook of the figures. The figures are contained in rectangular red and black borders, after the style of the Mughal miniatures. The influence of Jehangir's painters is evident in certain other overall effects."

Jammu Kalam and Wall Paintings of the Jammu Region

The paintings, whether miniature or mural, in the Jammu region are neither exotic nor do they grow suddenly but they are a product of a long period of evolution. They are the creation of a renaissance that marked the 18th and 19th centuries in the Himalayan hill states. From the evidence available, the miniature and wall paintings existed cheek by jowl with each other and went hand in hand. They came into existence in these hill regions almost simultaneously. The tradition of wall paintings was roughly contemporary but most of the Jammu wall paintings were done after 1820.

The exact origins of painting in Jammu are still obscure but an influx of artists from Basohli, the fountainhead of Pahari painting, may perhaps be presumed. In total contrast to the hot and burning colours of Basohli, the main Jammu kalam however, was marked by chilly pallor. Forms were also given placid poise and cool precise lines endowed them with grave tranquility. The pale colours, simplifying geometry and flowing rhythmical lines, are the characteristic of Jammu kalam. Later on Jammu kalam evinced the flexible animation of the Mughal paintings. But the "mental climate" of the Jammu region was such that the artists evolved a unique manner of painting with a new clarity is present in it. Instead of deep perspective there is now an airy geometry and while the scene itself may reflect the Mughal interest in sensuality, there is an over-all impression of serenity and composure. The Jammu artist has deft and fluent naturalism and this characterises the Jammu kalam.

There are four world famous Jammu paintings which illustrate this Jammu kalam in the miniatures. One is that of Radha and Krishna on the Serpent of Eternity done in C. 1760. In this picture Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu, is shown seated with Radha on the white snake which is believed in Hindu thought to support the universe. In the usual illustration of the theme, Vishnu with four arms, is shown seated with his consort

Lakshami, indicating the intense regard with which Krishna, the divine lover, was viewed in northern India.

The drooping head of the great snake, its simple contours, the sparsely filled lake and the curling ends of the long and sweeping clouds exemplify the stark simplification. The picture, entirely free of modelling, employs flat planes and perhaps for this reason makes easier the achievement of rhythmical harmony.

Another painting is that of Brij Raj Dev of Jammu with a courtier done in C.1770. The third painting is of "The Mughal Emperor Mohammad Shah attended by ladies" supposed to be painted by Nainsukh in C.1745. Following the sack of Delhi in 1739 by the Persian Nadir Shah, Mughal artists were dispersed over India. Some sought employment in the Punjab hills, certain Nainsukh settled for a time at the court of Jasorata. By 1748, however, he was established as the retained artist of Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu.

Fourth painting is of Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu painted by Nainsukh in C.1755. Raja Balwant Singh is writing his accounts while a drowsy page nods sleepily behind him. The artist has drawn his patron with casual informality and the same fluent naturalism characterises all his work. There is, however, a sense of vivid co-ordination and despite an undertone of humour it is this which may explain the picture's air of masterly exaltation later to characterize the styles of Guler, Garwal and Kangra.

The wall paintings of the Jammu region belong to the cultural renaissance period of about sixty years, stretching between 1832-90. Such paintings are mainly found in palaces and temples in Jammu, Poonch and Ramnagar. In Jammu, the wall paintings are found in the villages of Bhurj, Sui Simbli, Puramandal, Mule Chak, Miran Sahib and in the city of Jammu in the Rughnath temple, Purani Mandi temple, Ramji ka Mandir, Pir Kho, Dewan Mandir and in the old palaces of the Dogra dynasty. In Poonch, the paintings are found in the old fort built by Dhian Singh and in Udhampur district in Ramnagar palace and in Mansar.

The paintings of the Jammu region show a highly evolved technique and the understanding of the principles of decorating walls. These techniques originated in the rock paintings of early man in M.P., while the classical expression of the style is found in Ajanta, Ellora and Bagh. This tradition was adopted for painting on palaces and temple walls and followed in the Jammu region though the extant remains only date back to the early medieval period.

In the Jammu region the fresco and the tempera technique has been adopted and the most commonly used plaster consisted of brick powder, marble dust and lime. However, in Ramnagar palace, vegetable fibre and gypsum are also used.

The most remarkable feature of the drawing in this area is that it is linear and lyrical. Even now one can notice the natural power and rhythm of the composition. The lyricism is epitomised by the willowy nayikas, languishing for their lovers or standing arrogant with fulfilment. The drawings of the birds and trees also have the same lyrical quality. The Jammu murals have great strength and vitality where a powerful theme demands it.

The quality of drawings at various places depends on their date. In the earlier wall paintings the line is very fine and delicate. In earliest paintings rounded lines are noted. These paintings were characterised by smoothly drawn edges. The lines slowly became thicker and angular in the later period. The artists tried to confine panels with squares, both vertical and horizontal.

In some temples modelling and shading is evident. The colour scheme was to some extent determined by the set principles. It was generally agreed that the painting should be done on white background and it was considered to symbolise innocence and also the dead. In addition, the painters thought that it could be employed to coalesce a number of strong colours; that it was an essential ingredient for colour harmony.

Colour is also employed to give depth to composition. The paintings in the Ramnagar palace provide the epitome of this concept. In one painting the courtyard and lawns of the palace are deep green, the figures of women strolling in the compound are generally painted in combinations of orange, gold and maroon. The palatial buildings forming the background are stark white. The panel clearly shows depth in three planes. Living amidst beautiful surroundings, the artists have a true appreciation of natural colouring, which is displayed in these colour combinations. Colours like maroon, naswari, olive green, yellow and black have been used in almost all the centres of painting most effectively.

The colours are evenly spread and do not form concentrated or high patches. The quality of colours varies from place to place and bear their individual stamp. The strength of the colours and their innate harmony and coherence also vary from place to place.

The treatment of space is an important indicator of the quality of these wall paintings. In so far as isometric compositions are concerned, they

themselves give the illusion of space. Another method used is the division of composition by gently undulating rounded hills. Yet another factor is the skilled grouping of figures; geometrical designs and angles have been effectively employed at several places to create an extended feeling of space.

The compositions have an optical balance, in that almost all converge towards a central figure. The painters knew the principles of perspective. In many pictures the figures are larger in the foreground than those in the background, following the rules of "photographic perspective". Nevertheless, the central perspective is observed by the arrangement of hills, and trees in a triangular pattern with the ground projecting outward. It is also achieved by the use of architectural details. In many paintings the source of light is provided within the picture. Pictorial light has first of all been created by the effective use of colour.

The most difficult aspect in the paintings is to convey the sensory perceptions. Such perceptions are seen in the paintings by the associations evoked by the moving figures like birds. The Jammu artist knew how to utilise the stroboscopic effect. Stroboscopic motion is perceived when objects, which are essentially alike in appearance, differ in some perceptual features, for example, in location, size, or shape. On these wall paintings human figures are often shown in different shapes and sizes in different sections of a single composition, thus giving an impression of time passing as well as of time arrested.

In Jammu, wall paintings are found in the folk elements, not only in the choice of themes and symbols adopted but also in the use of earth colours. But all the same, the Jammu wall paintings show it to be a sophisticated art. These paintings are fundamentally religious in character and illustrate the most popular tales from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Bhagavata Purana, Siva Purana, etc.

Pahari Paintings and the Dogra Rulers of the Jammu Province

Pahari paintings have come from the depth and dexterous hands of the artists who inhabited the small states situated at the foothills of the western Himalayas. These states were governed by the cultured Dogra rulers.

On the basis of the geographical contiguity these states may be divided into the following three groups:

- 1. Basohli, Jammu, Jasrota, Poonch, Mankot, Kishtwar and Bhaderwah.
- 2. Chamba, Guler, Kangra, Kalu and Nurpur.
- 3. Bilaspur and Tehri Garhwal.

Some critics thought that these lands were artistically dry and parched and that the artists from Gujarat and Delhi etc. had come and baked the fresh bread with which they fed the sensuous Dogra rulers of these small states. But the early Pahari paintings bear no imprint of origin, adaptation and derivations from alien sources.

The Pahari art of painting was born and cradled long back in the misty past in Basohli and from there it spread to the other hill states. The Pahari paintings of Basohli sprang from folk art. "A cursory glance at the Basohli paintings assures us of the folk basis of this style long before the Mughal influence", says Mulak Raj Anand. Coomarswamy, too, believes that Basohli paintings had strong folk element. This Pahari art was nursed and developed by the loving hands of the noble Dogra Rajas like Kirpal Pal and Amrit Pal of Basohli, Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu and Raja Goverdhan Singh of Guler and Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra. The paintings in all these hill states belong to the same genre and the unity that is found in them is of a psychological order.

To a Dogra prince who was fond of chivalry, love and independence were ideals, and meditative inaction, therefore, was revolting to him. The society, hitherto, had been dominated by a narrow dogma, petrified code of morality in conduct and with a complete shallowness of social values. Then came the revival of Vaishnavism, called the Bhakti movement with its emphasis on love. There the Dogra princes of Jammu province as well as of other hill states found their anchor and they not only encouraged the arts particularly but also gave them a thematic direction and, being proud Dogras, did not in the beginning allow the Persian or Mughal styles to influence their traditional style and subjects. Thus the Pahari painter transcendes into the spiritual and the divine. The creative energy of a Pahari painter of every centre, in varying degrees, revolves round the religious pivot and this gives the Pahari paintings their universality.

KRISHNA LEGENDS

The artist turned to the Krishna legends and the scriptures. He created a Krishna land in his mind and then transferred it on canvas. There is tenderness and depth of feeling and reverence in the paintings. "The Pahari painter developed a poetic style of graceful rhythm and created a magic world. Apart from the divine allegory of the love of Gopis, particularly Radha and Krishna, the dalliance and game of love was so splendidly depicted by the artists in practically the same way that the prince found the paintings a sort of mirror in which he saw a reflection of himself. The painter thus provided the Dogra Rajas of the Jammu province with a feast they craved for."

Nevertheless, it is futile to say that the Dogra rulers of the Jammu province in particular patronised this art simply to cover up their own amours. They were highly pious people. They built temples and recited the Gita and sang devotional songs. Love is a principle on which the world is created. It is a divine gift in man. A man cannot realize the self until he has bathed in the glory of love. There have been different stages in the development of the Pahari art. It has evolved in different phases and it is perforce or by accident that names of different centres are adhered to them. But in each phase the Dogra rulers have played a great role.

It was during the regime of Kirpal Pal who ruled over Basohli in 1678-1693 painting left the cottages for the palaces and courts. Raja Kirpal Pal was the first ruler who patronised artists in a proper and regular manner. Devi Dass painted *Rasmanjari* during 1694-1695 A.D. It is a style that is vigorous and somewhat archaic but has got a promise of sophistication. Its drawings and treatment of colour are marvellous. Khandelval is of the opinion that intensity in the Basohli school was also due to the mental make-up of the Rajas—ardent, colourful, impetuous and rugged like the

hills in which they lived. Basohli *kalam* became the greatest school of Indian painting in Kirpal Pal's time. Then Raja Amrit Pal also patronised art. In fact, he built a huge palace and got murals painted in it. Later on Medini Pal (1725-36) also helped the artists and encouraged them.

DISPERSAL

The gradual dispersal of Basohli artists began in about 1700 A.D. Some went to Bandharalla and some to Chamb and Guler. The unbroken evolution in the Pahari pictorial art went on and the inevitable changes could be perceived in the time of Goverdhan Singh, who ruled over Guler from 1730 to 1773. In Guler's art there were inevitable changes, as the Pahari painters began to gather the decorative naturalism of Mughal art and the passion of the Basohli art together, to enhance the beauty of the paintings. The Dogra Raja encouraged the painting of pictures on religious themes with an emphasis on pose and gesture. The line is suave and refined and the paintings are seen in marked naturalism.

That Jammu too had reached this state in the development of Pahari painting is evident from the two portraits of Raja Balwant Singh. Other miniatures of Jammu reveal that the artists believed that the experiencing of mundane love with complete honesty and integrity and full intensity would make a man transcend into the realm of divine love and realize God.

The different styles of Pahari painting are, in fact, the different stages of the evolution or development of the Pahari painting whose fountainhead has been Basohli. There are two beautiful portraits from the Jammu centres found in the Central Museum, Lahore and N.C. Mehta's collections. These portraits are of Raja Balwant Singh, the younger brother of Raja Ranjit Dev, the ruler of Jammu. These have been painted by Nainsukh and Vagin Sha respectively and both the paintings are dated 1748. Nainsukh, it has been found out was in regular employment of Raja Balwant Singh. There seems to have been a local school of Jammu patronised by Raja Ranjeet Dev and his brothers, for there are contemporary paintings of Ghansar Dev and Surat Singh which show vigorous style and crude colours.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh, a great patron of art, encouraged people to learn art. He gave them various facilities and scholarships. Hari Chand was an excellent artist employed by him. The Maharaja married a princess of Guler whereby Guler School was introduced in Jammu. The princesses from Katoch, Chamba, Lambagram, etc. were also married to the later Dogra Rajas of Jammu, and in this way the artists came to Jammu, for example, Narotam, an artist from Guler, was employed by Raja Ram Singh. In fact, Nan Lal, the artist from Kangra alongwith his artist sons,

Channoo and Ruldoo, were the first artists who migrated to Jammu. Jagat Ram, another painter, was given assignment by Maharaja Pratap Singh who painted hundreds of religious paintings.

FINAL PHASE

The final phase of Pahari paintings was what is now known as the Kangra style. This stage which began from 1770 and ended with 1823, and also marked the death of Sansar Chand, the ruler of Kangra who patronised the artists in Kangra style, is the consummation of the Pahari art which was practised in dozens of centres. Beginning from the exercise of drawing and painting in the primitive fashion by native artists of Basohli, the Pahari painting reached, with the patronage of the Dogra rulers, its luminous and enthralling height. The paintings at this stage are true ones as these are the voices of the soul expressed in line and colour. The artist depicts what he intensely feels and experiences. It is indeed the passion that burns through the paintings and gives them the just glow and radiance, mellowing the crudities and coarse outlines of the past. W.G. Archer says, "For all this, the adhesion of Raja Sansar Chand to the cult of Krishna provides the main motivating force. Indeed without this cult and ruler's devotion to it the concentration of these artists on the feminine form and their investment of it with delicate poetry would be unintelligible."

The poets too, encouraged by the Dogra rulers, recalled the old world of Krishna in its prime and set this Krishna legend in a realm where there was neither winter nor hot summer, where gardens and landscapes bloomed with beauty and Dwarika and Vrindavan glittered through the silver mist. Both the subjects and the rulers found a nostalgia for the past and would like to be transported themselves to the days of Mahabharata. The painter had a vivid vision of this and in cool and tranquil colours he copied this vision on paper.

The offshoots of the Kangra style had many ramifications and it has spread far and wide. In Chamba a school had grown up under Guler influence in 1785. This style was also adopted in Tehri Garhwal. Archer says, "The success with which the later Kangra style annexed or subjugated painting in the Punjab hills is, in fact, the most convincing proof of its artistic vitality.

The feudal system may have its defects but there is no gainsaying the fact that arts in India as also in Europe owe their development to the patronage of the aristocracy. The Pahari art also thrived because of the love of art of the Dogra rulers and their encouragement of the artists.

Sobha Singh: The Legendary Artist and his Paintings in the Amar Mahal Museum

A young boy of ten pointed to his father that the printed picture of Guru Nanak Dev Ji hanging on the wall of the house was wrong. His father frowned and asked sternly, "Why?" "No man wears the clothes of gold and Guru Nanak Dev is shown as wearing the clothes of gold. He was a simple and a poor man," replied the boy calmly. The boy was no other than Sobha Singh, who later had a vision of Guru Nanak and determined that he would paint the Sikh Gurus. The story was told to me by Bibi Gurucharan Ji, the petite daughter of Sardar Sobha Singh who, in her turn, must have heard from her father. As Dr. Karan Singh once said, "For Sobha Singh art was not merely a profession but a sadhana, a spiritual discipline."

The sad demise of Sobha Singh on August 22, 1986 was felt as a national loss of great immensity. Sardar Ji, endearingly called by his admirers as Dar Ji, was one of the greatest figures among the world artists.

THE MAN

In the year 1982, Sardar Sobha Singh urged me to spend some time with him at Andretta, a sleepy village in Kangra valley, where he lived, and off I went there. Picture yourself a small hamlet of Andretta, kissing the feet of the holy Shivalik hill; there to sit beside the artist in his delightful garden in Elysian quiet for a peaceful chat and philosophising and adventuring with him in the realm of aesthetics and discussing the worth and meaning of art and life, was a blessed moment in one's life.

He had a deep and wide knowledge and then his silken grey hair, penetrating eyes and long, flowing beard recalled to my mind the sages of ancient India. Born on November 29, 1901, at the historic town of Sri Hargobindpur, Sobha Singh had a penchant for drawing and painting

when only a lad. So he took to art rather than go for an academic career, quite against the will of his father. He got himself admitted in the Industrial School in Amritsar and later on in 1919 he joined the army as a draughtsman and went to the Gulf countries. It was while journeying through some countries of the Middle East, particularly Iraq, that he saw the female form in its exuberant beauty and his brush stole that sparkling grace and magnificently transplanted into the creatures of his imagination.

HIS WORK

It was in 1923 that he returned to India. He gave up his government job and set up a studio in Amritsar and later in New Delhi. Then he went and lived far from the madding crowd in Andretta, making it a permanent home.

Sardar Sobha Singh, no doubt, belonged to the old guard but his works symphonise in colour, and he excels in matter of detail and impeccable draftsmanship.

He has specialised in painting Sikh Gurus and Hindu gods and goddesses too. "What makes you to paint predominantly these beings?" I questioned him. "The life's cup has been dealt to me in a bitter measure; my mother died when I was a small boy. I also broke my leg and became handicapped for life. Once a river of anxiety and fear was rising and rolling within my bosom, when suddenly I thought of Guru Nanak Dev; I closed my eyes and prayed for a moment and soon I magically got rid of the gloomy vapours that threatened to dark my mind. Therefore, I firmly determined to express my devotion to the Guru through the painting," he replied.

He has lavished beauty of body and soul on his pictures. He has gone to Iran, England, Switzerland and other countries and moved from place to place, seen the variegated flowers and carried the beauty of the great souls. He also saw the beauty of the beau monde as well and arrested it on his canvas. His "shepherdess" is lovable and his "Guru Nanak" is venerable.

HIS PAINTINGS IN THE AMAR MAHAL MUSEUM

He has talent for painting sparkling women, a gift so rare. Here a misgiving may creep in one's mind; these paintings of high romance, according to human psychology, cannot be done unless the painter himself at some stage of life has not been in a high tide of infatuation. But this is not the case with him, for he has been a disciplined man who valued morality of character. He told me that the painter like the author never paints his own love but only the loves of others. Sardar Sobha Singh can

paint glorious Gurus and noble souls for he mixes devotion with colours. Besides, he is a prince of realism. While at work he felt that he was in the company of those divine beings.

The Amar Mahal Museum contains a captivating gallery of his paintings. Of all his works, "Sohni Mahival" is considered by far the best of his paintings. The artist has poured into its making all his heart and spirit.

The rose-like beauty of Sohni who stands by the side of Mahival with a pitcher in her left hand appears inebriating with the wine of love. The background too is mystical. On the one hand, there is the overcast sky and a leafless tree standing against the glare of the setting sun while, on the other hand, there are violent waters of the river Jhelum. In the hands of the lesser talented artist it would have created a macabre atmosphere but the dexterity of Sobha Singh makes the whole scene awesome and casts a shadow of the coming tragedy.

The majority of his pictures, mostly of the Sikh Gurus, are done under the influence of the Western classical school and he did agree with me when I pointed out the fact to him. In these portraits the use of blue, white, yellow and pink colours for chiaroscuro effects has been quite happy. Previously when he transfigured on canvas the love-lore of the people's heart they bestowed on him their affection but with the painting of Guru Nanak, now exhibited in the Amar Mahal Museum, they gave him their unstinted reverence. With the knowledge of austere thematic content and tonal values he has made this picture a significant one. There is no doubt that he has infused sentimental religious idea in the paintings of the Gurus but it is worthy to remember that earlier in Europe sentimental and literary ideas based on Biblical themes produced many great works of art. Seeing this painting of Guru Nanak, the impact one gets is that it is profusely aesthetic and has the permeability of spiritual splendour. He has imbued the painting with finer divine feelings and this has helped in strong communication between the creator and the observer, who can easily appreciate Sobha Singh's sense of beauty and proportion.

There is also one superb painting of Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge. The blue and white colour used gives it an aura of purity and celestial beauty. The eyes of the goddess, looking on the sitar, inspires awe and devotion. The sparkling eyes and chubbiness impart loveliness and innocence to the cupid.

In an age when the camera portraits are quite in vogue, the difficulties that confront the painter seem insuperable but the portrait of late Maharani Tara Devi's picture painted by Sobha Singh belies this fact, for it has

tremendous visual impact and any photograph would pale into insignificance before it. Not only is it realistically painted but what gives it significance and charm is that her face is an index of her mind. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the great lady has a Madonna-like glory and the artist, having worked in a constrained manner and obviously with high seriousness, makes it look realistic and well-finished. He has used eye-catching colours, not intentionally but naturally, as the royalty is always attired in magnificence. We can feel the sheen of her Dogra costume made out of the shimmering brocade. She has an air of elegant grace and delicate aristocratic features. Generally Sobha Singh sees a melancholy poetry in the female figures and in this painting he has portrayed on the canvas her deepest thoughts. The soft and subdued gloom reflects those tragic times when the Pakistani raiders swooped down on the Kashmir valley, resulting in the political storm in the State and the fall of sceptre from the hands of her husband.

There are other life-like portraits done by Sobha Singh which are a feast for the eyes. Sobha Singh, on the whole, owes his success to his possessing a photographic memory of the noble faces and they flash upon his canvas in idealised forms, Gurus and gods, heroes and heroines and he depicts their hearts on their faces. So his Sikh Gurus and Hindu gods are exquisitely refined and polished in style and his consummate art shows itself in the power to evoke through the witchcraft of colours the angelic faces of yore.

What was his message for the people? The following lines which he wrote to me on 29th May, 1982 from Andretta is a good advice for all:

"We all of us have problems, which sometimes make life miserable. But counting our blessings we can stand on our feet again. You too have problems for which I requested you to count your blessings which you have many."

Stone-Carving: The Art of Shivaliks

The perennial river of time flows on in this vast and ancient land of India, in general placidly, but off and on violently, which absorbs many foreign cultural and artistic elements. India has maintained the indigenous creative power, a noble spiritual force and, in spite of diversity, an underlying artistic, cultural unity and harmony in its different places and in different periods; This has remained a keynote of its civilization. Besides, according to John Irwin, art in India has never been sectarian and all religions, "Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism have drawn upon and in turn contributed to a tradition of art common to India as a whole."

The region that kisses the feet of the north-western Himalayas is inhabited by a virile race called Dogras, who are imbued with great power, physical and imaginative. A Dogra is a strange blend of elephantine strength, highly religious and even austere, yet alive to the fingertips with sensuous beauty. These people have produced paintings which occupy honoured places in the great museums of the world, and displayed extraordinary skill and dexterity in stone-carving and building arts.

BEGINNINGS OF STONE CARVING

A survey of the earth reveals springs, called *boulies*, in shady haunts. The people have generously built stone walls round them and these have been ornamented with carved votive figures. Morever, a gesticulating exuberance of divine beings are found installed near these *boulies*. The style of these figures is undisputedly folk, and folk art is everywhere as old as the hills and goes back to the misty past. Most of these figures are crude and lack formal aesthetics and have not been made according to the laws of proportion or form but some, even though not confined in the straitjacket of convention, are really charming and fine. For instance, in a *bouli* at Udhampur town I found a lovely carving of Lord Shiva, whose eyelids droop gracefully and the legs are tucked up in a lotus position and the face

shows a delicate godly charm. There are other such fine statues near the boulies which also inspire devotion.

SCULPTURES AT BASOHLI

But it is the beauty of Basohli, a town which is 132 kms. from the Jammu city, and its surroundings that first contributed the fuel to kindle the artistic powers of the Dogras into intense artistic expression. In fact Basohli has been the fountain-head of the arts of the Pahari region. All others centres in the region which thirsted for art stooped to drink from the artistic waters of its springs.

The embryon in the field of regular and aesthetically stylistic stone-carving is found in an ancient stone-cut temple of Visvesvara on the bank of the Ravi at Basohli. It contains a number of carved images of Shiva, Mahisasuramardini and Brahma etc. The impression of Shiva's figure is one of the swelling power and the face has a superhuman effectiveness. In the middle of the cave is Shiva Linga on a circular pitha, carved out of the rock. There are also a couple of other figures; one of them is a Radhakrishna and the other of a lion. These are crude and seem to be early attempts of the local artists but they also possess a beauty of their own.

There is also a smaller cave a few steps away from this cave. On the facade of the cave are the figures of Shiva and Parvati. Here the artist has stressed on the face of Shiva a kind of mysterious calm and vigour, while Parvati looks serene. A little distance ahead towards the north is the figure of Brahma with four arms on the face of a rock. In the lower right hand he carries an upraised sword and in his left hand a mace and a trident.

All these stone-carvings appear to have been made in the early centuries of the Christian era and are purely indigenous in style.

SCULPTURES AT KRIMCHI

From the springboard of Basohli, the Dogra artist makes a high jump in artistic achievement at Krimchi, a village 40 miles away from Jammu Against the backdrop of lovely mountains is a small happy valley and there on a slope is an arresting sight of four ancient and splendid temples. In construction these temples are cupola shaped with a full blossomed lotus spread out and carved on a circular stone.

The outer walls of one of the temples bears unique kaleidoscopic and abstract designs that produce on gazing a sort of vertigo and an optical illusion, so that the temple looks higher than its actual height.

Most of the sculptures here have been lost but the remaining few are sufficient to rouse one's imagination to see more than what actually exists.

There are imposing sculptures, an ornate head of Lord Shiva, Vara Avtara carrying on its shoulders the earth and trampling to death the sea-demon under his feet. These masterpieces of sculpture reflect the maturity of the artists, for these, made from the hill stones found in abundance in the nearby stream, are indeed delicate and refined. These temples are supposed to have been built by Kanishka in the second century B.C. but the sculptures obviously belong to much later date, stylistically probably from 5th to 7th century A.D.

The terracotta figures and stone sculptures unearthed at Ambaran in Akhnoor, which have a wide range of subject matter and exquisite beauty, also belong to this period.

STONE-CARVING AT BABOR

At Babor, 26 miles east of the Jammu city, is a complex of six stone temples of modern size. When I visited this place in the company of Francis Brunnel, a much-travelled art critic and a photographer par excellence, I really found myself in a hallucinatory world of artistic enchantment of the past. Both of us agreed that Dr. Vogel was right when he said these temples belonged to the eleventh century. They, to some extent, resembled the Modhera temple, though they did not have its magnificence and elaborate carving, which was built in 1026 A.D. These temples also seem to reflect the Greeko-Roman influence.

In an area of about dozen miles, the digging at certain places there reveals walls and floors of stone-slabs, on some of which are carved spread-out lotus figures and there are also found pieces of red pottery. The local people say that sometimes metallic utensils have been found and it is possible if regular evacuations are made in this area, a civilization of Mahabharata times may be found revealed. The tradition says that in ancient times Babor was the capital of a powerful state ruled by a great king, Babor Vahan, who is thought to be the son of Arjuna, one of the Pandu brothers of Mahabharata times.

Now of Babor's sculptures and stone-carving at the eastern end of the village is found Devi's temple. Here on the left jamb of the portal is a splendid figure of the river goddess, Ganga, standing on the snout of a crocodile. This carving belongs to the 11th century and is unsurpassed for its virgin beauty and grace. It has a round face radiantly animated by the wide and almond-like eyes, fine acquiline nose, small innocent mouth and wears a three-peaked tiara on its head and pearl-like necklaces loosely falling between the big protruding breasts. It has an extraordinary thin

waist and standing in an easy pose presents a singular specimen of tender grace which invites the worshipper's devotion.

Another important figure is that of Bhairva carved on a stone-slab in the courtyard of the temple. It is the terrible aspect of Lord Shiva as a destroyer and has a 'wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command', with his three eyes, protruding teeth and a big moustache twisted upwards. He has four arms and a blowing dhoti round his waist and legs. In the upper left hand he carries the skull while in the right hand he has some other destructive weapon. The multiple arms of the Bhairva are not meant to depict a "biological monstrosity" but to show the different qualities of the god's power in a single concrete image. This figure has been superbly carved in detail and in a meticulous fashion. The impression of the figure is one of swelling power as its face is firm and the contours have a superhuman and dramatic effectiveness.

IN DOGRA ART GALLERY

A further development thematically and to some extent in style can be seen in some exquisite pieces found in the Dogra Art Gallery, Jammu. Here one beholds the slabs of sandstones on which are carved scenes of daily life which give a peep into the life of the people. It is a secular art based on naturalism. The carvings have a baroque elaboration of decorative details.

On one slab are carved figures in relief of two ladies sitting in a palanquin, carried by two bearers. These figures are entirely frontal in conception. That is followed by a foot soldier with a sword and a shield in the two hands. After him is seen the head of a horse. Some portion of the horse is broken. It must have been a full horse carrying a warrior.

The palanquin bearers are hefty and stout, who wear dhoti enveloping the body from the waist to the ankles, and each has a turban on his head. Their faces are towards the front while the rest of their bodies are in profile.

The two ladies are seated at ease in the palanquin and round face, raised eyebrows large eyes and well-arranged coiffure they look charming. The lady in the right carries a girl in her lap. These pictures reveal an interesting bodice covering the bulging breasts. The arrangements of the lower garments and the decorative ornaments—all are characterised by delicacy and detail.

These ladies appear to be belonging to some noble family and are quite robust and passionate. Gandhara influence is suggested by the way they wear their saris and it is covered in a realistic manner. Each woman

has tied her sari in lose folds instead of wearing it smoothly and looking transparent, as we find in Mathura type of figures. There are many such slabs about 3 ft. by 8ft. in the Gallery which show a lady in a palanquin being carried by two men and followed by one or two warriors on horses with swords raised in their hands.

What is significant about these figures is that there is a new method of relief-narrative, the separate episodes are carved in a sequence of slabs. Secondly, the figures, except that of the ladies, are in a state of movement. The palanquin bearers have put their one leg forward. The horse's head is raised and the bridle with the bells is stretched by the warrior with his left hand to control the speed of the horse while in the right hand he carries the sword which is raised high. The warrior is dressed in a long tunic and tight trousers, as done by Rajput chieftains and warriors. The features of various figures are purely Dogra and nothing can be assigned to foreign influence. It is possible that the style of the horse, which appears to be alive and conscious and proud of the brave rider, may have been learned from the plains.

In the Dogra Gallery is also a wonderful panel which depicts face-to-face fighting of a ferocious tiger and a warrior, carrying a sword and shield. It is an exceedingly lovely carving and is significant for its tremendous movement and horrifyingly realistic figure of the tiger. The tiger stands on its hind legs and with its open mouth is trying to devour the man, who is also attempting to thrust his sword in the brute's belly and with another hand placing the shield in front of its mouth. The warrior who has the handsome features of a Rajput prince looks calm and shows no traces of fear or any emotion. He wears a long princely tunic, tight trousers and turban. The dramatic effectiveness of this extraordinary tablet is increased by a deep carving and the fierce gestures of the tiger. What mortal hand could frame the fearful and symmetrical form of this tiger and at the same time carve the gentle and balanced look of the warrior!

Another example of figures carved on a block of stone of 3 ft. by 8ft with a telling naturalism is a caprisoned elephant, driven by a Mhavit and facing the elephant is a tiger standing on hind legs. The rendering of the animals is so nicely done that we have a full characterization of these animals as powerful and well-proportioned living forms.

Then there are about four carvings of Lord Shiva: one is a headless Shiva, another a Shiva worshipped by Gouri which has been got from Sunara village, third, a fragmentary Shiva and fourth, a Trimurti Shiva got from Akhnoor town and fifth, a Shiva and Parvati on Nandi bull excavated

from Basohli. While the figures of Parvati make us feel the svelte proportions, the figures of Shiva move us by the meditating face and the dynamic power of the body. All these carvings are of quite a late period either found in Akhnoor or Basohli.

CARVINGS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the 19th century, especially during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Jammu and Kashmir and Raja Sansar Chand of Katoch of Kangra the craftsmen of the Pahari region still plied the time-honoured trade of carving.

In the 19th century, especially during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh the craftsmen carved soft stones into elegant figures. So was also the case in the Kangra valley during Sansar Chand's time. But this century also sings the swan song of this art in the region and in the present century we find it almost dead.

Here a few things are worth noting about the stone carvings in the Pahari hill states. The Bhakti movement had established itself in the states and during the Rajput rule in Jammu and Kashmir and Kangra and other hill states, the artists busied themselves in carving the incarnations of Vishnu in prodigious diversity. Secondly, painting and architecture had to be fashioned according to the desires and tastes of the patrons but in stone carving the sculptor could work according to his own aesthetic principles and hence we find sculptures of more variety and beauty. No doubt, the artist had to earn his bread by the craft and so cater to the demand of the public but stone carving being less pliable he could not make it so large in numbers of mass consumption and, therefore, it did not become stereotyped. Islam had its influence on the painting and architecture of India but in sculpture there was absolutely no Islamic influence on the Dogra art which was learned and practised in the rest of India, as an offering to the divinity but, unlike the rest of India, it was always free from eroticism.

I have pointed to the few landmarks of Dogras' journey in the ethereal realms of sculptural art, for it is not possible to write of the profuse carvings and decorative motifs in large number of other unique and ancient shrines and temples of the Dogra-Pahari region, especially in Guler, Kangra and Chamba, etc. But the people of these places have age-old cultural ties with the Jammu region which could be traced as far back as Mahabharata times. Therefore, the same style and stages of the development of stone-carving are found in these places as well, for example, in shape and style the Baijnath temple and some other temples and the images housed in them resemble those of Krimchi.

Architectural Legacy of Jammu

The wonder that was Jammu, can be discerned from the architectural remains found in this region. That there has been an ancient civilization in Jammu and the adjacent area can be seen and understood well from the findings of spasmodic, though not thorough, and deep excavations at Babor, 26 miles east of Jammu city and Ambran in Akhnoor and other places. At Babor, particularly, appears to be buried in the debris of time a high civilization, as the stone temples, few of which are still extant, though in a ruined state, and as the pieces of pottery, metallic utensils and the stone carvings found there.

Many artistic remains of Jammu are of religious nature or were at least made for religious purposes. Secular art certainly existed and kings had sumptuous palaces, as lovely paintings and sculptures still found in some of the old palaces vividly show. However, the old sculptures and temples are an expression of deep religious experiences of the Dogras, and the sermons in stone, read from the marvellous carvings, teach the oneness of all things in the Universal spirit.

It is not possible to trace the continued history of Jammu's development of architectural style and form, as many temples and buildings have been destroyed by the cruel hands of man and nature, in particular, Tamerlaine who attacked Jammu during the reign of Raja Mal Dev in 1398 A.D. must have brought great devastation to this region. But landmarks still exist which point out the path of Jammu's architectural progress.

CAVE ARCHITECTURE

Although terracotta Buddha heads have been found at Ambran in Udhampur and Dr. Charles Gabi, a well-known art critic, opines that there had been a large Buddhist monastery and a stupa at that place, but no rock-cut Buddhist shrine is found in this region. There are some Hindu rock-cut caves existing on the bank of the Ravi at Basohli, 132 kms. away from the Jammu city. The prominent one is of Visvesvara cave named after Raja

Visva. The cave of Visvesvara is the largest excavation of the set and consists of two chambers, the outer of which is 11 feet square and 8 feet 3 inches in height. From the ceiling hangs a brass bell suspended from an iron-hook embedded in the rock.

Admittance to the inner cave is gained by a low doorway in the northern wall. Its ceiling is domed. In the middle of it is a Shiva Linga on a circular pitha carved out of a rock. There is a small marble image of eight-armed Annapurna. Below it are a couple of crude figures; one seems to be a Rakhasa and the other a lion. From the large statue which is said to be of Bhupat Pal, it is assumed that these rock-cut temples belong to C.1598-1635, during which the Raja ruled over Basohli. But from the crude carvings and the style of cultures that are found inside the walls of these caves, it can be said that these cave temples belong to 2nd century A.D.

There is another rock-cut cave at Pir Khoh in the Jammu city, which must have been excavated earlier than 15th century A.D. for near it is a Panchvaktra temple built by Raja Ajaib Dev.

STRUCTURAL BUILDINGS

In fact, no early remnants of wooden artistry had been found in the Jammu region, even though wood must have preceded stone as a material for construction. At Babor are a group of six ancient temples in a ruined state which are clear evidence of the name of long past tradition in building and stone carving. Dr. Vogel believes that the temple complex was built in the 11th century A.D. They, to some extent, resemble Modhera temple, built in 1026 A.D. That this temple was built in the 11th century is also imagined from the fact that Kalhana has recorded in *Rajtarangini* of a visit of Kirtidhara, ruler of Babhapura (i.e. Babor), when in the winter of 1087-88 A.D. rulers of eight adjoining principalities came to Srinagar at the invitation of their suzeraine Kalasa. Therefore, it is assumed that the Martand temple of Kashmir might have inspired Kirtidhara to build these temples at Babor.

The local tradition says that these temples belong to Mahabharata times. It is said that in ancient times Babor was the capital of a powerful state ruled by a great king Babor Vahan, one of the Pandu brothers. Be as it may, from the stylistic point of view these temples owe nothing to the inspiration of Martand, where proper mortar has been used. On the other hand, examination of the mutilated Sanskrit inscriptions discovered there by a Dogra Mandal delegation shows that the temples belong to the 2nd century A.D.

The group of Babor temples is a dream in stones. The feat in

engineering in these is such that with masonry large size stones set without mortar are kept in position by their weight and balance, strengthened by a system of interlocking flanges. It appears that the method employed in these shrines seems to have remained in vogue for quite a long time and was followed in the subsequent periods even in raising up enormous piles at Krimchi

The bigest temple is, in plan, "a triple star on a rectangular basement. The roof is supported on two rows of 24 large monolithic pillars, standing on well mounted bases". There are marvellously ornamented capitals and the gigantic roof-slabs. The stone-sculpture found in the temple complex too is most fascinating and show a consummate skill and a high sense of aesthetic beauty. Particularly enchanting is the statue of Ganga in the Devi's temple. There is a feeling, one critic exclaims "that the seeing this statue in the pose of a frozen dancing mudra that it might come to life at any moment".

TEMPLE COMPLEX AT KRIMCHI

Krimchi temples indicate great Dogra architectural evolution. From the springboard of Babor the architect makes a high jump in artistic achievement at Krimchi, a village 40 kms-away from the Jammu city. Against the backdrop of magnificent hills on a sloping and smiling valley is an enchanting sight of four ancient and splendid temples. Nearby, down a gorge flows a sparkling stream. The temples are lantern-shaped. The details are given in chapter 10 of this book.

MUSLIM MONUMENTS

The famous Muslim structures are the tombs of the two renowned Muslim saints, Baba Farid-ud-Din and his son Israr-u-Din in Kishtwar. These are built in Kashmiri Muslim style. There is no other mosque here which is so grand as these. The enchanting design of these structures captivates the onlooker. Each structure has got a large building with two big halls and side rooms. At the four corners of the building are lofty minarets and there are a number of bath rooms. This has been built with the help of the donations received from the public. There are some simple yet beautiful old mosques at Rajouri, Poonch and Jammu city which have now been renovated and redesigned.

SECULAR BUILDINGS

The earliest palatial building recorded in history was that of Raja Mal Dev, who ascended the throne of Jammu in 1357 A.D. He attacked the Raja of Noorpur and dismantling the fort of Pathankot he built a mansion at

Purani Mandi in the Jammu city. It is said that he was so powerful that he brought from the bank of the river Tawi two stones of one ton each when he first laid the foundation of his house. One rock Kali Jani still exists and the Dogras respectfully bow before it. A new building called Raja Thada which houses Rajput Amar Sobha, Jammu, has been now constructed here. In 1398 A.D. when Tamerlaine attacked Jammu, it is said that he brought ruin to the whole city and naturally the old building must have been razed to the ground. The house, obviously, must have been made of bricks and wood.

PALACES AT BASOHLI

Eighteenth century was the period of renaissance in Jammu, when Raja Dhruv Dev and his son Ranjeet Dev ruled over Jammu and Pal dynasty ruled over Basohli principality. The complex of palaces which are at present in ruined state, was known as the "Wonder of the Hills". G.T. Vigne, the European traveller who visited Basohli in 1840 A.D., remarked, "It is the very finest buildings of its sort I had seen in the East. Its square turrets, open and embattled parapets, projecting windows, Chinese-roofed balconies and moat-like tank presented a general appearance which without entering into specific details was sufficient to remind me of the most ancient red brick structures of my own country".

It is said and can even now be discerned from its ruins that it was five to seven stories above the ground and several stories below it. It appears to have been the blend of traditional Hindu and Mughal style. It, undoubtedly, had magnificent towers, wonderful balconies and each room had perfectly domed ceilings. There was arrangement for heating and cooling the rooms by a network of pipes which can even now be traced out. The palace stands on a beautiful hillock, at the back of which far down below, glides a stream and in front of it is quite a large tank in which is reflected the hillock and the palaces. Each room had murals which, though now rubbed off by rain as well as the human hands, seem to have been the finest specimens of Pahari art.

The town of Basohli was found by Raja Bhupat Pal after clearing the dense forest in 1630 A.D. and he also built a palace for himself. His son Raja Sangram Pal who ascended the throne in 1843 A.D. further extended the palace. But it was during the reign of Raja Mahinder Pal born in 1784 that the two magnificent palaces, Rang Mahal and Sheesh Mahal were constructed. In the Rang Mahal were the pictures of Nayakas painted according to the descriptions given in *Koka Shastra* and *Sunder Shingar*. It was in the year 1909 Vikrami when Basohli's last ruler was on the throne

that the front wall of the inner palace tumbled down at the very time when he brought his second bride inside the palace. That was the beginning of the end of these glorious palaces.

THE OLD PALACES OF DARBAR GARH

The landmark of great magnificence in Dogra architecture is the huge complex of palaces of Darbar Garh in the Jammu city which comprise of more than a thousand rooms. The largest buildings are five storeys high and the smallest two storeys in height. It was Raja Dhruv Dev who ascended the throne of Jammu in 1703 and shifted his residence from the Purani Mandi to 68 Durbar Garh. The details of these palaces are given in chapter 12 of this book.

AMAR MAHAL

Amar Mahal was built by Raja Amar Singh. It stands on an eminence known as Ramnagar in Jammu with the river Tawi flowing down below. At the end of the 16th century there existed a strong fort and during the reign of Raja Kapur Dev an army was stationed there. But later it became out of use and Raja Amar Singh the younger brother of Maharaja Pratap Singh, got a palace built there. At present it houses a Museum and Library. The palace and the Museum have been donated by Dr. Karan Singh, son of the last Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, to the Hari Tara Charitable Trust, created in his parents' name. The details about this palace are given in chapter 13 of this book.

MAHAHIKESHWAR TEMPLE

There is a marvellous temple of Mahahikeshwar Shiva at Billawar. It is a cupola-shaped temple made of standstone. Its height is 70 ft. In this temple there are about 13 pieces of sculpture, some in black marble of marvellous beauty and its outer walls have wonderful carvings. This also resembles Krimchi temple. The other old temples in the Jammu city are mostly built by Maharaja Ranbir Singh.

Jai Mata Di: The Holy Shrine of Vaishno Devi

Ya Devi Sarvabhuteshu Shaktirupena Samsthita Namastasyai Namastasyai Namo Namah

(That Devi who is present as Sakti (Porer) in all beings-I bow to her again and again and again.)

- Durgasaptasati

Jammu region appears like a celestial land, for here are found a large number of magnificent temples and abodes of gods and goddesses. The most prominent among them is the holy cave of Vaishno Devi, situated in a charming recess of the three silent pinnacles of the Trikuta mountain at an altitude of 5,000 feet. The shrine of Vaishno Devi has the same place in Jammu as that of Amarnath Ji in Kashmir. Both are Cave shrines but whereas the Amarnath Cave is visited on Ashad and Sravana Poornamashi only, the pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi extends over the whole year.

The worship of the Goddess goes back to the time of the Indus Valley Civilization, that is, about 3,000 B.C.

The Goddess is a personification of the all-pervading power (Shakti) of the all-powerful Lord. In India, the two have always been conceived of as a unity, e.g. Purusha-Prakriti, Shiva-Parvati, Lakshmi-Narayan, Radha-Krishna and Sita-Ram.

The Goddess is one but the names are many. She is the Aditi_mother of gods; she is Lakshmi, goddess of fortune; Saraswati, goddess of wisdom; Maha Kali, destroyer of the evil; Prithvi, goddess of earth; Shailaputri, daughter of the Himalaya; Annapoorna, goddess of food; and Siddhidattatri, giver of Siddhi, success or perfection. She is also the Mahadevi in relation to Mahadeva. She is the supreme knowledge, greatest good fortune and supreme bliss.

The shrine which attracts lakhs of pilgrims from all over India and abroad every year, is situated some 39 miles north of Jammu city.

The origin of the pilgrimage is shrouded in mystery. But that it is an ancient shrine, there is no doubt. According to some scholars, Trikuta hill and Vaishno Devi are mentioned in the Vedas and other ancient texts. Be that as it may, a number of legends have grown round it.

It is said that one old man, named Shridhar, discovered the cave of Vaishno Devi a very long time ago. He lived in a village called Hansali, about two kilometres away from Katra town, situated at the bottom of the Trikuta hill. He was a great devotee of the goddess and worshipped the little girls regularly. But he was deeply unhappy as he had no child of his own. The goddess took pity on him. She appeared to him in a dream at night and revealed to him the cave where she had her abode.

Next day in the morning he set out in search of the cave and at last found it. He entered into it and got the holy sight of the abode of Vaishno Devi. Pandit Shridhar sang hymns in praise of Devi and whole-heartedly worshipped her. The goddess was pleased with his devotion and granted him the boon of four sons and said that his descendants would continue to worship her. Hence, the descendants of Pandit Shridhar have been worshipping the goddess inside the cave since that day.

Thereafter, Pandit Shridhar made the neighbouring people know about the holy cave and thus the pilgrims started visiting the cave from all parts of the country and from abroad as well. The goddess is most benign and bountiful and grants the wishes of her devotees. The pilgrimage to the holy shrine particularly takes place during the autumn *Navaratras*, i.e., the first nine days of the bright half of the month of *Assuj* (October). Although the pilgrims to Vaishno Devi come all the year round but the rush during the days of *Navaratra* is so great that one may have to wait a day or two to take one's turn to get into the cave.

The shrine is a natural cave in which on the raised portion of the rock platform, are three small images of Maha-Saraswati, Maha-Lakshmi and Maha-Kali representing the Creative, Preservative and Destructive aspects of Divine Energy. Mr. J.N. Ganhar says: "While the other shrines elsewhere symbolise one or other aspect of the Divine Energy, Vaishno Devi embraces them all. This gives it a distinction and prominence all its own. In fact, it is the only shrine of its kind in the country."

The cave in which the goddess has taken her abode, is nearly a hundred feet long. But it is difficult of access. Inside it lies a huge rock and

a stream of crystal clear cold water issuing from a side of the cave flows past it. The stream is known as Charan Ganga, or the Ganga washing the lotus feet of the deity.

The pilgrims board the buses at Jammu and reach the little pastoral town of Katra in two hours. While the buses move on the zigzag road the pilgrims sing and shout slogan, Jai Mata Di. At Katra the pilgrims stay for the night. A pilgrim can stay in the Tourist Reception Centre, where dormitories are available at reasonable charges. In the Tourist Hostel and the Dak Banglow too rooms are available on rent. Accommodation is also available free of charges in Dharmarth Sarai, Shri Dhar Sabha Sarai and Chintamani Sarai. There are a few hotels as well and many private houses where rooms at normal rates are given.

Katra has a long market where articles of daily use as well as articles for worship and offerings are available. One can get canvas shoes, wooden sticks, cameras, thermos bottles, umbrellas and torches, etc. on hire.

From Katra pilgrims go on upward journey on foot or on ponies. As one goes up, one feels a strange, indescribable joy that keeps one going without any discomfort. There is a great faith among the pilgrims about the beneficent powers of the goddess and the pilgrims go on singing hymns in praise of the goddess. They greet each other by saying "Jai Mata Di."

Starting from Katra one passes through "Darshani Darwaza". A gate, constructed of stones, stands there and one can get a clear view of the hills from here. Hence it is called Darshani Darwaza, a gate of the hill-site, one and a half kilometres away from Katra.

Going down for about a mile one crosses Bal Ganga, a stream associated with Vaishno Devi. Actually from this place the stiff ascent on the Trikuta range starts. The pilgrims take a purificatory dip in this stream before starting on the ascent. This place is about two and a half kilometres distant from Katra at an altitude of 2,800 ft. above the sea-level.

About a mile ahead of Bal Ganga is Charan Padka. It is known after the sandals of the goddess. There is a simple temple enshrining the footprints of the goddess.

In his ascent to the cave, the pilgrim comes to the important spot of Ad Kanwari. It is a marvellous small plateau where some pilgrims prefer to rest for the night. This place contains a water tank, tea stalls, halwai shops and a small hotel. A dharmshala built by the Dharamarth Trust at a cost of Rupees four lakhs there can provide shelter to about one thousand devotees of the goddess.

There is a small temple and in the rocks there is a small opening or hole which pilgrims pass. This is called Gali-Yoni and passage through it is considered as a passport to *moksha* (salvation).

From Ad-Kanwari there is a steep ascent, almost perpendicular like the forehead of an elephant. Hence the range is called Hathi-Matha. It is at a distance of 2.5 kilometres from Ad-Kanwari. The height here is 6,500 feet above the sea level.

Sanji Chhet, the next stage, is the highest point on the track. It is 7,215 feet above the sea-level and its distance from Ad-Kanwari is 2³/₄ miles and almost six miles from Katra.

There is a gradual descent of about three-fourths of a mile from Sanji Chhet to Bhairav Ghati, situated 6,148 feet above the sea-level.

Bhairav Ghati has a small temple dedicated to the demon-god Bhairava, which should be visited only after darshan of the goddess in the sacred cave. The temple houses the head of the Bhairava while his petrified body is stated to be inside the cave in the shape of the rock over which the pilgrims have to crawl. It is a popular belief that the pilgrimage is not complete without visiting the temple of Bhairava on one's return.

From Bhairav Ghati one is able to have a first glimpse of Vaishnav Durbar which is situated in front of the hillside. The pilgrims on seeing the shrine raise the shouts: Jai Mata Di (Salutations to the Divine Mother!), Sheranwali Mata teri sada hi jai (Salutations to the Divine Mother whose mount is a lion), Sanchey Durbar Ki Jai (Obeisance to the Sacred Darbar). The holy cave is about a hundred feet long and so narrow that only one devotee can walk abreast. He has also to wade through the ankle deep cold water coming through the cave. The atmosphere in the cave is really inspiring and one is humbled by some mystic energy there.

Vaishno Devi has commanded allegiance of people, rich and poor from early times. Guru Nanak and Nam Dev have visited the shrine. So also Maharaja Gulab Singh and his successors.

Dr. Karan Singh, the scion of the Dogra ruling dynasty, inaugurated a new tunnel on 20th March 1977. Due to narrow entrance of the holy cave of Vaishno Devi, the pilgrims had to wait for a long time to enter the cave, until the devotees inside used to come out after having the holy sight. The new tunnel through which the pilgrims come out has solved the problem. Its length is 36.61 metres and height 2.21 metres.

10

Ancient Temples of Krimchi

The art of the Jammu area, as elsewhere in India, has from the beginning been dedicated to religious ends and the craftsmen remained anonymous as their aim was only to serve their faiths. The Hindu temples were designed to suggest the appearance of the cosmos or the heavens of the gods. Similarly, the goal of the plastic arts was not realism; the Hindu gods, made according to the strict laws of proportion and form, must be thought of as symbols or hierogylphs of real bodies. All suggestion of organic anatomy is suppressed; it is the abstract perfection of the form that is calculated to inspire devotion. "When observing any temple of Jammu we have to keep these points in view".

The Dogras are a marvellous race, an ancient race whose roots go back to the pre-Vedic times, as is proved by the excavations made at Ambran and the works of Hindu religion and Sanskrit literature. If excavations are carried at Babor and Krimchi, the ancient civilization of the Dogras will clearly come to light. At the moment, it is not possible to trace the continuous style of Jammu's development of architectural style and form, as the cruel hands of man and nature have destroyed many temples and buildings. But landmarks still exist which point out the path of Jammu's temple architecture.

The most impressive temples are the groups of ancient temples at Babor and Krimchi. The Babor temple complex, according to Dr. Vogel, was built in the 11th century A.D. These temples, to some extent, resemble Modhera temple built in 1026 A.D. The Krimchi temples that we are concerned at present marks the highwater mark in architecture and artistic achievement of Jammu.

At 40 kms, away from the Jammu city and six miles the north of Udhampur town at the bottom of the range of Ladha hills is spread the area of Bhuti Krimchi. The Raja who laid the foundations of the city of Krimchi is known as Kreechak.

The present village of Krimchi, although a mere hamlet of some peasants' houses, was a place of considerable importance; the ruins on the banks of the nalla Devak indicate that at one time it was a capital which contained many temples and was a prosperous habitation. On a high rock there are signs of an old fort. Its falling walls are still seen and inside the four walls is a plain ground where there lie spread all around ruins of the palaces of the Rajas of Bhuti.

It is said that Rajas of Bhatyal are connected with Raja Daya Karan, king of Kashmir, who had gone there on the behest of his father Raja Puran Karan, who was the ruler of Jammu. In fact, the Kashmiris had approached Raja Puran Karan to invade Kashmir and rescue them from the cruelties of the then ruling king of Kashmir. Raja Daya Karan conquered Kashmir and became its ruler. A descendent from this ruler, Raja Som Dutt, came from Kashmir to the Illaqa of Bathal and founded an independent kingdom of Bhuti with its capital at Krimchi. He is considered to be the founder of the Bhatyal Rajputs. It is, however, in 1834 that this state was annexed to Jammu by Maharaja Gulab Singh. The last Raja of Bhuti was Raja Himmat Singh whose exquisitely accomplished grand-daughter was later married to Raja Amar Singh. The name of the Rani's father was Th. Pratap Singh.

We have to take cognizance of this historical background, for it is said that Raja Som Dutt built the fort and the palaces at Krimchi. It is further believed that Raja Som Dutt, in all probability, must also have built the marvellous temple complex at Krimchi.

Against the background of the magnificent hills on a sloping and smiling valley is an enchanting sight of the four ancient and splendid temples. Nearby down the gorge flows a sparkling stream. The temples are lantern-shaped buildings with a large lotus-like disc at the top of each. There is one better preserved temple which is the gem of the Dogra architecture. Although the temple is dilapidated and the decay of centuries has furrowed its brow and wrought wrinkles on its glistening surface, yet it could not efface its pristine beauty and solemn grandeur. It certainly marks an advance in the art of composition over that of the Babor complex.

The height of the principal temple is about 50 ft. and before it there is 31 ft. space area which is reached by a flight of several steps. The porch in front is 10 ft. wide with an entrance of 6 ft. height and 4 ft. wide. The antablature of the front is of splendid craftsmanship. What is unique about it is that it is copiously decorated with abstract designs in kaledoscopic forms which produce an optical illusion so that one feels that it is soaring higher and higher. One experiences vertigo. There is something vibrant,

pulsating in these carvings that instinctly attracts the eyes and keeps them rivetted there. One feels a sense of intense movement when eyes follow the numerous meandering intricate lines that weave complex and enchanting patterns. The eyes revolve in myriad directions and the temple looks as if it is dancing. Each motif of the carvings has been done on more than one stone and then fitted in the over-all structure of the temple displaying perfect harmony and rhythm.

Much of the sculpture has been lost but the remaining few are sufficient to rouse one's imagination to see more there than actually exists there. The local people assert that a colonnade existed round the temple complex—numerous bases of pillars and several fragments of fluted columns were lying about. Now there are imposing sculptures like an ornate head of Lord Shiva and Vara Avtara, carrying the earth on his shoulders and trampling to death the sea demon by his feet. These masterpieces of sculpture reflect the maturity of the artists, for these, made from the white stones found in abundance in the nearby stream, are indeed refined and filled with a pulsating vitality. These statues at Krimchi are the reflections of the loving piety of the sculptors. Some other pieces recovered from the debris are the figures of Ganesha and Vishnu.

The chief peculiarities of these ruins afe the number of temples that contained within the same, what might have been, an enclosing wall and the absence of a symmetry in their arrangement. It may, I think, thus be argued that in earlier times, when the enclosing wall was but a mere means of protection, a number of detached temples were erected and dedicated to various deities from time to time. These temples at Krimchi were dedicated not to one particular god or deity but to the contained images of Kali, Siva and Vishnu, etc.

There are various opinions about the construction of these temples made of only stone and no cement or mortar of any kind has been used. The one is that these were constructed, as already mentioned, by Raja Som Dutt, who might have got artisans from Kashmir which excelled in the construction of temples. May be Som Dutt or any Bathial Raja constructed the temples but it is quite fantastic to think that any Kashmiri artisan was employed in building these temples. The style of the temples in Kashmir is absolutely different from that of the temples at Krimchi. There was not a single temple in Kashmir which could resemble Krimchi temples. Most of the temples in Kashmir do bear resemblance with those of Bengal. In both Kashmir and Bengal the primary form was the square block mounted by a pyramidal roof. The mode of elaborating the plan remains the same in both the places and consists in the addition of one or more protections

to each of the original four sides of the square. Morever, it is believed that the architecture of Kashmir had been influenced by those of Greece Bactrians. The temples of Krimchi bear no such influence and show at a glance that these are of the same style as those of Orissa. These temples at Krimchi are so strong that they have escaped destruction by nature and invaders on account of their remote situation.

There is another belief that Kanishka, while passing through this place, was captivated by the natural beauty of the place and that he ordered the construction of the temple complex. But these temples do not seem to have been constructed in the 1st century when Kanishka ruled. The reign of Kanishka was the great period of Gandhara art and we do not witness any influence of this art on the Krimchi temples. Besides, the Kushan king being a Buddhist could not have been interested in building the temples dedicated to Hindu gods.

The people of Krimchi assert that the temples were built by Pandus, who happened to wander here from Babor where they ruled. But again the style of the temples would have been the same as those of the temples found at Babor. The Krimchi temples indicated great Dogra architectural evolution and artistic achievement at Krimchi.

I visited the Krimchi temple complex in the company of Francis Brunnel, a renowned French writer, art critic and an expert photographer. We failed after a careful search in every likely place to find any trace of an inscription or any such helpful indication. But we were able to support our idea of the date of this locality by no better evidence than the state and style of the architectural details which in their form, outline and style, should, we imagined, rank in age after the Bhubaneshwar temples. After having carefully compared these temples with the temples found in the other parts of India we found that these temples at Krimchi bear so close affinity to the temples at Bhubaneshwar that we may suppose both to have owed their existence to some common origin without any great stretch of imagination. Though these temples at Krimchi are not of such huge magnitude or dimensions but they seem to have been built by artisans who were adept in the building art and had imitated the Bhubaneshwar temples. Of course, there are no signs of the gateways and walls left at Krimchi. Thus Krimchi temples date back to 8-11th century and decidely they must have been built by Bathial Rajas who ruled over the area for generations together. It is not a far-fetched idea that the Dogra artisans were highly skilled in architectural and sculptural arts.

There is no doubt that the most impressive, ancient and grandest

temple in Jammu is the principal temple dedicated to Kali, at Krimchi. It is in a better state of preservation than the adjacent ones. It contains two distinct chambers, one is called "Ardha-mandapa" and the other "Garbha griha". The latter chamber appears to have been richly ornamented, as seen from the niches. It is not difficult to realise that the statues seem to have been stolen.

There is a remarkable dearth of early dated example as to what was the prototype and what were the stages of evolution which resulted in such magnificent products of the builder's art as the temples at Babor and Krimchi. But it seems reasonable to presume that earlier example existed and that art progressed step by step upto a certain point from the simple to the more elaborate. Many of the beautiful temples remain buried and much excavations at Krimchi and other areas or in Jammu are called for.

11

Chenani and the Holy Temple of Sudh Mahadev

At a distance of fifty-seven miles from Jammu is the town of Chenani situated on a green hill and close by are the series of charming Shivalik hills covered with the dense forests of Devdar and conifer trees. Down beneath them flows the noisy river Tawi. What a delightful scene, as if all the beauty of nature has converged here! When the golden rays of the morning sun shines on the hills, peaks, fields of rice and maize, it appears as if this whole scene is a captivating picture conceived by some artist par excellence. And in the peaceful atmosphere of the evening when the moon scatters its silvery light all around, it appears more splendid than paradise itself. A man's heart throbs with delight.

This region of Chenani was known as the Jagir of Chenani. Its dimension was 97 square miles and its revenue was Rs. 50,000 per year. Here mushroom, wild pomegranates, honey and fruits like apples, pears and walnuts, etc.

The ancient history of Chenani is indistinct and misty. It is said that in 700 A.D. Megh Raj ruled over this region and was harassed by the rich Ranas. They indulged in murders and cruel action, so Megh Raj was compelled to seek the aid of Beer Chand, the ruler of Bilaspur who sent his younger brother Gamir Chand with a large army to help Megh Raj. He defeated and drove away the Ranas and then himself took this area in his possession and ruled over it. He established his capital at the holy place of Mantalai, thus laying the foundation of a strong and independent state.

The town Chenahan founded by the king in the beginning of the 18th century later became known as Chenani. After the death of Gamir Chand many Rajas one after the other ruled over Chenani about whose lives nothing is known. Nothing of historical importance occurred which

should have been described anywhere. Finally Raja Ram Chand ruled over this area.

In the area of Chenani is a holy place of Sudh Mahadev where a trident of Lord Shiva is fixed in the earth. It is six feet in height and it is said that it has gone down to such a depth in the earth that it is not possible to dig it out. Raja Ram Chand, out of curiosity, ordered it to be pulled out. After digging for two days when Raja Ram Chand was in deep sleep at night the whole atmosphere trembled with great noise. He awoke with fright and his heart was throbbing in fear. He looked around with his misty eyes. In the meantime he heard a supernatural voice saying, "Ram Chand you must stop digging".

"I shall obey immediately".

"When you will stop digging then from the head of the Trishul will fall down a piece of iron and from it will emerge an image of Lord Shiva. You must worship it".

"What should be done to the piece of iron?" Ram Chand enquired.

"You must get a sword made of it".

"What is the order regarding this sword?"

"You can use it in fight. Whenever you go to battle you must keep the sword under the war equipment. If it comes up, you should consider it as victory for yourself otherwise defeat".

Raja Ram Chand was trembling with fear. He immediately stopped digging. He brought the image of Lord Shiva to the palace and worshipped it. He also made a sword from the piece of iron. Morever, he constructed a temple there in which he installed a Shiva Lingam.

Here it is necessary to fully explain about Sudh Mahadev. This place is 72 miles away from the city of Jammu and thirteen and half miles away from Chenani. At the particular spot of the *tiratha* is a temple which houses a Shiva Lingam of black marble and closeby is Parvati Devi riding a Nandi bull. The heavy Trishul of Bhagwan Shiva is also there. Inside the temple a holy fire continuously remains burning which reminds us that here Baba Roopnath attained spiritual height after years of meditation. In the month of *Jeth* on the full moon a festival is held there when thousands of pilgrims from all over India come. Before entering the temple the pilgrims bathe in the river Devika which flows nearby and then they go towards the temple singing the devotional songs. On Shivratri and Baisakhi pilgrims visit this holy place in large numbers.

According to one tradition one giant Sudhu lived there who used to kill and plunder all around in the area and inflicted suffering on the people. So the people offered prayers to Lord Shiva and the Lord killed the giant with his *Trishul*. Since then this place is called Sudh Mahadev. Morever, there is another tradition that Shiv Ji and Parvati's marriage was performed here.

Raja Ram Chand died after ruling Chenani for three years. He extended his territory. After him, one after another, the princes of this dynasty became the Raja of Chenani. At last Raja Shamsher Singh governed the State.

Raja Shamsher Singh was a very brave man and always kept the holy sword and the idol of Lord Shiva with him, because of which he always came out triumphant from any battle. Thus when Raja Ranjit Dev's son Brij Raj Dev attacked Kangra in 1763, he took Shamsher Singh also with him. Raja Shamsher Singh showed great ability in the battle and in this way Raja of Kangra was defeated. The miracle of this holy sword became evident to the hill Rajas. The Raja of Nurpur, Prithi Singh, resolved to take away this holy sword. Prithi Singh was the son-in-law of Raja Ranjit Dev. After the victory of Kangra when Shamsher Singh was travelling back to Chenani, Prithi Singh suddenly and stealthily attacked him and after murdering him he carried away the sword and the idol with him. Later on the sword came into the possession of Amrit Pal, the Raja of Basohli. But nobody knows what happened to the sword thereafter.

Raja Shamsher Singh was very popular and loved by his subjects. When the news of his murder reached Chenani, there was a cry of revenge throughout the area and they formed a big army to avenge the death of Shamsher Singh. But on being assured by Raja Ranjit Dev that he would punish Raja Prithi Singh for this crime they remained silent. Raja Ranjit Dev got very angry with Prithi Singh and severed all his connections with his son-in-law.

After Raja Shamsher Singh's death his son Raja Kishore Chand ascended the throne. After him his son Teg Chand ruled over Chenani. He died without any issue. After him Raja Shamsher Singh's second son Raj Chand ascended the throne. Raja Dayal Chand was very brave and an able swordsman. When Ahmed Shah Abdali asked Raja Ranjit Dev to help him in attacking Kashmir, he sent his son Raja Braj Raj Dev. There was close friendship between Raja Shamsher Singh and Raja Brij Raj Dev. Therefore, on this account, Shamsher Singh sent his younger brother Jhagar Chand's son Raja Dayal Chand with Raja Brij Raj Dev. Raja Dayal Chand

displayed great bravery in this fight. In this battle Sukh Jeevan, the Afghan Governor of Kashmir, was defeated. Ahmad Shah Abdali granted a jagir at Martand in Kashmir to Raja Dayal Chand.

During the reign of Raja Dayal Chand, Raja Suchet Singh of Ram Nagar took possession of the district Marothi of Chenani State and later attacked Chenani itself. Raja Dayal Chand could not face such a large army and hid himself in the fort of Shab Garh. Suchet Singh set the royal palaces of Chenani on fire and annexed Chenani with Ramnagar. Raja Dayal Chand arrived in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and requested him for help. Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered Raja Gulab Singh that he should get back Chenani jagir restored to Dayal Chand. Raja Gulab Singh got Suchet Singh and Dayal reconciled with each other, as a result of which Kotli was handed over to Suchet Singh while Udhampur and Batotote were joined with Jammu and rest of the *ilaqa* was given to Dayal Chand as a jagir.

Raja Dayal Chand died after the reign of 55 years. After him his son Gajinder Chand became the Raja of Chenani, who had two sons, Raja Badri Chand and Kedar Chand. Badri Chand died issueless in 1872 and Kedar Chand ascended the throne. He was intelligent and an able administrator.

At that time Maharaja Pratap Singh was the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. His younger brother Raja Ram Singh had one daughter whom Maharaja Pratap Singh loved. She lived in his palace and was looked after by him. He gave away in marriage this daughter of Raja Ram Singh to Raja Kedar Chand. Maharaja Pratap Singh granted him all the powers of a first class magistrate and that of the civil judge of first status. Raja Kedar Chand was hardworking and efficient. In his time the trade in Chenani flourished. After him his elder son Raja Ram Chand inherited the throne. When the popular government was established in the Jammu and Kashmir State, then in April 1948 the jagir of Chenani was annexed with the Jammu and Kashmir State and was joined with Udhampur district. In this way the state and jagir of Chenani came to an end as an independent state after 1200 years. Raja Ram Singh was given an ordinary pension by the Jammu & Kashmir government. Chenani is a fertile region and the people are simple, truthful and innocent. Moreover, they are brave, hardworking and handsome. Even now the turn of the Time's wheel has not wiped out the grace and elegance from the face of Chenani. Here, far from the luxury, the noise and turmoil of the cities cannot disturb a man and in the calm atmosphere of the woods one feels a kinship with the Creator. In this way a man feels the real and eternal joy.

12

The Magnificent Old Palaces of the Dogra Rulers

The glorious landmark in Dogra architecture is the huge complex of palaces at Darbar Garh in the Jammu city, which comprises of lines of large houses with thousands of rooms. The largest buildings are of six storeys and the smallest of two storeys. It was Raja Druv Dev, who ascended the throne of Jammu in 1703 and shifted his residence from the Purani Madi to Darbar Garh in the east of Jammu city on the high cliff overlooking the Tawi.

Maharaja Ranjit Dev's son built a huge palace on the foundation of the palace which had been built by his father. During the reign of Ranjit Dev's brother Raja Braj Raj Dev, Man Singh, the Sikh chief of Sukerachia Misl burnt the city of Jammu in 1781 and naturally this palace must have been gutted. Long after when Maharaja Gulab Singh became the ruler of Jammu he got a beautiful mansion constructed in the same premises. Maharaja Ranbir Singh, his son and then his three sons, Maharaja Pratap Singh, Raja Ram Singh and Raja Amar Singh, one after the other, also built grand buildings in its vicinity. It appears that the British architects were employed and so we find in them European influences but the artists, artisans and technicians all, were men of Jammu. It would be difficult to find any scene where art and nature are so happily blended together and produce so heavenly an abode.

VARIED ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Many architectural styles have been adopted in each set of buildings so that when one goes from one court to another one feels as if moving from one age to another. One section of the buildings is in old Hindu style, another in Indo-Persian style and yet another of modified European style. In some buildings there are semicircular arches, while in others there are lancet ones. In a two-storeyed building a Roman arcade has been

constructed. In some buildings wooden beams have been used, while in others iron ones cross the rooms. The ceilings are mostly of brick, but in some they are wooden.

These buildings of heterogeneous styles, some standing shoulder to shoulder, could cause confusion and inharmonious effect as a result of which one may think them to be careless and thoughtless mixture. On the other hand, their largeness, variety, regularity, wide interiors and simpleness lend them grace and dispel monotony and cold dullness.

HARMONIOUS DESIGN

At first the palaces look to have been designed and constructed without any architectural symmetry or effect but, if one were to contemplate, a harmonious design emerges in form and reaches a unity and completeness. There are five harmonious groups of houses around the five courtyards. First, there is an inner group of palaces. These are situated on the rocky eminence, overlooking the river Tawi. The whole palace complex consists of a large square enclosure, surrounded by buildings, with a garden in the centre. This is divided into two parts by a broad terrace which leads to the central Sheesh Mahal.

On the Tawi side Maharaja Gulab Singh constructed the house which Maharaja Ranbir Singh extended further. It is of seven storeys; there are three underground and four above the ground.

MAHARAJA RANBIR SINGH'S PALACE

Maharaja Ranbir Singh's palace furnishes us with significantly pleasing conception. It is noble and dignified and at the same time romantic and picturesque. It is known as Sheesh Mahal. It consists of many rooms in the first storey with elaborate decorations. One room has the painted walls with flower designs of pieces of mirrors, and portraits of Maharaja Gulab Singh and Maharaja Ranbir Singh are painted on glasses. The ceiling is of painted wood with extraordinary flower designs. It has no windows except two doors, one leading to Maid's Room. It is quite dark here and if one were to burn a candle, its reflection will be found in thousands of mirror pieces. It is not enough that an individual building should be comfortable and pleasant. It must be adapted to the climate. Hence, most of the windows are fixed on the river side. Then there is another room which is similar to it except that it contains some large mirrors in the wall on one side of the room and on the opposite wall are the exotic paintings.

On the right side is the large building of Raja Ram Singh, the second son of Maharaja Ranbir Singh and on its left are the two-storeyed buildings

for the princes and princesses of Poonch and adjacent to it are the two houses which were occupied by the male and female servants. These houses illustrate a purely indigenous style in palace architecture.

RAJA JAGAT SINGH OF POONCH'S BUILDING

The entrance to this complex is through a massive gate of deodar wood in which large iron nails have been fixed. It is an arched gate and then there is a vaulted high corridor. On its right was the office of the *Deori* Officer and on the left was stationed the armed guard. On the left a door led to a large pink hall where occasionally dances and banquets were held. Just adjacent to this inner complex in the north is a wonderful two-storeyed building made of marble on which beautiful flower designs are carved in the lower storey. It has ten balconised windows and on the ground floor is a row of large arched windows.

On the left of the large gate leading to the inner complex, is a large line of houses which were occupied by Maharaja Pratap Singh when he was the heir apparent.

MAHARANI CHARAK'S BUILDING

A corridor in the inner complex leads to another group of buildings with a courtyard. There one finds a very high building of six storeys built by Maharaja Pratap Singh for his Maharani Charak. Adjacent to it is a building of five storeys where other ladies lived. It is said that Maharaja Pratap Singh had shifted to this complex. There are no perforated screen windows. There is another building which has now fallen into ruins but here Maharaja Pratap Singh used to have his meals and smoke hukka, which he was very fond of, and have a siesta. During the day, a corridor from here led to the kitchen. There is a building in the premises where his Private Secretary used to reside. These buildings are of Indo-Persian design. The buildings are in Hindu style but contain some balconised windows and floral designs outside which are made of small pebbles and mortar. Inside the doors and walls of some room are found the murals of Pahari style. Maharani Charak's palace reveals the high technical dexterity of Dogra workmen and Maharaja Pratap Singh and his father fully exploited their skill in their own architectural undertakings.

From this premises a dark corridor leads to the outer large complex. This corridor is called *Tota-maina ki gali* for here were lined on both sides many cages containing varieties of parrots and mainas. Maharaja Pratap Singh used to come out into the outer complex to hold a Durbar on the large platform situated in the centre of the large compound. It is a large complex, many times bigger than the inner one. It has three measure gates. The main

gate, called Chok Chabutra gate, is a large gate of wood arched at the top and it leads to a vaulted porch. On the top of the gate is a small dome and the top facade of this gate is beautifully painted in floral designs. It is on the western side and forms the principal entrance to the citadel. It was built by Maharaja Gulab Singh.

RAJA AMAR SINGH'S PALACE

When we enter this gate we find a line of large houses, four-storeys high, built by Raja Amar Singh, the third son of Maharaja Pratap Singh. These houses, though built in Hindu style, have adopted many European principles. The rooms are large and well ventilated and there are cross ventilations. The rooms contain no ornate designs but simplicity marks their designs. There are no towers and no domes of any sort. The roofs are flat as in any Hindu style. The windows and doors, though large, contain no glass panes and there are no balconies or balconised windows. The walls are plastered with lime inside and outside with lime and cement, purely in British style. The stairs are wide and light.

RAJA RAM SINGH'S PALACE

Then on the left is a line of houses, six-storeys high, built by Raja Ram Singh who lived here all his life. Its stairs are wide and not so deep but going up the five storeyed building was tiresome for the Raja and he used to go up the stairs on a horse. The buildings have balconised windows but some windows on the other side are simple wooden ones and they open on the outside on the street. It does not look a castle-like building in shape and style. Adjacent to it is a corridor leading to the back of the building where were mint house and armoury built by Maharaja Ranbir Singh.

On the right side of Raja Ram Singh's building, rather across on the opposite side, is a marvellous building which extends to the whole side with a break in the middle of an opening with a long door called Pukki Dakki gate. This building is a combination of British and Mogul design. It is two storeys high and on the roof are the domes. One of the large domes contains a big high clock.

It has many balconised windows and the ground floor has the arched windows. There are open verandahs in both the storeys with a cluster of columns in Doric style. The upper building contains a green hall where Maharaja Pratap Singh and Maharaja Hari Singh used to hold Durbar every now and then and listened to the grievances of the people. The second building in its vicinity contains the offices of the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief.

GOL GHAR

The opening or the gate in between these two buildings leads to a street. Going ahead in the left of the street are some quarters and then there is the Gol Ghar. This side of the complex got burnt and the Gol Ghar was greatly damaged. Gol Ghar has six storeys with a cloister of windows all around. There is a courtyard down in the ground which is a square enclosure. Looked from the above it looks like a large well. These buildings were built by Maharaja Pratap Singh for his Guru Sant Deb to live. In other rooms guests and servants lived. There were offices of some administration departments. These buildings are like some cathedral and are hardly found anywhere in the northern India. These buildings are roofed by a large dome on a cluster of arched constructions.

There is quite a contrast in the inner palaces and the outer complex. Nothing can be happier than the mode in which the principal apartments are arranged so as to afford views over the river Tawi and the hills beyond.

The buildings in the old palaces of the Dogra rulers are varied in design and style. Some are in French Renaissance style, others in early British period style while some others in modified modern style. But there is no thoughtless mixture of buildings of heterogeneous variety. But their very variety, magnificence and grace dispel monotony and cold dullness. When one moves from one court to another one feels a pleasing change and freshness of vision.

13

Picturesque Amar Mahal

The splendid palace, called Amar Mahal, is an exquisite specimen of architecture and offers an enchanting view. Donated to the nation by Dr. Karan Singh, the son of late Maharaja Hari Singh, it now houses a magnificent museum and a library. Shrimati Indira Gandhi inaugurated them on April 14, 1975.

THE MAGNIFICENT PALACE

A chateau-like mansion, Amar Mahal was built by Raja Sir Amar Singh a couple of years before his demise in 1908. He was the grandfather of Dr. Karan Singh.

Amar Mahal stands on an eminence known as Ram Nagar in Jammu (Kashmir state) with the river Tawi gliding nearby and it commands one of the fairest views which human eyes can gaze upon. Its size, beauty and grandeur are so harmoniously united that it appears, particularly in the golden and crimson rays of the rising and the setting sun, as enchanting as a vision. It was, as is said, a famous French architect, who waved the wand of enchantment over what before was but a wilderness and there arose a solitary pleasure-palace, around which was and continues to be a panorama of delight.

THE HARI-TARA CHARITABLE TRUST

The palace now houses a museum and a library but their inception came when Dr. Karan Singh and his wife, Shrimati Yesho Raj Laxami, created the Hari-Tara Charitable Trust in 1970. To this Trust they donated their three large palaces, Amar Mahal, Ranbir Mahal and Karan Niwas with attached outhouses besides other buildings and gardens. They also deposited a very large sum of money for the transaction of the Trust. The aims and objectives of the Trust are many and cover a broad spectrum of educational, cultural, literary and philanthropic activities.

THE MUSEUM

Dr. Karan Singh possessed a large number of Dogra Pahari paintings depicting the Nala-Damayanti theme, portraits of his ancestors, who ruled over the state of Jammu and Kashmir for a century and a good number of modern paintings done by painters of repute, representing various schools and types all of which he generously gave to the Amar Mahal Museum.

MINIATURE PAINTINGS

The miniature Dogra Pahari paintings, done in water colour, are displayed on the wooden pannelled walls of the Entrance Hall. These are forty-seven in number and the inner measurement of each painting is 22.1 cm by 33 cm. This set of paintings is a wonderful example of the way in which a theme from Mahabharata is treated in Srihara's *Naisadcharita* and represented in a secular setting.

According to Dr. B.A. Goswami, these paintings were done either by the son or a disciple of Nain Sukh, the renowned Pahari painter in the 18th century who had settled in Basohli. Though painted so long ago, they still look clear, beautiful and fresh and indigenous colours used therein have not in the least faded or become dull.

These paintings express the acme of artistic refinement. The melting linear contour, the judicious use of colours and the delicate handling of the details have elevated these paintings to the height of aesthetic excellence. In these miniatures there is a subtle use of colours and the faces and figures are enthralling.

Like Kangra style these paintings are naturalistic, delicate and lyrical but Kangra style, in the words of O.P. Sharma, an eminent art critic, "suffers from lack of modelling and slight decline in the quality of drawing". But these paintings in the Amar Mahal reach great heights in drawing and modelling in composition and perspective and the artist has succeeded in capturing the emotional turmoil of the theme.

The theme, no doubt, is on the surface, a simple one, that is, the mutual love of Nala and Damayanti and is expressed in a clear and bold manner. The intoxication and longing of their love is expressed frankly. The agony of the souls is also symbolised by the objects of nature, particularly by the raging storm.

The paintings introduce two dimensions of the story. The first is its human dimension, the earth and earthly love and the second, the mystical dimension, the gods and the heavens. The two are not parallel to each other but subtly blend to make a harmonious whole. The artist mingles the

earthly world with a heavenly one and acquires a fresh and fine artistic creation. In this series of pictures we share the life of a prince in his palace and also go up in the dwelling of gods. The images of the palace-life is woven into the very web of Heaven's fabric thus forming a glorious romance without any fantastic invention, and, therefore, looks credible to a common man.

The Dogra painter has painted each picture with the painstaking of a diamond cutter.

THE PORTRAIT GALLERY

A door from this hall leads to what was then Darbar Hall, on the wooden walls of which hang the life-size portraits of the Dogra dynasty. These include Maharaja Gulab Singh, the founder of the Jammu and Kashmir State, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, Maharaja Pratap Singh, Raja Ram Singh and Raja Amar Singh done by Nana N. Jani of Kathiawar in 1915. The portraits of Maharaja Hari Singh and Maharani Tara Devi, present in this hall, have been painted by Sobha Singh. The portraits of Dr. Karan Singh and his wife Shrimati Yesho Raj Laxami displayed here, have been painted by N.S. Subha Krishna.

In the portrait gallery the modern history of Jammu and Kashmir comes alive and one is seized with happy reflections upon the former rulers of Jammu and Kashmir.

Maharaja Gulab Singh who extended the territories of India up to Tibet, in this portrait, looks extraordinarily handsome and dignified and suggests his possessing the qualities of head and heart. Maharaja Ranbir Singh's portrait depicting his broad forehead and white graceful beard suggests that he was an enlightened man and a great scholar. It is an enduring monument to a strong and wise personality. Maharani Tara Devi dressed in a shimmering Dogra costume made of satin-smooth fabric of brocade, has an elegant grace and looks kind-hearted but her soft and subdued gloom on the face reflects those times when the raiders from Pakistan indulged in murder, loot and arson in the State.

All the portraits of the gallery have been painted in oil with restraint and formal precision but at the same time they give objective expression of inner feelings of the subjects. Through clarity, balance and beauty all these serene portraits achieve distinction and give the Dogra nobility a kind of immortality. The paintings done by Nana N. Jani, are in warm and deep tones.

CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

From here we pass on to the adjacent two oblong rooms. It is in the Contemporary Art Gallery are displayed the paintings of modern Indian artists, representing the various schools of art, viz., Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism,

Indian artists from old times created prodigious works whose variety, abundance, exuberance and beauty need a deep knowledge of Indian culture and mythology, historic reality and concepts of art in order to properly appreciate and understand them. The Indian art no longer confined to the straitjacket of rules, has become so complex and kaleidoscopic in vision that its true significance would escape our grasp like will-o-wisp, if we do not possess intelligence and have learnt innumerable sources and philosophy and ethos of the country. We may discuss some of the painters and their paintings represented in the gallery.

M.F. HUSSAIN

Here in the gallery are the works of M.F. Hussain. He has been subjected to the variety of influences, both Eastern and Western but by imitating and rejecting, thrashing and kneading by his own sensibility and moulding in the crucible of his imagination he has also evolved an art of utmost significance in the contemporary Indian painting. His paintings have to be admired and enjoyed and to analyse his painting is to gild the lily. Intellect, no doubt, is at the centre of Hussain's art but there is also passion which comes from the heart.

There are three paintings of Hussain in the gallery; one of Shrimati Indira Gandhi; another a scene of Varanasi where we see a dead body in the Ganges and a man is trying to lift it. In it are also shown three wooden logs symbolising a funeral pyre and a bird soaring upwards symbolising the flight of man's soul; and the third is the picture of women, all nudes, bathing in the Ganges early at dawn when the sun has just appeared on the horizon.

The social values in India are in the process of breaking and reconstruction and Hussain, aware of this cataclysm, has clearly reflected this in his creative translations and transmutations of line, form and colour as seen in the three paintings.

RAM KUMAR

Ram Kumar is also represented here. His temper and art were influenced by the deep despair of life, hence we find in him compassion and pity which does not degenerate into sentimentality. Thus he portrays

forlorn and ravaged men with drooping, dumb and mute mouths who are inward victims of their suffering. Then he takes to painting desolate landscapes and wildernesses. His landscape generally is merely a background for some mysterious and unknown human tragedy.

In the gallery there is his oil painting on canvas (34" by 25"). It is a landscape painted in light-black, rather steel grey colour. Here is depicted a deep blue lake and its vast sloping shore. In the background of the shore are clusters of upright trees. We also see sleepy and dull hamlets, small fields and steep rocks which are faintly reflected in the water of the lake. The whole scene is so gruesome that there appears to be no life as if "the sedge is withered from the lake and no birds sing." In the houses the people do not seem to live nor do they work.

GHULAM RASUL SANTOSH

The famous Kashmiri poet and artist, Santosh is well represented in the Museum. At first greatly influenced by the Western painters he developed the necessary skill to give visible shape to his invisible ideas and fantasies. In the contemporary Art Gallery of the Museum is his painting in Western style showing Mona Lisa and other aspects of womanhood emanating from the creative imagination of Leonardo da Vinci.

Later on he delved deep in the Tantra philosophy and was inspired by the mystical poetry of Lal Ded, Nund Rishi and other Kashmir Sufis. Of metaphysical concept there is his painting in the gallery titled "Siva Jyoti", depicting *lingam* and *Yuni*, as Siva and Sakti, in the centre of which there burns an eternal flame. The yellow, red and black colours used in the painting harmonise wonderfully. That aspect of modern art where the line and form metamorphises almost in Indian traditional way, becomes most acceptable to his brush.

N.S. SUBHA KRISHNA

The concerted efforts of Subha Krishna has made him an artist par excellence. He is a master of the brush and works to perfection in matters of detail. His life-size portrait of Pandit Nehru occupies the pride of place in the gallery. This work in the gallery is a symphony of oil colour and holds the imagination spell-bound. This picture also shows the artist's dexterity and skill in imparting mental glow over the subject's facial expression. The colours are used so subtly that they impart an aura of nobility to the keen looking Pandit Ji.

THE GALLERY OF "DASAVATARA"

There is a small gallery of Dasavatara. It contains eleven paintings of ten Avatars, representing Lord Vishnu and his ten incarnations, which may be interpreted as a parable of evolution from life to Life Divine done by Jaswant Singh.

The artist's clarity and dramatic power give a new meaning to the Hindu mythology and these pictures have a sort of mystical quality in them. The whole set in the gallery is a kind of elfin orchestra and the artist has in these paintings sung the epic of Evolution itself, particularly the Krishna painting portrays the feeling of musical abstraction. "The essences are always confined in the smallest glasses", says John Dryden and this is true about this small gallery of "Dasavatara."

THE LIBRARY

The Library has three sections. One section contains old and rare books, the legacy of Maharaja Hari Singh and his father Raja Amar Singh. The second section consists of modern books given by Dr. Karan Singh. The third section on the second floor contains books in Sanskrit and modern Indian languages. Hindi books in this section have been donated by Shrimati Yesho Raj Laxami, the wife of Dr. Karan Singh. There is also a large collection of albums and photographs in the Photography Section of the library.

RAJMATA'S SUITE

Adjacent to the library is a large room of the late Maharani Tara Devi and it has been kept as it was during her lifetime. Here one sees some of her personal belongings, dresses and pictures etc.

Thousands of visitors from different parts of the country and other foreign lands visit this Museum and are enthralled and enlightened by the rare possessions of the Museum.

14

Dogra Jewellery and Dress

The custom of wearing personal ornaments is as old as man. The savage man put pieces of bone, wood or iron in his ear, lips or nose. He made necklaces and bracelets strings of teeth, pebbles or seeds and shells. Modern men probably made gold and silver jewellery soon after they discovered these metals. The attractive colour of gold and the ease with which it can be shaped or worked, has always made it the chief metal used for jewellery.

Dogras also produce gold jewellery of great beauty, using only simple tools and the skill of their own hands. Among Dogras 'jewellery' forms an important part of the costume. They produce elaborate pieces which are worn by women with aplomb. Dogra jewellery is often remarkable for its delicate design and splendour.

Now in the modern times jewellery designs have become quite elaborate and richly decorated with enamel, gems and pearls. Precious and semi-precious stones are set on the metal. Jammu city is the chief centre of jewellery manufacture. Cheap metal alloys and glass or plastic imitations of precious stones are used in greater quantity.

Generally, the Dogras wear the following jewellery:

- I. Ornaments of the Head and Neck:
- 1. Mangal Sutra. It is the symbol of wedlock and so has great importance as an ornament among the Hindu women. It is generally of one tola of gold.
- 2. Tikka. It is worn over the forehead and may be triangular or round pendulum which is tied with a black thread that goes back through the centre of the head and tied with hair with a pin-clip.
- 3. Chumake. These are the gold ear rings and sometimes called *balis* which hang from each ear weigh about one tola.

- 4. Nathan. It is a large ring of one tola which passes through the small hole of the left nostril. It is round in shape.
- 5. Necklace. It is worn round the neck and is generally made of five tolas of gold.
 - 6. Long. It (or nose pin) is worn in the nose.
- 7. Gold chain. It is of about three to four tolas of gold worn round the neck.

II. Ornaments of the Arm

- 1. Bangles. Each bangle consists of half tola gold and two bangles are worn in each of the arm. Some may wear more depending on the economical position.
 - 2. Kada of four tolas of gold is worn in each arm.
- 3. There are rings for the fingers which are generally studded with pearls, sapphire or any other jewel. A bride may have three rings in each of the hand.
- 4. Round rings in the ear. Some women prefer to wear round rings in each ear weighing half a tola of gold.

III. Ornaments for Feet

- 1. There are silver anklets called panzeb of one tola each worn on the two feet. There are also silver rings, two or three worn in the fingers of each feet
- 2. Some women wear panchale which covers each hand and its fingers. These are made of gold plated brass metal and worn by the bride only on the day of the wedding.

The Dogra men do not wear any gold ornament except a chain of one tola. Earlier they wore a circular ring in each ear but now it has altogether been discarded. Of course, they wear rings in their fingers, particularly the wedding ring which are gifted by their wives. In fact, the "Ring Ceremony" has become quite in vogue among the Dogras as the bride and the prospective bridegroom exchange gold rings.

DOGRA DRESS

Dogras, undoubtedly, are known for their arts and for their valour. At the same time they lead a simple life. All this is reflected in the clothes they wear. Now the Dogras, like other people of the country, have also adopted Western dress so suited to the present day hectic life in place of the typical Dogra dress which was in keeping with a serene and calm life which they led in the past.

- i. "The Chudidar Pyjama": The typical Dogra dress consists of close fitting trousers known as "chudidar pyjama (ghutana)" with folds from ankle to calves. It was fastened by a skilfully made cord of cotton threads.
- ii. Kurta: The Kurta with narrow sleeves serves the purpose of underwear. It is made of hand-spun khadi.
- iii. Khilka, 'Mokla Kurta': It is made of fine country-made khasa with broad sleeves and broad girth and is worn over the underwear with a *phatovie* (jacket) of khadi in between. It is found around the neck with a thread clasp and thread hook. In winter a *posteen* or *choga* (cloak) is worn over it. It is also fastened at the front with clasps or hooks.
- iv. "The Head Wear": It consists of twenty-four yards long and about two inches wide strip of muslin piece tightly bound on the head. On it is bound a six yards long turban of fine muslin dyed or undyed.

Round the neck a three yards long muslin piece is worn with both ends hanging on the chest. It serves the purpose of a handkerchief also. In winter a Kashmiri shawl is worn over it.

Dogra Woman's Dress

Dogras wore khadi long before the khadi movement was started by Gandhiji. The most important part of the dowry were the items of salu and spinning wheel. The salu is a covering made of a piece of khadi cloth dyed bold red in kusumba and was embroidered in beautiful design of flower to be woven by the bride after marriage.

- i. Head Dress: An embroidered piece of cloth of six yards long serves as the covering for the head which falls to the ankles.
- ii. "Ghagra": A loose flowing dress of linen or silk with numerous folds which is tied round the waist with a silken or cotton cord. It is worn over the tight fitting *suthan* or trousers of silk chintz susi cloth. It imparts matron like and dignified appearance to the wearer. Dogra women in this dress are paragons of womenhood, diffusing an aroma of modesty, chastity, strength and tenderness all around. They inspired awe in the wicked and courage in the noble.
- iii. Bodice (choli): It is an artistically brocaded or embroidered close fitting jacket covering the upper part of the breast and tied on the back with strings of cotton or silk.

15

Dogra Dishes and Dances

Food of the people is determined by the climate and geographical conditions of the region; it is also a matter of taste. People of the refined taste as the Dogras are, their culinary art reflects in the appetising food of scientifically balanced nutritious ingredients containing enough calories necessary for mental and physical health.

The typical Dogra food consists of the following dishes:

- 1. Shri-palov. It is a sweet and delicious dish. In preparing this food the rice is meshed and fried in ghee in a narrow-necked cooking vessel (degchi) and then it is boiled in milk and mixed with sugar and condensed milk. It is then kept on low fire till it is perfectly cooked. Cinnamon, peeled almonds, pistachios and some other spices are added to it. It is served in small plates.
- 2. Khamiras (Dumplings). Wheat flour is kneaded and leavened and put aside for sometime for fermentation. Then small pieces weighing a *chatak* are taken out of it and rounded and flattened by hand and fried in boiling ghee till reddened before putting it in the frying pan and poppy seeds and peeled almonds are put in it.
- 3. **Thothrus.** These are made of wheat flour in the same way but they are globular in shape.
- 4. Ghiwars. It is made of loosely kneaded and leavened wheat flour which is sprinkled in boiling ghee in a shallow hollow pan in which it assumes a jelly like form of bread. It is taken with sugar and curd.
- 5. Auria. It is prepared by grinding rye into a fine powder and then mixing it with curd and churning it. Then slices of peeled and boiled potatoes or pumpkins are added to it. It is mostly eaten with boiled rice.
- 6. Madharas. These are prepared by frying grams or rajmah or rongi or potato chips, etc. in ghee and then adding curd to it when the grains get softened. They are allowed to simmer on light burning fire after adding salt

and spices. They are eaten with boiled rice. In case of sweet madharas instead of adding salt, sugar is added to them.

- 7. **Khir.** It is prepared by boiling rice in milk and sweetened with sugar. Almonds and pistachios etc. are added to it.
- 8. Makund bari. Wheat flour is kneaded into a dough. Then it is washed again and again till only fibres are left and all white substance is washed away. It is cut into small slices which are fried like the potatoes in ghee and then curd and salt are added to it. It is also taken with boiled rice.
- 9. Ambal. The sour seeds of wild grown pomegranates are crushed and mixed with water and strained through sieve or a piece of gauze cloth. The juice is poured in iron pan in which oil is boiling. Then salt and other condiments are added with a pinch of gur to sweeten it to make it tasty.
- 10. Laddu. It is made of vermicellis of gram flour cooked in ghee and then coated with sugar and made into round balls and dried.
- 11. Sakars. Fine wheat flour is turned into unleavened dough. Then small pieces are taken out of it and flattened into thin circular bread which is then fried in ghee. It is taken with sweet laddu or is steeped in milk and taken when it turns into soft jelly like porridge.

There are many vegetarian typical dishes of Dogras which are prepared in other parts of the country with some variations. These are rajmah, chole, rungimah chole di dal, cauliflower, turnips and cabbages.

The masters of the Dogra culinary art mostly belong to Basohli in Kathua district of Jammu. They were in much demand.

DOGRA DANCES

Dancing is the oldest and liveliest of the arts. Men in all countries and in all times have expressed their feelings in rhythm and body movements.

The dance is the language of the body. It draws people together in their thoughts and feelings. A dancer can communicate any subject and any idea to his audience. His movements may interpret religious history or beliefs, or they may interpret things in our everyday life.

Dogras are virile people full of vitality and gallantry and their dances are the expression of their *joie de vivre*. These dances are performed on special occasions like the advent of spring season, the harvest time when the peasants feel joy at the fruit of their labour, or wedding days or when birth of a male child takes place. They are also performed on the arrival of some important persons. The dances are accompanied by drums and flutes.

Following are the Dogra dances, mostly folk dances:

1. Chhajja Dance. This is also called peacock dance or 'Dandaras'. This dance is performed on the day of *Lohri* festival and it is thought that the peacock is ecstatic at the advent of the spring.

"Chajja" is a huge model of peacock with its tail spread into fan-like form and is made from bamboo sticks, card-boards and multi-coloured papers.

A member of the party puts the "Chajja" into motion and other persons dance in different poses to the beating of the drums. The sweet tunes of *shehnai* with the beating of drums produce an atmosphere of joy.

2. **Bhangra.** It is generally in vogue in the plains of Jammu and is performed on all festive days but specially it is performed on *Baisakhi*.

A clown and a made-up women are the two important characters of the dance. The dance party goes from house to house. This dance is accompanied by songs. The drum beater stands in the middle of the dancers who at every sharp beat of drum shout in rhythmical voice "hoi! hoi! with joy.

3. **Kudd.** Kudd is the dance of the higher regions of Jammu province. Bhaderwah Kishtwary and Ramnagar are known for their Kudd dances. The word Kudd means *mela* and is celebrated once in a year. This dance is generally performed at night.

The people of the village, where this dance is organised, invite their relatives and friends from other places to witness and enjoy this dance.

It is a religious dance connected with the shrines and deities of the mountains. A big fire is lighted in an open space and dancers wearing pyjamas and black jackets with colourful handkerchiefs in their hands go on encircling the fire in slow rhythmical forms. They move kerchiefs with the movements of arms. The movements of the dance gain momentum till it reaches the climax and then again it slows down till it comes to a halt at dawn.

The drums, flutes and "Narsinghas" make the dance more lively and thrilling.

4. **Phumnian.** The word means, blooming, in Dogri. This dance has connection with the birth of a male child, symbolised as a bud. It is performed after the harvest. Before people eat the new grain, it is offered to God with devotion. They go to a religious place and offer the grains and on return perform this dance. The dancers wear tight pyjamas, turbans and

kurtas. While moving in a circle they open and close their fingers symbolising the opening of blossoms.

Motions of the dance also show the birth of a child taking him in the lap, embracing him and blessing him. The movements of this dance are generally performed in the lower hills of Jammu.

5. Raslila. Raslila is a representation of the traditional ras of Lord Krishna and Gopis. The dancers dance in two rows with two small sticks in both hands of every dancer. They move in tune with the strokes of the sticks. Flutes are the main accompaniment of Raslila. The movements of this dance are the slowest of all other folk dances of the Dogras.

HISTORY

A land where a goat and lion
Drinking water together from a pond
Astonished the king who was
In pursuit of the hunt.
He cleared and converted the forest
Into his kingdom called "Jambhu".

16

Reign of Raja Ranjit Dev (1733-82): Golden Chapter in the History of Jammu

The prosperity of Jammu was at its height under Ranjit Dev, whose mild government extended equal protection to Hindus and Mohammedans while the Punjab was overrun by the horrors of war.

-Hugel

The early history of Jammu is shrouded in mystery. Traditionally, Jammu was founded about three thousand years ago by Jambu Lochan, brother of Bahu Lochan, who had earlier established his rule over the area on the left bank of the Tawi, called Bahu.

"According to Tarikh-i-Azmi of Kashmir", writes Dr. M.L. Kapur, "Jammu came into existence around 900 A.D. It is also about this time that our eyes meet the earliest reference to Durgra Desha (from which obviously, the terms Duggar and Dogra are derived) in two inscriptions on copper plates of the 11th century. The plates speak of a grand victory of Cabila Verman of Chamba (910-30) over the combined forces of Kiras and the Lord of Durgara. There is also a stray reference to Bahusthala in Kalan's Rajtarangini but its identity with our Bahu has yet to be established".

The first authoritative reference to Jammu is found in the Memoir of Timur who attacked Jammu and burnt it during his invasion of India. Mal Dev, who then ruled over Jammu, was converted to Islam after his defeat. His immediate successor was Bhim Dev. For a long time Jammu remained occupied with war. After Kapur Dev (1530-71) his two sons, Jay Dev and Samit Dev, fell out with each other and set-up their independent principalities at Bahu and Jammu respectively. They again united during the reign of Hari Dev (1652-88). Hari Dev died in the Deccan while leading a Mughal expedition. In the time of Dhruv Dev (1703-42), the people of Bahu raided and sacked Jammu seven times. So Jammu's population was small and

people lived in temporary huts.

The prosperity, power and grandeur of Jammu is attributed to Raja Ranjit Dev who ascended the throne after the demise of his father, according to Dr. Charak, in 1733 A.D. Ranjit Dev was the first Dogra who established his vast and affluent state on the principles of justice, humanitarianism and secularism. This Raja was true to his words and in horse-riding and military arts had achieved excellence. Therefore, for bravery, valour and love of peace he was renowned throughout northern India.

Major Smyth has given a romantic story of the imprisonment and release of Ranjit Dev by the Governor of Punjab. He has written that many a time the Mughal Governor of the Punjab had invited Ranjit Dev to come to Lahore for his followers had plundered a caravan carrying about 1,00,000 rupees worth of Pashmina going from Kashmir to Lahore for Meer Munnoo. This event took place in 1747. But he did not care. However, in the latter end of 1748 or the beginning of 1749 he seemed to have been so closely pressed by his Bahu brethren that he went to Lahore in the hope to get his family quarrel settled at the Durb Durbar. No sooner did Ranjit Dev reach there than he was put in chains and imprisoned in the lower cell of the Lahore fort. In 1760 Bahadur Khan and Afzal Beg, the officers of the Delhi Darbar had come to purchase some Turkish horses and also to know the conditions of the province. They were performing the job of a Governor there. When they were sitting in their court an attendant informed them that the famous horse that they had purchased for Rs. 48.000 at Turkistan was tied outside but in Lahore there was none so brave and talented who could ride and train such a dreadful horse. A Courtier informed them that there was Raja Ranjit Dev in their prison who was a wonderful rider and he could do the job perfectly well. One Governor ordered that his chains be broken and that task be assigned to him. But they should be careful that the captive must do the practice within the limits of the parade ground.

The walls of the fort were very high except in the northern and western corners where the river Ravi flowed with great speed and was very deep. The walls were only 6 feet high. One day when Ranjit Dev was training the horse in the outer ground of the fort and the spectators were applauding his skill, he suddenly turned the horse and like the speed of lightning crossed over the wall of the fort and appeared on the other side of the river. Ranjit Dev rode faster on the horse as he was followed by over one thousand soldiers on horses. But they could not overtake him. Twenty thousand rupees were placed on his head but Ranjit Dev galloped towards the hills

of Jammu and met the members of his family before sunset.

Hardly had he embraced them when he resolved to go back and within 48 hours he presented himself before the Governor. The Governor was astounded to see him particularly when he had lost all hope of getting back the horse. The Governor said to him, "Ranjit Dev you escaped, then why did you come back?" Ranjit Dev replied, "I could not assess the speed of this horse within the four walls of the fort. Morever, I felt the intense desire of meeting the family members of my home. We Dogras are true to our word and desist from betrayal. I am back at your service".

The Governor said, "What a man you are! I order that you be set free and properly be considered as the Raja of Jammu. Moreover, you are given the gift of a robe of honour and twenty thousand rupees in cash".

Thus Ranjit Dev departed for Jammu with 80 equestrian soldiers and assended the throne of Jammu in 1760. In his absence his brother Kesar Singh was running the government. But the Raja of Bahu had attacked him many times and set the houses of Jammu on fire. Ranjit Dev immediately conquered the Bahu region and annexed the same to Jammu. Then his army marched on and on.

He made Basohli's Amrit Pal, Baderwah's Daya Pal, Kishtwar's Kiram Ullah and Mankot's Azmet Dev his vassals. His suzerainty was accepted by the rulers of Akhnoor, Andarwah, Balwath, Padwel, Chimama, Chanda Saral, Parel, Dosia, Janak Van, Kalakot Shahpore and Shakargarh. He also brought under his control Chamba, Balawar, Bhadu, Bandraltha or Ramnagar, Jasrota, Bhuti Chenani. By 1773, his authority extended over the entire country from Jasrota to Kaluwal on the Chenab and from Roras to Mandikail in Gurdaspur. The rulers of Bhimber, Rajouri and Poonch also were in constant attendance at his court. In 1762, Ranjit Dev, at the behest of Ahmad Shah Abdali, punished the refractory Governor of Kashmir, Sukh Jiwan, who was appointed by Abdali.

During the reign of Ranjit Dev, Jammu achieved great commercial prosperity. Due to the turbulence in the plains the common routes were unsafe, so the trade route was turned through the hills. Due to the insecurity of the roads in the plains the traders who had to go to Kashmir or northwestern boundary would pass through Bilaspur, Haripur, Nurpur and come to Basohli and then arrive at Jammu. The route from Delhi to Kashmir would pass through Jammu because Jammu region was quite safe and from the point of view of trade was quite important, so rich people and many traders settled in the Jammu city. A market with shops filled with goods and merchandise got established stretching about two miles.

Georger Forster says: "Ranjit Dev was a just and wise ruler. Due to his virtuous character, the people of various religions came from outside to settle here and the city became rich and prosperous. He treated the Muslims with kindness and for them he got a colony established in the city where he got a mosque also constructed. Thus many Muslims came and settled here. He gave them all security and ordered that anyone who caused the Muslims any trouble would be severely punished. The Hindus complained that the Muslims would draw water from the wells with the leather buckets and thereby the water would get polluted. Raja Ranjit Dev rejected their grievance and decreed that the water would not thus get impure".

In an age of political turbulence and the religious fanaticism Raja Ranjit Dev used to give refuge and security to everyone without the consideration of caste, creed and religion. The people who ran away from the plains to settle in Jammu included Malika Zamani, the wife of the Mughal Mohammad Shah (1719-48), Mughlani Begum, the widow of Mir Mannu, who had succeeded Zakaria Khan as the Mughal Governor of the Punjab, the family of Raja Kaua Mall, and that of Charat Singh, the grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Jammu had already become a gravitational centre for the scholars, poets and artists. In Ranjit Dev's time Jammu had all the more become the haven of artists, painters and poets. There was a talented Dogri poet, named Devi Datta in his court who wrote many books, for example: Brij Raj Panchista, Bara Mah, Dutta Sangrah. Moreover, he also translated Mahabharta in Brij Bhasha. Ranjit Dev established such an ethos of culture that many poets emerged. One was the famous Sanskrit poet Ganga Ram who wrote a monumental book like Mamla Shotak. He was renowned for his excellence in Sanskrit language and literature and Hindu jurisprudence. Second famous scholar who was born in this atmosphere was Kaka Ram Shastri.

Ranjit Dev also used to welcome artists and painters with kindness and generosity. In his time a special kind of style in painting came into vogue. Sansar Chand, a renowned painter of Jammu says on the characteristics of this style: "Among Jammu school's characteristics is one of naturalism. The colours used are light and delicate and generally light yellow colours have been used. As this art progressed instead of strong and passionate and exciting colours light colours began to be used. The curved and parallel lines brought grandeur to the drawing. The reason for using the light yellowish colours in painting depicting love and

romance was that these could display sadness and despondency".

Wilkinson says:

"The painting of Dogra hills is quite akin to folk art and by developing and adorning it in the royal palaces, no special change occurred".

In Ranjit Sigh's time Nain Sukh and his four sons were renowned painters. They lived in Basohli. They came to Jammu and Ranjit Dev patronised them. There were other painters as well who adorned the court of Ranjit Dev. The paintings of that time are charming and captivating. In them is found the blending of grandeur and magic of the mountains and the beauty, grace and elegance of the Dogra people. The paintings are full of delicacy and sophistication and, moreover, they have their individual qualities. The state of the hearts of Rajas and Ranis have been painted symbolically and depicted in the conditions of nature and natural objects. For example, strongly blowing storms and clouds on the skies, etc. depict the turmoil inside the heart of the heroine or hero.

Jammu had attained eminence in building arts also so that even today the specimens of the old art are found in the old forts and temples. Among the specially worth-mentioning are those of Krimchi, Sucd Mahade Babor, Bilawar, etc. During Raja Ranjit Dev's rule many buildings were constructed. Among these were Havelli Begum which was built for Muglani Begum, a magnificent mosque at Mast Garh in Jammu and Panch Bhakhtar and temple of Lord Shiva. He also expanded and beautified his own palace complex. As very rich people lived during his time, so they also built many magnificent mansions for themselves.

It is commonly acknowledged that Ranjit Dev was a kind judge and an administrator; a man of liberal ideas he showed much intelligence while giving his judgement. Once people brought a complaint against a washerwoman who used to bring food for her husband on the bank of a river. One day, they alleged that she had put poison in the food and after taking it the washerman immediately died. They pleaded that the woman should be severely punished. The Raja enquired if they had any doubt on her moral character. They replied that she had no sexual weakness nor had she any illicit connection with anybody. One fails to know why she poisoned her husband. The king ordered them to see the place where the washerwoman had placed the food and fully examine the surroundings. They went and saw that a serpent had coiled underneath a rock and the ants had collected there and passed over the place where the food was placed. They concluded that the ants must have poisoned the food, as a result of which the washerman must have died. Thus the poor woman was exonerated. In this

way Raja Ranjit Singh used to come to the truth of the case with the power of his extraordinary intellect.

He had appointed many officers to carryout the administration of the State and on them strict vigilance was kept. Those officers found guilty of any fault or accepting any bribe were heavily punished. Of course, officials were given proper and regular salaries. He got improvement made in the cultivation of the land and in the process of collecting the revenue.

Raja Ranjit Singh breathed his last in 1782 leaving a vast state behind him. After him his son, Brij Raj Dev, who had once revolted against his father, ascended the throne of Jammu.

"A century ago", observes Drew, "the old regime was flourishing under Ranjit Dev, who is still spoken of with the highest respect as a wise administrator, a just judge and a tolerant man".

17

Maharaja Gulab Singh: Ulysses of the Hills

"He is the only ruler in India's long history who could be said to have extended the geographical boundaries of India...No previous Indian ruler, not even Samudra Gupta or Akbar, had even dreamed of invading Tibet, and though Zorawar, who ventured too far, paid penalty for his adventure, the Maharaja's forces routed the Tibetan army and extended the border of India to the other side of the Himalayas".

So wrote K.M. Pannikar about Maharaja Gulab Singh, the founder of the Jammu and Kashmir State, whose life-size portrait drawn by Nana K. Jani of Kathiawar in 1815 first meets the eye when one enters the Portrait Gallery of the Amar Mahal Museum, Jammu.

The Maharaja's Life

It was the year 1972 when Maharaja Gulab Singh was born. His father's name was Kishore Singh who held a Jagir at Andarwal in Jammu tehsil but his young days were moulded by the stern hand of his grandfather, at whose feet he learnt the three R's, statecraft, archery, marvellous horsemanship and unparalleled wielding of sword and thus was cast in heroic mould. The boy grew up to pass into history as "Ulysses of the Hills".

Maharaja Gulab Singh claimed his descent from Ranjit Dev himself, who was a great ruler of Jammu and the apostle of secularism in an age when religious fanaticism was thought to be a virtue. After a few generations the crown fell on Raja Jai Dev Singh who was a weakling and engrossed in pleasures. His wife played the ruler but she had grown ugly with black jealousy. Maharaja Ranjit Singh saw his opportunity and ordered Bhai Hukam Singh, his able lieutenant, to march on to Jammu and annex the same to the Sikh state.

Maharaja Gulab Singh, a young boy of sixteen, lashed by his own heroic spirit, galloped off from his grandfather's house and joined in the pitched battle. He fought and proved his mettle by smashing many a men of the enemy and made them withdraw but Bhai Hukam Singh hurled his large columns on the hills of Jammu and ultimately annexed it. At this time Gulab Singh had grown dignified in appearance; well-built, muscular and had a sensitive mind. His eyes, large and fiery, drew attention at once. His fearlessness won him the favour of his enemy and subsequently Bhai Hukam Singh brought him to the notice of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who took him in his service. Later on his brothers Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh also were given jobs by the Maharaja. In fact, the former rose to become the Prime Minister of the Sikh State. From then on began Gulab Singh's odyssey of valorous deeds; the siege of Multan brought him in the admirable notice of Ranjit Singh. In the Frontier campaigns of Ranjit Singh between 1815 and 1820 Gulab Singh played a prominent part. Day by day, his dignity and influence increased at the Sikh Durbar.

It was an age when fighting and adventure was a medium of self-expression for vital and restless people. One such adventurer was Mian Dido, who had plagued the Sikh government of Jammu and Ranjit Singh asked Gulab Singh to bring him down. By a strategem he cut off Dido's supplies and thereafter attacked him in his citadel and shot him dead. In 1820 the State of Jammu was given to Gulab Singh as a jagir and allowed him to keep his force. He was also granted the title of Raja. Soon Gulab Singh by a diplomatic feat conquered Kishtwar. Ranjit Singh harboured an old grudge against the Raja of Rajouri and he was anxious to humble him. So, under instructions of Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh marched on to Rajouri and defeated the Raja.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was highly pleased with Gulab Singh and in 1822 he personally came to Akhnoor. Trumpets sounded and the men cried "Raja Gulab Singh ki Jai" and Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself applied raj tilak to Gulab Singh and thus Ranjit Singh conferred on him the principality of Jammu, which then officially passed again in to the hands of a Dogra ruler.

With unfaltering feet he marched on and made thrilling conquests and pulled down all the chieftains of Jammu territory to their knees and annexed their territories—Reasi, Bhaderwah, Jasrota, Basohli and Smarth etc. Then his Dogra army under General Zowar Singh marched upwards up to Tibet and he proudly planted his *Suraj Bansi* flag on the roof of the world. In the depth of harsh summer and hard winter the Dogra forces marched fearlessly through frost and snow, facing regular as well as

guerilla mountaineers and conquered Lhasa, Baltistan, Gilgit, Kargil and Bunji.

Maharaja Gulab Singh was now at the pinnacle of power but soon after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Lion of Punjab on 27th June, 1839 there started confusion and turmoil at the Lahore Durbar. There were wanton Sardars who were jealous of the Dogra brothers. They and even Rani Jinda, who now held the whip of power, hated them like poison. The result was that Maharaja Gulab Singh's two brothers and a nephew, one by one, fell victims to the Sikh assassins. Maharaja steeled his heart and escaped death narrowly, though his extermination was also sure.

Sikh Confrontation with the British

At last the wheel turned. The British were staring at the fertile lands of the Punjab with fascination and covetous eyes. The Punjab was broken and they saw the chance to crush it under their heels. Maharaja Gulab Singh's imagination worked as vigorously in war as in peace; the military quality in him was tempered with reflection. He saw that luxury had enervated the Sikh chiefs and he cautioned them not to antagonise the British. They did not heed the warning and on 13 December 1845 the British attacked the Sikhs and defeated them near Hari-ka-Patta and in the next war at Sobraon crushed them. Maharaja Gulab Singh, acceptable to both the parties, was called to negotiate. By the Treaty of Lahore on March 9 and 11, 1846, the Sikhs were required to relinquish the Jullender Doab and both banks of Sutlej river, to pay an indemnity of Rs. 1.5 crores and reduce the army to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. A British unit was to be posted in Lahore for the remainder of the year with the Sikhs paying the expenses.

The Lahore Durbar expressed its inability to pay the full amount of indemnity and would either have ceded their entire territory or the treaty would have been paralysed. Maharaja Gulab Singh wielding stark reason to settle problems saw the stupidity of not making peace with the British and could observe the coming events through the shadow. By not acting unwisely, a bridge over the crises was built by him when he came forward to pay Rs. 75 lakhs. The Punjab was saved for the time being.

Kashmir passes to Maharaja Gulab Singh

Then the Treaty of Amritsar was made on 16th March. 1840 by which the State of Jammu and Kashmir and other areas were given to Maharaja Gulab Singh. To say that he was given these areas on payment of Rs 75 lakhs is to put the cart before the horse. The British had already decided to hand over the hilly areas to Gulab Singh as with their base at Ferozepore;

a menacing people on the line of communication ready to rise, it would have been impossible for the British in 1845 to conquer Kashmir and retain it. The prospect was completely dark for them. Another main object which the British had in view was to dismember the Sikh empire.

It was by political wisdom as well as by conquest that Maharaja Gulab Singh acquired Jammu and Kashmir. "The view that Kashmir was sold for a paltry sum by a Government whose main interest was to fill its coffers is a travesty of facts and misreading of history", says K.M. Pannikar. Kashmir had already been conquered by Maharaja Gulab Singh and he was the de facto "Master of the Valley". Let Francis Young Husband speak in this connection:

"Raja Gulab Singh has already been mentioned as accompanying Ranjit Singh's troops on their victorious march to Kashmir in 1819. On the death of Ranjit Singh there was much violence and mutiny among the Sikh solidiers and the Governor of Kashmir was murdered by them. Thereupon a body of about 5,000 men nominally under the command of Sher Singh, Ranjit Singh's successor, was sent to Kashmir to restore authority. This was the year 1841, when the British were still behind the Sutlej, but were engaged in the fruitless and disastrous expedition to Kabul, which resulted in the murder of the envoy. Gulab Singh quelled the mutiny in Kashmir, placed there a Governor of his own and from this time he became a virtual master of the Valley, though till the year 1846 it nominally belonged to the Sikh rulers at Lahore".

The British handed over Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh on paper. Sheikh Imam Uddin, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir under instructions from Lal Singh of Lahore Durbar, refused to hand over the possession of Kashmir to the Maharaja. It was only when the Dogra force under the command of Yuvraj Ranbir Singh aided by "a small British force", came sweeping with relentless fury that the Governor surrendered Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh.

Then a nameless soldier from the Shivaliks became resplendent in the brilliant crown of a Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir.

Maharaja Gulab Singh's Administration

It was an age when the frenzy of fanaticism and human suffering evoked no tears. Hearts had become stony but Gulab Singh even though an orthodox Hindu, was secular in outlook and equalitarian in spirit. No doubt, he was unbearably harsh and furious at times but he found that a strong action was necessary to impress some wanton people with irresistible

might, put down rebellion and restore order and thereby render trade and commerce safe for all.

No less than 3,115 jagirdars had obtained grants or land from the previous governments and the peasantry was suffering. He shocked most of the jagirdars by snatching away their jagirs which mitigated the suffering of the peasants to some extent.

The begar or forced labour caused the inhabitants a great deal of misery. He brought reform in this too. He determined a certain number of men in each village who would be considered liable to do labour when called upon by the Government. For this they were given one kharwar of rice per month and their food when employed. When not called upon they were only to be paid six kharwars for the year. An officer was appointed to take charge of this work.

Maharaja Gulab Singh introduced rationing system in food and reorganised the shawl department and reformed the system whereby the tax was regulated by the price of the shawl in market and the worker was no longer serf.

Maharaja Gulab Singh as a Man

Cunningham and Major Smyth detested Maharaja Gulab Singh, yet the former conceded that the Maharaja was "an able and a moderate man, who does little in idle spirit and who is not without some traits both of good humour and generosity, while the latter acknowledged that Gulab Singh "was courteous and polite in demeanour and exhibited a suavity of manner and language". He further said that he was "of good memory, free, humorous and intimate with the lowest and poorest classes of his subjects".

Sir Henry, who knew Gulab Singh felt he was a terror to the tribe of corrupt and tyrannical officials and though his justice was crude it was expeditious and he would decide cases on the spot.

This summarises his character. Tact, valour, sharp intellect and generosity were the keynote of his character and "he possessed every gift that thrusts a man from the depths to peak and lays on his brow the mantle of leadership".

At last he was broken by dropsy and the shadow of death seemed close by, so he handed over the reins of his government to his son and soon after he breathed his last in 1858. The State was like a widow in deep mourning.

18

Ranbir Singh: Maharaja with a Heart of Gold

Ranbir Singh (born in 1830) was the youngest of the three sons of Maharaja Gulab Singh. Unluckily, by 1840 both his elder brothers, Udham Singh and Sohan Singh, had been killed and he was destined to succeed his father, Maharaja Gulab Singh, as the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir state which had been founded in 1846. He received adequate military training and briefing and grounding in higher politics under the seasoned guidance of his father. He met several times the top-ranking British officers, got education in English diplomacy and etiquette from European tutors, read Persian, Sanskrit and Pushto languages and mastered many oriental subjects. He had two daughters and three sons, Pratap Singh, Ram Singh and Amar Singh. Ranbir Singh was annointed Maharaja by his father in February 1856, a year and a half before his own death. Ranbir Singh ruled for 29 years and died on 12th September, 1885 at the age of 55.

Consolidation of the State

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was essentially a man of peace. However, in order to secure his north-western frontier, he had to mobilise his army against the frontier tribes and he conquered Gilgit, Nagar, Honza, Chitral, Yasin, Darel and all the Shinaki and Khushwaq in tribal republics between 1860 and 1874. He established contacts with Yarkand, Kashgar, Khotan and other central Asian powers and with Russia and sent his secret agents to these countries. He sent annual trade and political missions to Lhasa and 18 other monastries of Tibet and finally with British collaboration despatched Douglas Forsythe trade mission to Yarkand in 1872 and 1873 and concluded a trade treaty with Central Asian States and the British Government.

Administrative Reforms

At home he carried out several social and administrative reforms. He decentralised administration and divided functions of the government into three main branches: Daftar-i-Nizami, Daftar-i-Diwani and Daftar-i-Jangi; appointed four ministers to run the government and allotted them separate portfolios. For better administration he divided Kashmir province into 6 districts, 27 tehsils and 48 parganas and Jammu province into 8 districts, 25 tehsils and 207 parganas. Districts of Gilgit, Skardu and Ladahak were also sub-divided into parganas. Treasury and accounts were reformed and auditing of accounts and cash salary system were introduced. Judicial system was reorganised and Jury System was introduced. He codified laws and promulgated *Ranbir Dand Vidhi* (Ranbir Penal Code).

He established a number of courts, i.e., one High Court, 2 Sadar Courts, I4 District Courts, 2 City Courts, one Daghi-i-Shawl Court and one Panchayat Court in addition to Revenue Courts of Tehsildars and Naibtehsildars. Maharaja also held two Darbars daily at which he heard appeals. A mixed court of British and State officials was set up in 1872 to decide civil suits between European and British subjects on the one hand and the subjects of the Maharaja on the other. He introduced numerous innovations, struck his own coin, the chilki rupee, issued paper currency called shrikar, reformed Dogri script and made it official language for the Jammu Province. He also got published several books in bilingual script, Dogri and Persian. He set up Post and Telegraph offices all over the state and issued his own postage stamps. The usual time for transit of dak (post) between Jammu and Srinagar was 48 hours. There were some 300 dak chaukis (post offices) all over the state. Postal organisation of his time has been recognised by the world authorities on Postal System and a book titled Stamps of Jammu and Kashmir by Prof. Frits Staal of California University, in collaboration with Shri B.P.Sharma, has been published by Collectors Club, New York.

He prohibited the evil customs of Sati and female infanticide, gave aid to widows and poor girls, abolished slavery; gave *Sudras* (Scheduled Castes) right to study scriptures, constructed roads, dugs *Kuhls* and tanks for irrigation and water supply and established Dharmarth Trust for management of religious endowments, temples and shrines.

Patron of Education and Letters

He gave particular attention to dissemination of knowledge and enhancing literary activities. He donated a lakh of rupees for the establishment of the Punjab University, Lahore in 1883. He was its first Fellow. He opened first two colleges in the state, one each in Jammu and Srinagar, started schools on British India model in all districts, tehsils, towns and in all the big villages. *Maktabs* and *Pathshalas* (schools for children) were revived. Big university type residential educational institutions were established at Jammu and Uttarbehni to accommodate over 2000 students. Education was made free at all levels and students were provided free books, stationery, boarding and lodging. He introduced printing in the state. He established a bureau of about 100 scholars to collect or copy great Sanskrit and Persian works and to translate them into vernaculars and Dogri; his Sanskrit manuscripts collection at the Rughnath Temple is one of the biggest in the world containing over 6000 manuscripts. He also set up the Department of Research and Publications, founded the literary society. Vidya Vilas Sabha attended to several Hindu and Muslim scholars.

Social and Economic Measures

New commercial crops and industries were introduced in the valley; 20 varieties of grapes from France, Iran and other countries were brought to the valley and 1,118,410 sapplings were distributed free to the cultivators. Cultivation of Hops was introduced and four government gardens laid out for this purpose. Wine industry was encouraged and best quality of whisky was produced in Govt. Distillery. Saffron cultivation was also revived. Sericulture, cocoon breeding and silk filature were introduced on large scale as cottage industry; a silk factory and silk department were opened. He encouraged shawl, carpet and paper-making industries, opened a shawl warehouse in London, held exhibition of Kashmiri crafts at Calcutta and London and instituted an Annual Fair at Jammu. He gave several concessions and subsidies to shawl-bafs and craftsmen so that the people of labour class, as a general rule, were well fed, well clothed and fairly housed; prices were apparently low. He accorded full religious freedom to citizens, gave large subsidies to repair mosques and construct churches and other places of worship and remitted Nikah tax and several other cesses.

Famine of 1877-78

During the ghastly famine of 1877-78 in the valley. Maharaja ordered that grains be purchased worth lakks of rupees from the Punjab. The grains had cost the state Rs. 15. 90 per *kharwar* whereas it was sold to the people at a rate of Rs. 4.25 only. This great subsidy helped the starving people. *Langers* (free kitchens) were also started. To encourage import of foodgrains to the valley the Maharaja awarded Rs. 1000 as 'Khilat' to those who

brought to Kashmir the foodgrains to the value of Rs. 20,000. About 2 lakh mounds of grain were imported and the Maharaja met a loss of over Rs. 33 lakhs in the form of free distribution of food and grains, remittance of various cesses and taxes and arrears of land revenue in order to save people from the ravages of famine.

A Great Builder and Patron of Architecture

Maharaja Ranbir Singh constructed a number of massive buildings for their intrinsic value and to provide employment to thousands of artisans and labourers. The huge Rughnath Temple complex at Jammu is well balanced and impressive in construction. So are also Ranbireshwar and Jammu, Temple University at Uttarbehni and Maharaja Gulab Singh's Samadhi at Rambagh, Srinagar. Among his imperious mansions was the Ajaib Ghar (Museum) Complex. This building, constructed in 1876 on a plinth area of 360 feet by 120 feet in a record time of three months, is an engineering feat by any standard. It contained the largest room in India equipped with some very fine Venetian mirrors; walls and ceilings of the whole building were painted by Kashmiri *Kammagars*. A number of miniatures in Dogra Art Museum, Jammu and S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar belong to his period. Some very fine manuscripts, illustrations and murals were done under his patronage.

19

Maharaja Hari Singh: An Extraordinary Social Reformer

The soldier of fortune from the Jammu hills was resplendent in the glittering crown of a Maharaja. He was Maharaja Gulab Singh who ruled over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Baltistan, etc. He was the founder of the united and compact State of Jammu and Kashmir. His dynasty continued to rule over it for more than a century (1846-1952).

Maharaja Gulab Singh's genius winged in two distinct realms of achievement; he was as great a statesman as well as a soldier. To these he owed his meteoric rise. His reign may be termed as an Age of Conquests. His conquests were the most fruitful events in Indian history.

It was left to his son and successor Maharaja Ranbir Singh to construct an edifice on his strong foundation. Maharaja Ranbir Singh's rule was an Age of Consolidation and Enlightenment. Schools and colleges were opened. Maktabs and Pathshallas were revived. Libraries were established and the Dharmarth Trust was formed. He codified laws and promulgated the Ranbir Penal Code. Subsidies were granted to repair mosques and churches. He was also a patron of literature and a great builder of temples.

Shree Pratap Singh (1885-1925) succeeded his father. His was an Age of Modernisation. The two trunk roads, Jhelum Valley Road and Banihal Cart Road, were completed during his time. The Jammu-Sialkot Railway was thrown open to traffic in 1890. The land revenue settlement was done under the able supervision of Walter Lawrence. Many roads and canals were constructed and the Food Control Department was set-up.

Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the throne after the death of his uncle Maharaja Pratap Singh on September 23, 1925. He rose as a luminous star on the firmament of reformation in Indian history. His reign was primarily an *Age of Reformation*.

In his first public speech in January 1926 he declared:

"If I am considered worth governing this State, then I will say that for me all communities, religions and races are equal. As a ruler I have no religion; all religions are mine and my religion is *Justice*. It is possible that while dispensing justice I may commit mistakes. To err is human. One who says that he does not commit a mistake is not speaking the truth. Only God is free from error. My duty is to look at one and all with equality. I shall, as far as possible, work with justice".

He realised that social justice was most important and significant in human affairs. The Maharaja did his best in the field of social reform and thus naturally clashed with orthodox people. While he worked for progress, the orthodox were all for reaction. But he faced it and overcame the opposition.

Much earlier than Maharaja Hari Singh, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and much later Mahatma Gandhi had tried to eradicate untouchability. But they had not been able, with all their efforts, to eradicate it completely.

Maharaja Hari Singh had studied in Ajmer and was nourished on western, progressive and liberal ideas. He had studied books on history, politics and social subjects and had realized that Indian society condemned the *Harijans* to a life of filth and degradation. They lived in hovels yet they continued to render valuable services to the society for a mere pittance. Even the minority of *Harijans*, he said, should feel secure, happy and free, and with characteristic zeal he did much with the force of his great personality in support of *Harijan* upliftment.

The depressed classes in the State were subjected to great humiliation. Harijans were not allowed to draw water from a common well or tank and their children could not study at schools where upper class children received education. This discriminatory treatment was obnoxious and pernicious and the Maharaja could not allow such unjust treatment to be meted out to this section of his subjects.

He, therefore, ordered that no discrimination would be shown to the depressed classes in any of the government institutions and threw open all public wells, tanks, temples and schools to them. The district officers had orders that they should supervise and see that these instructions were followed in letter and spirit and punish those who violated them.

DOORS OF TEMPLES OPENED FOR HARIJANS

Maharaja Hari Singh made a formal proclamation on October 31, 1932 in which he declared that the *Harijans* would be allowed to enter and

worship in all temples. He also ordered that the proclamation should be published in the Gazette Extraordinary of the Government, and the same should be communicated to the Minister for Religious Institutions, Head Pujaris of Raghunath Temple, Srinagar and Jammu for information of the public. The proclamation was vociferously opposed by the priests. The Head Priest of the Raghunath Temple, Jammu resigned in protest. The Maharaja had great regard for the Head Pujari as he had been associated with the Dogra House for many years and made efforts to dissuade him from giving up his job. But the pujari was adamant. The Maharaja accepted his resignation but did not withdraw the proclamation. This decision of Maharaja Hari Singh earned him the unprecedented credit of being the first ruler in India to have taken such a bold step for the emanicipation of the Harijans.

HARIJAN UPLIFTMENT

Maharaja Hari Singh was intelligent enough to realise that these reforms had no value for men with empty stomachs. So economic assistance was also granted to the depressed classes. Their children were granted special scholarships and preferential treatment was accorded to them in recruitment to various government services. Seats were reserved for their representatives in local bodies and the State Legislature, called Praja Sabha, when it was established later on. If Maharaja Hari Singh had waged no struggle other than this against untouchability, even then he would have earned immortality.

CHILD MARRIAGES UNLAWFUL

Maharaja Hari Singh had heard many horrifying stories of child marriages, particularly in Hindu society. It was considered a two-edged sword which caused many health hazards to the couple. If the girl became a child-widow then, under the Hindu custom, she could not remarry. Thus, great misery was caused as a result of this evil custom. Maharaja Hari Singh soon after his accession to the throne enacted a law in 1928, called the Infant Marriages Prevention Regulation, under which the age of marriage for girls was fixed at minimum of 14 years and for boys a minimum of 18 years. If anyone was found following the pernicious practice of marrying the child below these ages or sided or abetted such marriages, he was imprisoned for one year with or without a fine which could extend upto Rs. 1,000.

At the same time this law forbade incompatible marriages by providing that a man above 50, marrying a girl below 15 would make the man and his father-in-law, besides their accomplices, liable to be punished with

imprisonment upto four years with or without a fine which could be extended to Rs. 2,000. This salutary measure paved the way for ending the child and unequal marriages and thus it brought peace and happiness to the people of the state.

WIDOW REMARRIAGE

A Hindu woman, howsoever young, could not remarry when her husband died. In 1933 Maharaja Hari Singh passed a law whereby a widow had the right to remarry without any hurdles. The purpose of this law was explained by His Highness in these words:

"In spite of the fact that a lot of change has come in the Hindu society and the majority of the Hindus feel that for the Hindu widows to remarry is right, still some people consider widow remarriage harmful for the Hindu society at large. Taking into consideration the fact that parts of India also are advancing, it is my opinion that there should be no restriction on Hindu widows marrying again. The widow remarriage would result in the benefit of the public".

PROHIBITION OF POLYGAMY

Maharaja Hari Singh decried polygamy among the Hindus.

Moreover, from ancient times, there was a tradition among the Buddhists of Ladakh that all the brothers of one family could marry one woman, and a married woman had a right to keep another husband with or without the consent of her husband or husbands. In 1941a law was made whereby it was considered a crime for a woman to keep more than one husband.

PROSTITUTION SUPPRESSED

Another law was passed in 1934 which was called the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women Regulation by which the brothels were closed and public prostitution was considered immoral, a sin and grave offence. It was very difficult to execute this law. But the Maharaja was determined to do away with this curse. So he adopted measures whereby these unfortunate and outcaste women could either be absorbed in respectable families or were given training in some kind of handicraft which would make them economically self-supporting.

DEMAND FOR "RUM" ILLEGAL.

The Maharaja got a law passed in the Praja Sabha in 1940, whereby none could accept "Rum"; a certain amount of cash, which was taken from the side of bridegroom by the bride's side at the time of betrothal or marriage. To obtain "Rum", was now regarded an offence and was punishable under the law.

INFANTICIDE AMONG THE RAJPUTS

The custom of infanticide was long prevalent among the Rajputs. The moment a girl was born, she was strangled to death and buried inside the compound of the house. The original cause of this heinous crime was an economic one. The poor among the Rajputs could not afford to pay the heavy dowry demanded by the parents of the boy. The practice was prevalent even during the time of Maharaja Hari Singh. So he proclaimed that for every daughter, born in a Rajput family, her parents would be granted an acre of land and financial help at the time of her marriage. The Maharaja also established a regular fund, called the Dhandevi Memorial Fund, in memory of his deceased wife for this purpose. In this way the sinful practice was eradicated.

SMOKING AMONG CHILDREN

In 1929 Maharaja Hari Singh promulgated a law called the *Juvenile Smoking Regulation*, whereby smoking among young children was forbidden, and any boy below 16 years of age could not sell tobacco.

REFORMS AMONG THE RAJPUT COMMUNITY

There was some caste distinction among the Rajputs. The Maharaja had done away with the distinction of high and low class system prevailing among them. He declared that the Rajputs, whether high or low, should sit together and interdine. There was a strange tradition among the Rajputs according to which if a Rajput tilled the land, he could not marry off his son to the daughter of Suvaran Rajputs, though he could give away his daughter to them. In order to stop this practice, Maharaja Hari Singh held a function and himself ploughed the land in front of an assembled crowd at the Ranbir Mahal. He issued strict instructions "that there should be no distinction between one Rajput and another one so far as social status and social intercourse were concerned".

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Maharaja Hari Singh was a staunch advocate of the educational system and girls' education. He opened girls' schools and allowed the girls to receive higher education in colleges. There was no bar to their entry in the government services. Many women were appointed in government jobs, mostly in Education and Medical departments; a separate branch of the Education Department was also established for the advancement of the girls' education.

MEDICAL REFORMS

As Maharaja Hari Singh wished that more and more people should receive free medical aid, he reformed the whole medical system. He had a central medical hospital building constructed in Jammu at the cost of Rs. 8 lakhs and another at Srinagar at the cost of Rs. 35 lakhs. A total of about a hundred hospitals and dispensaries were opened in the state. Five hospitals were opened for the T.B. patients. Many students were granted scholarships for getting medical training in foreign countries and were later given appointments in the State. Moreover, a scheme for eradication of plague in Jammu and another for eradication of cholera in Kashmir were formulated. As a result of these, both the diseases completely disappeared from the State.

RESPECT FOR ALL RELIGIONS

Maharaja Hari Singh avowed that all religions were equal before God. He was, therefore, tolerant towards all religions and there was complete freedom of religious practice in the State. He used to participate in the festivals and religious functions of all the religions and respected their sentiments. At the time of Id festival, he used to visit the Id ground and congratulate the Muslims and remain there so long as they were engaged in the worship. His cosmopolitan and liberal outlook surpassed all in those times of narrow vision. It is since then the practice of participating in each other's religious festivals began and has been continuing thereby helping in the emotional integration.

Maharaja Hari Singh was, indeed, a pioneer in many respects. He was eager to make his State a welfare one. The true facts about him are being realised only with the passage of time. As ill luck would have it, the turn of events took him away to exile in Bombay where he died like the hero of a Greek tragedy, his tragic flaw, if it was a flaw, being his love for self-respect and dignity.

20

Maharani Tara Devi of Jammu and Kashmir (1910-67)

"Oh, Tara, you were born under a lucky star. A small landholder's daughter you will marry one of the greatest kings of India", the parents said to their seventeen-year old daughter. They put round her neck a gold collar set with jewels, the token of espousal. It is said that General Janak Singh of the State army had known this daughter of Shri Beli Chand Katoch, a landholder at Bijaipur in the Kangra valley and he thought: "This marvellous gem should adorn the palace of Jammu and Kashmir". Maharaja Hari Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, had married thrice earlier, twice in Saurashtra and once in the Chamba State but all the three wives had died childless.

To know the late Maharani Tara Devi one may simply contemplate on her two large portraits done by Sd. Sobha Singh and which are displayed in the Amar Mahal Museum. The chiselled features, the bright big eyes and clear ivory complexion: these are the dominant features of her physiognomy. The psychological insight also can be gained by gazing at the portraits. In one portrait the Maharani is richly dressed in shimmering Dogra costume, made out of the satin smooth fabrics. The soft and subdued gloom on her face reflects those tragic times when the Pakistani raiders swooped on the State, and her heart bled on seeing the devastation and misery wrought by them.

The other picture shows her in the saffron-coloured clothes of a devotee of Lord Krishna, singing hymns in accompaniment of an *ek-tara*, a stringed musical instrument. This is the portrait of her last years when she had practically renounced the world. Love for her gods and passion to mitigate the suffering of the people were the only psychological traits that were dominant in her.

A Day in the Life of the Maharani

Maharani Tara Devi would not remain idle. Early morning a sheaf of petitions came from widows, orphans, parents who could not marry off their daughters—all seeking charities. The late Maharani was moved to pity at the sight of misery. Seldom did a distressed person's appeal go without success. Each day large sums of money, garments, jewellery were given in charity. The late Maharani loved her work. It was her good fortune, she thought, to be in a position to help those who were in need. She used to plead often with the late Maharaja on behalf of the servants or officials who had incurred his displeasure. Once in a while, with tears in her eyes, she begged for the pardon of a political offender. She had a firm belief in distributing justice, the great religious principle.

The author of "Heir Apparent", her son, Dr. Karan Singh, says that Maharani Tara Devi was of poor family and howsoever she may have liked the trappings and tinsel of royalty, she always considered it a sacred duty to alleviate the suffering of the poor. Throughout her thirty years as Maharani she spent large amounts on helping not only her poor relations but hundreds of common folk in want and distress. It is impossible to recount the number of girls she got married off and that of the houses for the poor she had got made.

Her Husband and Reforms

The late Maharaja Hari Singh could not but be captivated by the late Maharani's extraordinary charm. She had rare qualities of superb common sense and courage. From her photographs we can imagine well enough that her fascination could not entirely be lost on the late Maharaja. The incompatibility that existed in the characters of the husband and the wife was the contrast one could find in a strong ruler and an innocent and tender woman.

Of course, they were estranged after 1950. The reason was that Maharaja Hari Singh hated the late Maharani's brother, Th. Nichint Chand. The finger of Destiny wrote! The Maharaja started resenting the Thakur but the Maharani could not forsake him. Th. Nichint Chand reminded her that when in the palace intrigue and conspiracy lurked in darkness like rats to come out at the first opportunity, he was the only source of comfort to her. The Maharani had complete faith in her brother.

Nevertheless, the Maharaja and Maharani lived for a number of years in harmony and tranquility otherwise the large number of social reforms done in their time could not have been possible. Maharani Tara Devi hunted on horseback with her husband. She was a good shot. They

sometimes cooked together, went on picnics and travels and enjoyed the joys of life together for quite a long time. Thus she had managed to win Maharaja Hari Singh's affections by her beauty and wit. She did not fade away between the screens of the palace but became the inseparable companion of her husband for many years.

Maharaja Hari Singh made many social reforms, particularly, he tried to mitigate the suffering of women. He himself had lived like a Happy Prince and could have had no knowledge of the miseries of the poor and their social problems. Maharani Tara Devi had full knowledge about them. What rendered the idea of Tara Devi's affinity for the miserable more acceptable was that she had seen the suffering of the common folk face to face in her early life and her feeling for the distressed seemed to have been so strong that her efforts for bringing about social reformation with the help of her husband became almost the cult of an ideal.

Mother to the Harijans

Maharani Tara Devi would not tolerate the distinction between man and man based on spurious notions of caste purity. She had, like her husband, equalitarian ideals and wanted to build a bridge between socially unequal girls. Thus, she included *Harijan* girls among the nine who were worshipped during the holy Navratra. She did not believe in culinary taboos and freely interdined with the members of other religions.

She appears to have persuaded the Maharaja to throw all temples opened to the *Harijans*. Thus, untouchability was abolished in the State long before Mahatma Gandhi took up the cause. Special scholarships were provided for the *Harijan* boys and girls in schools. Orders were issued for giving them preferential treatment in recruitment in services.

Maharani Tara Devi got many *Harijan* girls married at her own expenses and gave away clothes and jewellery to many of them.

Other Social Reforms

She made every effort to get infanticide among the Rajputs stopped. Every Rajput parent who had a daughter was allotted one acre of State land and substantial financial help was given to him. Infant marriage was made a serious crime and also immoral traffic of girls was recognised as a highly punishable offence. Rum Rasum was altogether stopped by being recognised as a social evil. The widows were allowed to remarry under the State law. The late Maharani also got many widows married at her own expense within my personal knowledge.

Interest in the Promotion of Education

She felt deeply interested in the promotion of education in the State. She presided over the functions of the colleges and delivered addresses on the occasion of convocations and prize distributions in the three colleges of the State.

In one address she said, "Education is almost free and compulsory at certain places in the State but there is nothing extraordinary in this. The children have the same claim in receiving primary education like the milk of the mother. The question of compulsion or of payment does not arise. If the teaching staff of your institute teaches the children with motherly love, they can achieve literacy in a short time. I trust that the character of the candidates will not be lost sight of in the selection of teachers. She said that the higher education is not imparted merely for passing examinations. The real purpose is to fit the students for meeting all difficulties in their future lives with ability. India is passing today through a critical period. Hence, this is the time when ability of those who have received education in various educational institutions is being put to a serious test. Their education can be said to have been successful only if at this critical moment they give the proper lead and show the requisite qualities of foresight, patience, humanity, tolerance and love".

On this occasion, the teaching staff and the staff of the college felt honoured and the Principal, Dr. R.K. Bhan, described the occasion as a red letter day for the education department.

Special attention was given to the female education also. A separate department of female education was opened in the State. Many girls' schools were opened in the State and girls were admitted in the colleges and given special scholarships.

Service to the Soldiers

In the World War II Indian troops were sent to the war fronts and Maharaja Hari Singh had left for London to attend the meeting of Churchill's War Cabinet of which the former was a member. Earlier he had paid a visit to the State Forces in the Middle East. During those war days the late Maharani felt that she should do something for the jawans at the forward areas and their families at home.

She organised a War Aid Committee and ladies club in which Dogra and Kashmiri, both Hindu and Muslim leading ladies took part. They would knit, sew and prepare sweets and pickles for troops in the forward areas. They would also collect money, clothes and blankets and distribute them among the families of the soldiers engaged in war. Her social service was recognised by the British Government which awarded her "The Crown of India", a decoration reserved for distinguished women.

Refugee Relief Work

In 1947, as we know, the State was at the centre of political storms and history was rapidly being forged on the anvil of clashing events. The Pakistani raiders had complete sway over the villages bordering with Pakistan. The terror that stalked the boundaries of the State was ruthlessly making its way to the city of Jammu itself, which had become a large refugee camp and the prospect was black as an Indian night. But Maharani Tara Devi rose to the occasion and it was at that moment that her courage and strong organisational capacity came to surface. She would spend the whole day in distributing rations and clothes and till late night attend to the needs of the crying women and children. Often she financed and arranged for simple marriages among the refugees. She organised a Women's Seva Dal, which later was called Maharani Seva Dal and arranged for them to receive para-military training from the army authorities and ex-service men. She allotted to this Dal a huge amount from her own privy purse. Thus she was in every way active in the refugee relief work. She was hailed as the 'Angel of Mercy'.

Many distinguished personalities visited the centres of this organisation. They praised the Maharani who had taken charge as General Officer Commander of the Seva Dal as "Ex-Officio". The Dal under her instructions and guidance had set-up some other sections such as Army wing, Refugee Relief Committee, Nursing and First Aid wings. The volunteers of the Dal arranged stage-cultural shows before the troops on the border area.

Lady Mountbatten who paid a visit to Jammu said, "I am much pleased to visit the Maharani's Seva Dal. It gives me added joy to watch the young girls handling rifles. Girls are smart not only in training but are all educated with mental outlook". Gen. K.M. Cariappa, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian army wrote to Maharani Tara Devi. "The Dal was started at a very critical time when peace of the State was threatened and the pressure on the border line by the hostiles was on the increase every moment. The initiative of number of patriotic ladies was funded by Her Highness—Maharani Sahiba of Jammu and Kashmir. Under her guidance Eves woke up and became ready to defend their country at a critical time. Similarly, Baldev Singh, Defence Minister, Maniben Patil and Mrs. John

Mathai also expressed their high appreciation for the Maharani's patriotic work during the dark days of Pak aggression.

The Renunciation

Maharani Tara Devi became a plaything of circumstances over which she had no control and after her estrangement from her husband she went on pilgrimages to various holy places in India and also visited the great temples in the South in the company of her son, Dr. Karan Singh. During these pilgrimages she gave large sums of money in charity. After the demise of her husband the gracious lady passed her days in complete retirement within the four walls of Amar Mahal, wearing only white garments and no jewellery. "Life has no taste for me now", she cried.

Seclusion and renunciation are great sharpeners and refiners of the sense of spirituality and peace because they encourage the habit of concentration on the Godhead. So was it with the late Maharani. There was much spiritual upliftment in her. But even in those last days of her life the interests of the distressed were dearer to her than life itself and she continued to send them help in cash and kind.

21

Dr. Karan Singh: From Yuvraj to Global Citizen

"A statesman and brilliant administrator; perceptive thinker and profound humanist, artist and poet, Dr. Karan Singh's evolutionary world-view, culminating in the convergence of science and consciousness, promises to be a breakthrough in a fragmented, fractured and frustrated world".

-Prof. Kishore Gandhi

The booming of guns from the high hill of Hari Parbat in Srinagar announced the birth of Heir Apparent to His Highness Maharaja Hari Singh and Her Highness Maharani Tara Devi. The day was 9th March, 1931; the Yuvraj, later named Karan Singh, was born in the elite coastal resort of Cannes in France. The people of Jammu and Kashmir came out in the streets danced and rejoiced. The school children were given sweets and the poor rice and money. The people of those days still carry his image of Yuvraj and even now call him Yuvraj Karan Singh Bahadur. The vicissitudes of time could not efface this image.

It is important to note that the seeds of religion and spiritualism were sown in him when in his mother's womb. Maharani Tara Devi was a highly religious woman and was at her devotions most of the time during her confinement. She listened to the devotional songs from a gramophone which is still preserved in the Amar Mahal Museum, Jammu.

The life's journey of Dr. Karan Singh has four stages or turnings and corresponding to it there are four stages of his ascent on the ladder of spiritualism.

First Stage

Heir to the throne of the largest princely State of India, sequestered in royal isolation of palaces with their hordes of fawning courtiers, he was forced into princely pastimes like horse racing, polo and shikar. It is astounding that later Karan Singh was able to break the shackles of noblesse oblige with which he had been bound to ride the crest of the wave of an egalitarian, socialistic society ushered in by an independent India.

At this first stage he loved the moments with his mother who taught him to sing the lilting Dogri devotional songs. He felt proud to be a Dogra and his affection for Dogra culture got deeply rooted in his psyche. He studied at Doon School and began reading prolifically, which made him think of the vast world outside the ramparts of the palaces.

At this time he was exposed to a world of suffering and sorrow. He witnessed a horrifying scene. He writes:

"At about this time I went to Dachigam and shot a bear while it was eating mulberries on one of the trees. It fell to the ground shrieking pitifully like a child, and lay there for long before it died. These cries haunted me for weeks... I privately recorded a signed note on 1st January, 1952 to the effect that my long-range aim was to achieve spiritual enlightenment and peace and to successfully spread the message throughout the world so that the world which is rushing headlong into the dark and frightful abyss of destruction along the road of hate, envy, cruelty and fanaticism can be saved and put on the broad and clear sunlit path of peace, happiness, love and universal prosperity. I was just under twenty-one years of age when I wrote this..."

At the knickerbocker state Karan Singh's life had not been like a spring breeze and one of unbroken bliss. He suffered physically and for long had been tossing on the sick bed and thus took to reading and high thinking. He was destined to see the world of politics when he met an accident and had to get himself admitted in a New York hospital for surgery. He stayed there for a year and saw the Dewey-Truman presidential race on his bedside TV. He realised that the golden world of the Maharajas was finished and he had to decide whether to follow his father into exile or join the new changing order of democratic India.

At the age of eighteen Karan Singh decided for a partnership in the birth of a new nation, the discovering of India's rich mosaic of people and culture and a total immersion in its religion, literature and public life.

Second Stage

His dimension at the second stage widened to include the whole of Jammu and Kashmir State, whose founder was his illustrious ancestor Maharaja Gulab Singh. While he had a special affinity with the Jammu

region, he was now deeply committed to the welfare of the Kashmir Valley and the far-flung regions of Ladakh.

He was appointed as Regent by his father in 1949 and continued at the post upto 1952. Then he was elected Sadar-i-Riyasat (President) and remained so till 1965 and then served as Governor of Jammu and Kashmir from 1965 to March 1967. This was the most productive period of his life. He graduated from the Jammu and Kashmir University of which he was himself the Chancellor. In 1957 he took an M.A. degree from the Delhi University in Political Science with a first class first, creating a University record which is still unbroken. He then earned his doctorate from the same University by writing a thesis on the political thought of Sri Aurobindo.

It must be remembered that those were the days when political tempests were unleashing their full force against the Dogra dynasty. Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla, the then Prime Minister of Kashmir, was an egotist, with little consideration for the young prince and it shows Dr. Karan Singh's sagacity and prudence that he carried on smoothly with the Sheikh and his group of followers without bowing to any of them and when the time demanded he asserted himself and put the Sheikh behind bars in 1953.

During these difficult years in the aftermath of Pakistan's invasion when the whole political system was undergoing a fundamental change, he was able to play an important role in strengthening the national interest and helping to bring about a smooth transition to the new democratic order.

This period also marks Dr. Karan Singh's quest for Truth and the second volume of his autobiography contains the spiritual influences of great seers like Shri Krishna Prem and Shree Madhava Ashish upon him. There is no doubt that he had gone high above the threshold of spiritual consciousness and he felt the rising of Kundalini and had darshan of Lord Krishna during his sleep.

Third Stage

His third stage embraces the whole of India when in March 1967, at the age of 36, he was inducted as member of the Union Cabinet. He was elected from the Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency. He was reelected from the same constituency in 1971, 1977 and 1980.

Dr. Karan Singh first became the Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, a post which he held for six years. In 1973 he moved to the portfolio of Health and Family Planning and in 1979 assumed of Education and Culture.

Besides his public and political work he authored about two dozen books on Political Science, philosophical essays, travelogues and poems in English. He learnt classical music and travelled extensively throughout the country and abroad, having represented India at international conferences. In the later period he was Ambassador of India to the U.S.A. though for a brief period but received extensive and extremely favourable media coverage in both countries.

Dr. Karan Singh always felt that India had been his motherland and all the states and regions can flourish only if the nation flourishes. The security, welfare and progress of India was his over-riding commitment.

At this stage Dr. Karan Singh's spiritual quest led him to Yoga and the Upanishads. He realised that "the crux of human predicament ultimately revolves around the problems of human consciousness. It is the man who combines the body, the mind and the soul. Therefore, it is imperative that while on the one hand we look outside for our various solutions, we have also to look within. And Yoga deals essentially with this inner explanation".

Thus, Dr. Karan Singh examines Yoga from three angles: first, Yoga and the body; second, Yoga and the mind and third, Yoga and consciousness. According to Dr. Karan Singh, Yoga is the means of yoking or joining human consciousness with super-conscious states, generally expressed in such theological terms as God and the Divine.

During this period, Dr. Karan Singh organised a seminar on "Mind, Body and Consciousness" in the Amar Mahal Library, Jammu where great scientists and religious leaders had gathered. At this time he also translated the Mundaka Upanishad from the original Sanskrit text, which is a brilliant work. From the assimilation of the chief products of Oriental and Occidental thought he was able to make a scaffolding upon which he erected his own system of philosophy of life.

Fourth Stage

In the fourth stage Dr. Karan Singh had a deep commitment to the survival of the human race on this planet. We are facing a dilemma and as J.B. Priestley puts it, "we exist one telephone call from Doomsday". No doubt, the achievements of science are great and man is no longer a helpless toy in the hands of knowledge and nature but her proud master. He has pushed out the boundaries of knowledge but thereby he has endangered the possibility of human life on the globe. At this time the whole world is being rocked in a crescendo of convulsions and the fate of humanity is precariously poised on a precipice.

Therefore, Dr. Karan Singh has been making all out efforts to synthesise the Western scientific thought and Eastern wisdom to bring together science and spirituality. Dr. Karan Singh is engaged with other master-minds of the world to help mankind to advance along the path of the internationalisation of a truly rich spiritual culture. He is involved in the dissemination of the ideology of all-round harmonious development of the individual by Integral Yoga. At present there are four concepts uppermost in his mind:

1. First is the concept of human unity. In Rig Veda, Dr. Karan Singh remarks, it is said that Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is a family) and he feels that with the help of science and technology it is possible to achieve the goal of unity. Dr. Karan Singh says: "These years have enabled me to extend the sphere of my activity in the country and abroad, so that while I remain proud to be a citizen of the world's largest democracy I also look upon myself as a global citizen and feel at home wherever I happen to be. Perhaps it is this feeling which must become the bedrock of the emerging global society". He believes in a world which, in the words of Tagore, "has not been broken into fragments or narrow domestic walls".

For making people aware of the emerging holistic world-view, seeing the world as an integrated whole he has associated himself with many cultural and academic societies. He is the Chairman of the Temple of Understanding, Chairman of the People's Commission on Environment and Development, India, Chairman of the Governing body of Auroville Foundation, President of India International Centre Vishal Hindu Parishad. He is a member of the prestigious Club of Rome and is President of the Author's Guild of India, the Commonwealth Society of India. He is a lifelong Conservationist having been Chairman of the Indian Board of Wildlife for many years.

- 2. The second concept is that of evolution of consciousness. There is going to be a sort of metamorphosis in the evolutionary development of man. Man, Dr. Karan Singh believes, "is an intermediary creature", "a link between animal and God" and that a quantum jump in the evolution of consciousness is a possibility.
- 3. With this is linked the concept of Integral Yoga. He believes that life cannot be divided into different intellectual, material and psychological compartments but it has to be viewed as a whole. There must be a balance between these different aspects.

This concept of Integral Yoga is derived from Sri Aurobindo's spiritual thought. There are three movements of the Integral Yoga— the movement of surrender, the movement of rising to the supramental sphere and absorbing its light and power and the third movement of returning to the terrestrial consciousness.

The Integral Yoga, according to Dr. Karan Singh, "is also integral because it integrates the four major strands of Yoga: Bhaktiyoga, the devotional input; Karmyoga, constant and ceaseless action, divine inspired and divine dedicated; Jnanayoga, the aspect of discrimination and certain aspects of Rajayoga, the psycho-physical dimension".

4. Dr. Karan Singh believes in the concept that all religions are so many paths which lead to the same goal. The doctrine that there is essential unity of all religions, he believes, is put forward in the Rig Veda dictum—ekeam ad vidprah balmdha vadani (truth is one, the wise call it by many names). To quote Dr. Karan Singh, "Religion provides the broad conceptual framework and the psycho-spiritual motivation between man and the divine and the Hindu view of religion has always accepted and welcomed all movements growing towards God. Viewed thus religion can become a great unifying force in a world driven by hatred and conflict". He further says that "all manifestation is permeated by the light of the Divine and the planet earth is a very special laboratory for evolutionary consciousness with the human race now transiting into a global society poised for global consciousness".

Dr. Karan Singh has established Centre for Global Consciousness on March 9, 1995 in the Amar Mahal Museum and Library, Jammu. The aim of the Centre is to seek to bring together scholars and seekers from various religious and philosophical disciplines so as to foster creative thinking upon these issues.

Dr. Karan Singh is married to a Nepalese princess, the grand-daughter of Maharaja Mohan Shamsher Jang Bahadur, the last Prime Minister of the Rana dynasty of Nepal. She is herself a social worker and believes in the essential unity of all religions and oneness of different nations of the world.

LITERATURE

Behold the exquisite lakes of Mansar and Sanasar, behold in every home maidens of beauty like the full-moon; for centuries bards and minstrels have sung praises of our glorious land.

KARAN SINGH

Dogri Folk Songs

The lands that comprise of Poonch, Jammu province, Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur districts and most of the Himachal Pradesh, and kiss the feet of the Himalayas in the north-west of India and are inhabited by a valorous race called Dogras. They are a strange and unique blend of martial prowess, toughness and high sensitiveness. Their brave deeds, particularly of Maharaja Gulab Singh and his great generals, are renowned throughout the world. The excellence of the Dogras in the pictorial art can be gauged from the fact that their miniature paintings occupy the places of honour in the great museums of the world and are highly admired. But Dogri poetry, particularly Dogri folk songs, are not well known, even though they excel in artistic merit and sweet melody. There is a marvellous anthology of Dogri folk songs translated into English, entitled "Shadow and Sunlight" by Dr. Karan Singh, from which one can discern the richness of Dogri folk songs. Dogras, no doubt, have an immense wealth of folk songs.

WHAT IS A FOLK SONG?

A folk song is a song sung by the common people, particularly by those living in the rural areas. These people cherish them as their treasured possessions and these are generally handed down orally from generation to generation. It reflects the mind of the masses, their dreams and aspirations, their beliefs and customs, their modes of living and environment. It may have some mystic element but does not embody in itself any deep philosophy or metaphysical thought or concept.

DOGRI FOLK SONGS

Dogri folk songs are beautiful and fresh like the variegated flowers. They mirror the life of the Dogras—their tears and laughter. These folk songs which present large variety of themes and contents, are as old as the hills which inspire them. Most of these songs are typically human rather than individual and the listener can himself share the expressions and feelings. It is the quality of universatality that has made them survive so

far and are, therefore, cherished even now. Their origin can be traced to expressing the feelings of the clan or group rather than the individual. A Dogri folk song is both subjective and objective. Some of the songs are the result of direct inspiration and the subjects treated are the poet's own experiences, thoughts and feelings. There are also songs which contain the actions and passions of the outside world and the poet very seldom refers to his own individuality. Dogri Folk is broadly classified into lyric, ballad, play-song, dance song, and mystic and semi-mystic song that are sung in a particular season or in accompaniment to a particular occupation.

LOVE SONGS

Among the Dogras the expression of unrestrained and sensuous passion is looked down upon, hence the sentiment and emotion of love is presented in a controlled form, yet it indirectly suggests the depth of passion. The touches of lustful joys find no place in the love songs of the Dogras. They impress us by common sincerity as also by their simple and vivid language and brevity. They are not marred by over-elaboration. Here is a sweet song depicting the indifference of the lover. The poet in this short-lined verse sings fluently of love with grace and warmth of feeling:

O DAGEBAZ MANUAN

O my deceitful Love I live and long for you. Pray come, O come to me; How I languish you see O my deceitful Love

The world happily moves on And all is in full bloom And my life is but in gloom While my heart is broken; O my deceitful Love.

Another song of the same kind is as follows:

O MERIA PATLIAO MANUAN

(My Tender Love)

What makes you angry with me? What is my sin, tell me I pray? With earnest feeling I say O my dear tender Love.

I pass days of unrest and sleepless nights; My desire plays havoc with me And your charming words puzzle me O my sweet tender Love.

A delicious dish of suchian I serve But you spurn it and run to Mandi Ah! how my tears well up. O my sweet and tender Love.

Your sword and shield and Armour hangs on the peg And war drums fail to raise your spirit. O my sweet and tender Love.

The first song reveals the maid's inner life, her desperation and delirious sorrow. The plaint of love and the ache of disappointment is expressed in sweet music. There is unity and harmony in the poem.

The other doleful poem expresses the indifference of her lover gone astray. The delicious dishes and the war trumpets fail to arouse the man from his stupor. The pathos of rejected love and the graceful music make the poem quite alluring. The copious references to weapons and the dainty dishes give a glimpse of the life of the Dogras. It is full of suggestion of the clanging fights and clattering arms.

Its rhymes, rhythms and assonance, etc. make it a musical lyric which, sung to the accompaniment of a flute, creates a soft inebriation of the mind.

The conditions of life in the *kandi* area of the Jammu region are harsn and inconsistent with their martial spirit; the main source of employment of the Dogras is service in the army. Consequently, the men go away to distant places and thus are separated from their home and hearth. Therefore, many poems abound in the pangs of separation. Thus sings the poet:

Overhead gather the stormy clouds
And the cold drops of rain drop down
Alas, my Love stays away from me!
The garden is in bloom and bulbuls sing
the merry lay
From the hill-tops greet our ears
The sweet calls of the peacocks:
The papiha on high sings in joy
And chakors chatter among the bushes.

The cold drops of rain drop down Alas, my Love comes not to me!

And again, the poet's fancy sometimes rises to great heights, while expressing the pangs of separation of the beloved one from her lover:

CHANNI RATEN, CHAKRE TA BOLDE

The chakors call through the moonlight Hark to the chakoras in the moonlight Calling to each other.

Thus do the separated lovers

Long for love.

During the day they play together joyously How unfortunate, the night separates them And they sigh and pine for each other.

Duggar is a land, by and large, a virtual Arcadia. There are plains,

A man may sing blissfully of the beauties of nature:

THANDA PANI CHITTI CHANNI RATIN

meadows and valleys where bubbling brooks flow full of crystalline water.

Cool water, a pure moonlit night
Lovely is the pure moonlit night
Flows murmuring the stream of cool water
Hidden behind the green foliage
O beauteous maid I crave to drink
Water from your hands
So clean your pail for me.

Again,

BAHAR AAI DI HÁI

The sweet spring has come
Rejoice my beloved
To your heart's fill
Sing and dance and leave sorrow
Unmindful of the morrow
The pretty birds to sing
Merry lovers greet the spring.

Dogras are patriotic and love their land more than the very Heaven. In many of the folk songs there is a great amplitude in the ideas of freedom, patriotism and independence which animate all these verses. In these

poems both the matter and manner are infinitely important. The subject in its naked simplicity is more arresting and wonderful than the most romantic imagery of other songs. The following serves as an example—

SURGAI DE GAL NAHIN LA ADIYA

O dear, talk not of Heaven Sing with pride of our land The springs and joys of Dogra land Surrounded by cool ranges Of our magnificent mountains Can they ever pass out of our mind

Better still is the following poem:

DIKHI LAI DOGRA DESH

O friend, come and behold
Our splendid Dogra Desh
See the valiant and brave bands of men
And the women, the very incarnations.
Of goddess Durga and Chandi.
Behold the magnificent mountains
Rippling streams meandering amongst them
And the milk-white water of the Tawi
Flowing in a winding course
Behold the lovely lakes
Of Mansar and Sanasar
Look at the Dogra damsels
Beauteous like the full moon.
Thus bards sing the praises
Of this our splendid Dogra Desh.

There are folk songs which are half-mystical, the verses akin to other love songs with an emotion which is quite romantic. In these poems the poets speak of the transitory nature of the material benefits and true love is more valuable than the bags of gold.

O mother, bags of money are only bags of dust My love is supreme and it's not going to rust The *sajjan* is alive, let God be blest That he is safe and sound, that's enough for me, Whether brings he gold or no from another country.

RELIGIOUS SONGS

The Dogra land is an abode of gods and goddesses. Here are many shrines and magnificent temples. The Dogras are God-fearing and highly religious people. There are many devotional folk songs which are lyrical in form and enshrine a striving and hunger for God. There are also different hymns devoted to different deities. Here is a famous hymn *Bod Jwala Mai* beautifully translated into English by Dr. Karan Singh:

O Mother Jwala, dwelling amidst the mountains

Fulfil our innermost desires

A bright red garment adorns your body

And on your forehead is the yellow saffron mark

The fine hued shawl covers your head

Its edges shimmering with golden embroidery.

The feeling animating this poem is sincere and ardent. The prayer has warmth and emphasis.

SEASONAL FOLK SONGS

Actually these are the love songs describing the sickness of separation. They describe the agonising influence of various months on the love-lorn damsel. This form of seasonal songs are quite popular in Duggar and are called *Bara Masa*. The woman's mood colours the objects of nature, for example, in monsoon season, as there is storm outside there is also storm in the mind of the love-lorn damsel, or the moon instead of soothing and healing a forlorn and forsaken woman, may rouse her emotions and cause immense suffering, for example:

Comes the month of Jyeshtha and the hot sun scorches the earth my heart thirsts for your love like the fish for water.

MODERN FOLK SONGS

Although Dogri poetry has leapt from the springboard of folk song, yet the stream of the poetry of the common people, particularly in the rural area, has not altogether dried up. The modern folk songs have acquired themes from the modern life and consequently new currents of thought. All the modern writers of folk songs reveal some aspect of contemporary life and thought. They turn their impartial eager and clear sighted eyes not only on the past but also on all the present society of theirs. To observe is

a much joy to them. The freedom has brought new hopes and aspirations which are clearly reflected in the modern folk songs. Their effect on the senses and the imagination hardly varies. The songs like "The Train Goes Through Every Village" (Gaddi aaii Grain Grain) and "Cursed be the Life of Kandi" (Jali Jai O Kandi da Jeena) are quite popular.

In Dogri folk songs simple words have a particular expressive values which are outside or beyond their meaning. In them is the force of association of ideas which supplies grace, energy and lucidity. Actually in these folk songs the maximum of suggestion is imparted.

Prof. Ramnath Shastri (1914-): A Colossus in Dogra Parnassus

The degree of Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa was conferred on Prof. R.N. Shastri by the University of Jammu on 10th November, 1994. In his citation the Vice-Chancellor, Y.R. Malhotra, said that Society for Dogri Literature has rightly described Prof. Ram Nath Shastri as "Father of Literary Movement in Dogri literature, who is instrumental in instilling an element of pride into the people of Jammu in their language and land".

Prof. Shastri is a legend in his life-time and symbol of Dogri renaissance. He was decorated with Padamshri in 1990 at an investiture ceremony".

The magnificence of a mountain cannot be observed when one is too near it. Its grandeur in completeness can be perceived from a distance. It should not sound hyperbolic exaggeration when I say that such a mountain is Prof. Ram Nath Shastri, for he has become a legend in his lifetime. He and I were colleagues in the P.W. College (now Govt. G.M. College), Jammu and Govt. M.A.M. College, Jammu. I could not then gauge fully his glorious activities and it is now after my retirement from the government service that I could undertake the task to fathom the vast depths of Dogri creation including that of Prof. Shastri and wonder at the Dogri literary apex that he has reached. Farooq Naziki, the Director of Doordarshan, Srinagar, too calls him the symbol of Dogri Renaissance and undoubtedly he is the epitome of Duggar. Dogra and Dogri. Not that he has ever been obsessed with the Dogra regionalism or tribal instinct but far from it, he loves the whole of India, including Kashmir. Prof. Nilambar Dev Sharma says as follows in connection with Prof. Shastri:

"From here, it is only a step forward to work closer cultural affinity and he has paid a handsome tribute to the land of Kashmir, its beautiful poplar and chinar trees. At the same time he has lauded the artists, the craftsmen and the poets like Laleswari, Mehjoor and Nadim. Kashmir's culture is great because like the poplars and the chinar trees, it has its roots deep in soil" (Paudan—page 50-52, Prait Kiran edited by Madhukar). And Shastri makes a cause with forces of progress and peace, which are active throughout the whole world.

HIS IMPRESSIVE PERSONALITY

"Only let me make my life simple and straight like a flute reed for thee to fill with music", says Tagore in *Geetanjali* and to this corresponds the thumb-nail profile of Prof. R.N. Shastri. I have known him simple in his life-style. Come biting winter, come burning summer, he is always clad in white kurta and pyjama of khadi. He represents truly, what the poet calls, "khanda meetha Dogre" (Dogra, sweet as candy). No doubt, he has an amiable disposition combined with an untiring industry. He symbolises in his appearance the culture and grace of Dogras. He is without any ego or personal pride. He may well quote Tagore: "It was my part at the feast to play upon my instrument, and I have done all I could".

HIS CAREER

Born in April 15, 1914 in a respectable Brahmin family of Jammu, he was educated in a Pathshalla and then in modern type of a school. His education in his early years being a combination of tradition and modernisation, he developed in himself the traits of a high moral character. He did Shastri (Hons. in Sanskrit), Prabhakar (Hons. in Hindi) and M.A. (Sanskrit).

He started his career as a teacher in a private school in 1938 and then he was selected as lecturer in Hindi-Sanskrit in P.W. College, Jammu in 1947. He retired as a Professor of Sanskrit in April 1970. Soon after he got a Senior Fellowship in Dogri (Jammu University). Then he got appointment as Chief Editor of the Dogri-Dogri Dictionary in 1975, a project which lasted till 1985. He was also a member of Central Committee of Jammu & Kashmir Academy from 1959-1964.

He got Robe of Honour (Jammu & Kashmir Academy) in 1973. For his short stories he got an award from Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi in 1977. He also got State Academy Award for his collection of ghazals (Talkhian) in 1981-82. For the book "Folk Heroes of Duggar" he got State Academy Award. To crown it all he was awarded Padma Shri. Recently, the Jammu University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa.

SHASTRI'S BELIEFS

One's beliefs are the edifice on which the construction of one's greatness stands. What are Prof. Shastri's beliefs, ideals and convictions? I put these questions directly to him and got the answers to them straight from the horse's mouth.

- 1. He has perfect belief in God. "As regards my belief in God", says Prof. Shastri, "I can only say that this sublime relationship between me and my all-pervading Master is a permanent thing, a very subtle relation which I cannot express in words. During my 82 years of life I have occasionally felt that some Invisible Hand has always guided me from falling into the potholes of life. How can I explain the relationship which is beyond all rituals and scriptures. How should I thank the Invisible Hand for providing me these rare opportunities and guide me through His grace and affection".
- 2. What inspired him to work? He says, "I don't write for the pleasure of writing". This, in other words, means that writing for him is not art for art's sake. He explains, "My convictions and my ideals stand for human brotherhood and I have through my writing always condemned exploitation—social, religious and political. My whole writing is dedicated to these convictions".

THE ESTIMATE OF HIS WORK

Prof. Shastri launched his literary career with his short stories in Hindi. He also wrote one-act plays, pure songs and essays. He espoused the cause of Hindi, being the Secretary of Hindi Sahitya Mandal.

But then the wheel of Time took a turn. The movement for the development of regional languages was going ahead and Prof. Shastri served whole-heartedly the cause for the development of the Dogri language which had fallen in dark days due to the wrong policy of Maharaja Pratap Singh's officials. For the promotion of the Dogri language Dogri Sanstha, Jammu was formed in order to put back the language and literature on the rails. The goal of the Sanstha was to bring about a cultural renaissance in Duggar and Ram Nath Shastri was in the vanguard and a beacon of light to guide the movement.

Prof. Shastri appeared on the Dogri literary scene with Dogri play Bawa Jitu which was staged at many places and became very popular. His poems were first published along with those of others in Jago Duggar. These poems depict his love for Duggar, the land of the Dogras which had a magnificent past and it became necessary to revive the past splendour of the Dogras. These are sentimental in purport and forceful like a trumpet call. These little masterpieces of Prof. Shastri are highly artistic literary

performances. He tried to create confidence among the Dogras in Akh Keri Uri (Why are you feeling self-conscious), Dhart. In Banjar Naiyan Kesar Kailaryian (How we have made barren these blossoming flower-beds) he asks the Dogras to wake up and welcome the new age. Here he can be compared to Mehjoor who says:

"Come gardener, create the glory of spring!"

"In Eh kun Aaiya (Who's come here)," says Prof. N.L. Sharma, "he expresses confidence in the new forces of progressivism; the old forces of ignorance and reaction are going away, and all sections of the people are awake to build up a happy future. Dogras should also wake up, the rokers and peasants, the warriors and patriotic mothers as well". Men like Prof. Shastri "learn by suffering what they teach in song". Prof. Shastri, in spite of his pathos in some poems, is optimistic, for example, in poems like Dharte de surke di muriye jawani (Good days are returning to this earth).

The foundation of Prof. Shastri's poetry is based on realism. Realism is inseparable from recognition that a person's character is determined by the environment and by the circumstances of life and activity. Prof. Shastri stands first and foremost for the concrete realities of life, his words and phrases tingle with vitality. *Chakki* (stone-grinder) is the superb example of his realistic poetry and depicts the never-ending mother-in-law-and-daughter-in-law-syndrome, particularly when the bride's husband is away for earning his livelihood or fighting on a battle field, as it was usually the case with the Dogra youngman. *Chakki* is an essential possession in a Dogra house. It is a partner in a woman's sorrow and joys. The poem rendered into English by me is as follows:

CHAKKI

A wave of life rushes along your veins, You come to life at my gentle touch My life's desires and longings to awaken.

None but you love in all this house; While all others are at rest in sweet slumber, We two alone are awake and grinding grain.

When your mind laments in dismal distress, In truth, I think of my lover in some distant land. My dishevelled hairs shake with life's sorrows And my face pale and thin blushes red.

Nay, both your wheels are ever in union But our hearts are aflame in separation.

Both your parts meet and embrace together So you sing the sweet soothing melody. Ah! cursed be you that brings to me back My restless thoughts of our separated hearts.

When he arrives I forget in blithe of heart My taunting and feeling jealous of you But the meeting and caressing of your two parts, Pleased at heart, I forget your gladness. Thus to me again the spring of flowers arrives. And I forget the calamitous days Painful as the pricks of poisonous thorns.

At the surface the poem's theme appears a common episode but actually it is an allegory. In it the grinding sordidness and damnable life in this world is revealed in the grim lines. This episode reveals the universal misery of mankind's down-trodden people.

Two notes dominate all Prof. Shastri's works. One is his love for Nature and the Earth and the other his love for peasantry and hard working class. In 1971 in his preface to his collection of poems *Dharti ka Rin* (The Debt to the Earth) he wrote:

"In these poems I got the basic inspiration from two things, Time and the Earth.

Time does not stop and like an indifferent hermit it has no concern for our sorrows and joys but the Earth's love for man is a perfect truth. We always get love and support in its lap. To repay the same debt I have given to the first collection of my poems the title *Dharti ka Rin* (The Debt to the Earth)."

He expressed his wish in the style of Shelley about this poem: In the palaces of gold the Ravanas rule
Truth and justice are bondmen there
And the people's noble Sita is
Imprisoned there by Ravanas of selfishness.
Those that can awaken the pride of some
Sleeping comfortably in this land
And set on fire the mansions of Lanka
I am yearning for those blazing words of fire.

He, like Shelley, felt that "the selfish and the strong still tyrannize without reproach or check".

Prof. Shastri is no ordinary human being. He is a spiritual man, a

visionary and a reformer. He wants to bring about a social cataclysm. All that was evil in life he traced to slavery—slavery of feudalism, superstition and cowardice. Prof. Shastri values human dignity and feels that poets have to play a great role in bringing about a social revolution". And the poet being the brain of humanity, remains unvanquished by any force, material or physical".

Some of Prof. Shastri's poems deal with the love of land, courage and bravery. His love of Nature is to be noted in his poem *Sansar*. He writes:

Just as one goes along coughing and with suppressed hope

Or some planet falls from the sky

And gets lost in the dark void

Leaving the sky wailing

Or suddenly some thorn pricks the finger

Or some wave of passion brings colour to the eyes

Just as a pebble dropped into water pool

Extends the circles of waves

Same way O Valley of Sansar

You come to my mind.

HIS GHAZALS

Ghazals are primarily meant to express the thoughts and passions of love but now they include philosophical, cultural, moral and economic subjects as well. But Prof. Shastri is elusive in portraying the emotion of love and I doubt if he had, in his drab existence, found the pleasures of true romance. What does the teetotaller know of inebriation of a cool wine? Of course, he might have imagined about love. I have rendered some verses of his ghazals into English. They are more or less autobiographical, full of pathos.

- I quaffed off in quietness the cups of poison
 When thorns of life pricked me I ignored with laughter;
 Annoyed were my lovers with my silence;
 Though always I put a veil on their love-making.
- My daily struggle is my daily prayer
 Book of verses is my sweet life;
 I have no instrument to make a melody;
 My love will be the one and stir the strings.

- 3. Wherefore should we mourn on autumn's arrival Or rejoice and talk of the spring that is gone When the garden lies waste and desolate!
- 4 My life is a dry desert of Karbala It is the rugged fort of Sirhind; A long tale of tyranny A story of many a compulsions.
- 5. It does not rush out with my sighs Nor it wells and runs down with tears What cloud I have in my mind. Which ever wanders and pours not?
- Should I admire my fortune for in the 6. Path that leads to you I found no shade anywhere In the long journey, the enchantment of a cool shade What a sustenance it is you know not!
- Seeing the rout of many a one 7. Many a caravans beat a retreat Singing joyfully we followed our way, And went forward on and on.
- The heavy load of heart does not get lightened 8. Howsoever one may give vent to pent up feelings Why none sings a harmonious tune Or talk of love and benignant grace.
- In the intoxication of your youth 9. You have not seen who lifelong pined for it.
- 10. In her kajal (collyrium) the colour of Yamuna is seen And the small line of smile is like the Ganges The eyes burning with longing appears Saraswati And in her eyes is the holy Sangam of Triveni!

It is essential for writing ghazals that the language must be soft, sweet and cryptic. Redundant words and unusual idioms are not suited to it. In Prof. Shastri's ghazals we find these excellences and a balanced blend of thought and feeling but they lack spontaneity, passion and vehemence. His ghazals are packed with meaning and seriousness of thought.

Prof. Ram Nath Shastri is in favour of peace and is against aggression or conquests. This is evident from his poem Roop Kund. In this poem, according to Prof. Nilambar Dev Sharma, "he challenges the old notions of bravery and victory. Victory for whom? Victory over what? The unjust occupation of a country may be the undeserved defeat of another country; a national hero who has achieved victories over foreigners may well be counted a tyrant by them". Thus Prof. Shastri is all for peace and in the style of Tagore he writes a poem *Aman* (peace) which is rendered into English by me as follows:

Let there be soothing coolness in the gentle breezes

There should flow freely sweet waters of springs and streams.

There be evergreen vegetation and foliage

Days should be full of comfort and nights restful

Plenty of grains and succulent fruits

And sins by sun's rays be removed

The food give full strength and energy

And be equally available to one and all

On the earth and the sky let there be peace!

He is a poet with a mission. His mission is peace through poetry. In the delirium in which the world is caught up, the poet certainly has a vital role to play.

STYLE OF HIS POEMS

Prof. Shastri's style is a literary one. He has paid much attention to the lucidity of expression and elegance of form. He was never content with less than the polished best. There were, undoubtedly, fastidious niceties and crystal-hard wisdom which hindered his spontaneity.

He is adept in the craft of poetry and also taught other renowned Dogri poets the art of versification. Among them are Ved Pal Deep, Madhukar, Yesh Sharma and Padma, etc.

A great creative writer, Prof. Shastri has published many books, including his ten original works. He has translated a number of Indian classics, viz., Kalidas' *Meghdoot*, Bhartarhari's *Niti Shatak, Srinagar Shatak* and *Vairagya Shatak* and a few plays of Rabindra Nath Tagore as also his *Gitanjali*. He has also translated Vinoba Bhave, Mahatama Gandhi and Shudrak into Dogri. As Chief Editor in the Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy he edited its hexa volume Dogri-Dogri Dictionary. He also edited *Nami Chetan*, a Dogri literature periodical.

Thus for his poetic excellence in Dogri and his monumental work for the development of Dogri language he well deserves an honoured place on the Dogri Parnasses.

Parmanand Almast: The Melodious Poet

A gaunt, tall man dressed in poor but clean clothes with a smile on his lips was administering medicine to his patients in a local hospital. Then he recited a verse or two in his subdued melodious tune. The patients felt their pain mitigated and they loved him. He was Parmanand Almast, born in 1958 in the beautiful region of Dudu-Basant-Garh (tehsil Ramnagar in Jammu province). Almast was the only son of his parents and received their affection in a great measure. But when he was ten, his father passed away. His mother was mentally deficient and he started living with his grandfather. He passed the middle class examination, and soon he had to seek a job as a 'compounder' after the death of his grandfather.

Almast started writing poetry and, according to an art critic, he came to Dogri poetry with his songs in praise of the hilly regions, their scenic beauty, the simplicity of their people and these aspects is predominant in all his poetry. "In the poetry of Almast are found the bubbling of brooks, the chirping of birds, the variegated flowers and the freshness and beauty of the hilly areas. He appears to be a perfect Pahari man living in the hills of Jammu and gives captivating descriptions of the natural scenery and atmosphere like the folk songs of Jammu".

Almast is no longer alive and like Ghalib he could write best after consuming alcohol and this ultimately killed him. I have written a poem "Ah! He broke His Cups. His Art was Dead!" which was published in a local paper. The excerpts from it are as follows:

"Ah touch not, taste not, handle not!"
Yet the poet loved the sparkling wine;
In his cups love and bliss he sought;
Gay songs he wrote and they were fine

Alas! I heard no more the poet sing.

He cried, bereft of all his art,

He cried, bereft of all his art,

And all his gifts, a bloated thing.

A faded form, nothing to impart.

His lute was broken, tearful his eyes;

His heart was cold, which wine kept hot;

Yet lives dull life, where no joy lies.

The feeling of Almast is the expression of the heart-beats of the people themselves. There is spontaneity, melody, the words that sometimes cheer and sometimes inebriate and other times pierce the heart. His tunes and rhythms are those of the songs of the Pahari songs which take us on the wings of imagination to the world of intoxication and forgetfulness.

In the beginning he wrote about the apathy, idleness and the social evils. He gives a trumpet call to the people to rise from the state of lethargy. His song Jag, Jag is like the hammer strokes on the mind of man yet not jarring to the heart. It is to shake him from sloth and inaction. He says:

The wheel of Time has turned

And come to awake thee

Now leave off lethargy and inaction.

In this connection the poem Jeevan Dali Vo Jana. The English rendering of the poem is as follows:

Youth'll fade away and life'll vanish one day;

The resplendent sun sets down, the dark night sets on;

The gloomy night departs and shimmering day dawns

Thus the wheel of dark night and bright day

Goes round and round, ever and eternally.

Every pot the potter fashions will drop down and be destroyed

So too the mortal man melts away.

Beauty' bloom may kite-like hasten up

But the thread has snapped, the wind has dropped

Alas! the glow of youth comes down and decays.

Lord of the lands with pride feels puffed up!

But the thread has snapped, the wind has dropped

Alas! the glow of youth comes down and decays

We're strangers, futile is to be proud and vain.

Fair youth, pomp and brilliance of a few days

Fades and falls so fast; like starry clusters sparkling in the skies;

The rich and black tresses grow grey, then soon turn to dull and ugly pale.

Ah! nothing is steadfast and lasts much you may strive and struggle.

Cold and chill winter arrives

Caps the pinnacle with snow and frost.

But the summer's sunshine melts it away

O, Almast, life is blowing bubble;

Leave lusty life and towered places

Hasten and take to wild woods.

For realms and lands and yellow gold

Will remain far behind and empty and bare

Soon you will fall cold and dead.

Almast's style and feeling are his own, full of feeling and effect. He may pay homage to a valorous Dogra soldier or strike deep at the evils of society or give vent to the agony of separation from his beloved damsel, his expression is melodious, words appropriate to the subject.

He criticises the superfluous rites and ceremonies of the people in the swift-like bitterness:

Heaven cannot be gained by beating drums

And ringing bells in the temples

Or calling from the tops of the mosques

By giving alms for the peace of your dead

You want to bring life to the dead

But you kill those who are living

You have their lives to ruin and

By beating drum and singing bells

Heaven cannot be gained.

He pays homage to the brave Dogra soldiers who have extended our territories upto Ladakh and who defend our territories facing all the fearful odds. He says:

O soldier of our country, you are our life

In you rests our respect, our honour and all

You should keep to your dharma

And safeguard our respect and honour

In the battlefield never get discouraged

However trouble you may have to face

O handsome youth, O the jewel of your mother

Somehow destroy the enemy and gain the fame.

As we see the many of Almast's poems we find that he has used the

metre, the rhythm and the images of the Dogri folk songs, which have their unique characteristics. The sentiments and feelings are simple and there is that spontaneity and melody that one sways in ecstasy. There is such magic in his simple Wordsworthian-like words that it overwhelms our mind, as Sawan Aiya Ho (O Sawan has come).

His songs of idyllic beauty reach to the apex of musical compositions, as:

Dark clouds are cast over
The lighting is shining brilliantly
The rain is pouring and the
East wind is wonderful and alluring.
All around is spread mist
The Sawan has thus arrived.
Wherever you look the bubbling brooks rush down
The pools are full of water like an ocean
The springs are murmuring their sweet songs
Lotus has blossomed in the lakes
Thus the Sawan has arrived.

Almast is sensuous and thereby penetrates the hearts. He gets emotional at the beauty of nature, beauty of damsels. He says:

The damsels dreaming and singing
And they give calls for love
Their lovers are not in homes
Thus their hearts are throbbing
I am helpless my Almast has not arrived
While the Sawan has come home to its nest.

Almast mirrors the lives of the Pahari people in his song *Pahari da Basna* (Living among hills). He sings:

Alluring is the life among the hills
There the tunes of flutes are heard
These are for lovers and we love to
Live in harmony and immense joy.
When beautiful damsels dear
Close their ears and sing
We forget all the world of suffering
How sweet is the living among the hills!

What after all does Almost believe in? He thinks that life is full of tears and laughter. There is ecstasy and there is agony. We must take life in its

stride, enjoying the little joys of life, the little children at play, the captivating damsels singing among the hills, the shepherd playing on his flute. The loves, the hustle and bustle of the city life are also enjoyable. Though he would like to go far from the madding crowd in the seclusion of the villages yet he would like to return to his city of temples.

Ved Pal Deep: The King of Dogri Ghazals

The poem "Lamentation" written by me appeared in the Kashmir Times on the death of Shree Ved Pal Deep:

LAMENTATION

Dear Ved Pal Deep, these twenty years,
I've read whatever you chose to write;

You drew my laughter and my tears,
You pleased my taste with grave or light.

I've read what'er you chose to write,
On culture, criticism, poems and ballads;

So well you met the critics' spite.

So softly turn'd its fierce tirades.

Culture, criticism, poems and ballads, Mahatmas and ancient apes;

Many ladies and their escapades,

I know them each in twenty shapes.

Mahatmas and ancient apes, In many papers and books;

I've read Dogri poems, your japes, Of ghosts, of fairies and of spooks.

In many papers and books, Ved Pal Deep could never bore!

Week after week your angle hooks.

Some fish you often caught before.

Yet Ved Pal Deep could never bore, You were a valiant man on life's rough; Your Dogri poems had charm enough, Which I can now get no more.

For dear old Som, it is a great woe,
All your friends, cry and sorely weep;

For you've left all to inspire no more,

But you are for ever lodged in our heart's deep.

The bright candle of Shree Ved Pal Deep's life was suddenly snuffed out, and a painful shiver ran down my spine the moment I learnt about it. All the people of Jammu thought that he was indeed a luminous star on the horizon of Jammu's cultural renaissance.

Ved Pal Deep, born in 1929, passed away in 1995 after a short illness and his death was a great loss to the country. He was one of the superb poets that Jammu has produced. He was well educated and had done his M.A. in Hindi but he had equal knowledge of Urdu and English. He started writing poetry in Hindi and *Shalya* is his long lyric in Hindi which he translated into Dogri. The basis of this poem is his own romance and in it he describes the joys and sorrows of deep love.

Then in July 1948 there was cataclysmic change in his personality and poetry. In his student life he joined the Student Union and with other members of the Union he toured the different villages of Jammu and saw the beauty and importance of the Dogri language. He fell in love with the people of his land and admired the simplicity, straightforwardness and hospitality of the Dogras. He became progressive in outlook and believed in the socialistic pattern of society. We can feel his delicacy of art in his earlier poem *Holi*. He says:

White and clean are someone's clothes
But some are dressed in dirty ones
But today all are donned in the same colour
O Holi come sprinkle colour of love on all.

In the poem *Dogra* he mirrors the tradition and culture of the Dogras with deep love. It has a pure and charming simplicity:

In the garden there are flower-beds

And in the bed there are jasmine plants

So is India the world's garden inhabited by Indians

And the Dogras are the honour of the Indians.

But from 1955 onwards Deep's poetry acquired maturity and depth of feeling. He became more realistic and achieved quite a perfection in art.

Ghazal helped him in giving better means of expression of his ideas. Some of the verses translated into English are as follows:

Where the destination? Where the direction? And the people have marched which way?

Matters not the least who wins But know which side lies the justice.

Had we not the hope of achieving our aim Say how would have we fared in our way?

Man lives to change the adverse Time Always aiming at it and going ahead Unmindful of moments, months and years.

A flower grows in the garden yet may not blossom But in the wilderness are flowers which are Unmindful of spring, the summer and the cold winter.

Those who labour know the worth of other's toil Those who sit idle know not the difference.

Ved Pal Deep became conscious that a change was coming, a good time was coming where there would be no illiteracy, no superstition and no social evils which had put obstacles in the path of progress. He also felt that a revolution was coming—a feeling which greatly affects him and he writes (translated into English):

If one were to ask who am I Spontaneously comes out: I am a Dogra In this time there can be no longer

The difference of caste — Sharma, Gupta or Jamwal.

He is a controversial poet. He feels that the struggle between the bourgeois and the proletariat is still continuing and the real freedom is yet far off. In Navin Azadi (New Freedom) he says that freedom should visit the huts of the poor. Yet another poem is Kal ha mein kala, mere sathe un nini ganon (Yesterday I was all alone, today my comrades are countless). About this poem Prof. Nilamber Sharma writes: "The poem weaves a beautiful pattern and the words and similis evolve an imagery which is rich in thought content and poetic qualities. Like the innumerable waves of the sea, the infinite number of stars, countless leaves and sands, his comrades are numberless. It is a revolutionary poem, challenging in its tone and content. Deep has included very deftly, references to the geography of the State and the Punjab; the force of the masses is like the force of swelling

Ujh river, before which the walls of straw (the weak policy of the opponents) must crumble".

Deep is always overwhelmed with political ideas and upheavals. He mirrors his painful experiences of life. He becomes subjective even in ghazals. His soul seems restless and in such a situation would like to cling to one solace that man is blessed with, that is love. But love has proved evasive like will-o-the wisp to him. He had fallen in love with Padma, the great Dogra poetess and eventually married her but then their relations turned sour and he took to drinking which ultimately killed him. Sometimes, earlier he was assailed with disappointments, sometimes he felt hopeful. These pent up feelings have been given vent to in his charming ghazal Meré Mane Ch Payar Iyan Gai Jian Kha (In my heart there is the same old love for you).

Deep has many feathers in his cap and the most captivating one is his Ghazal writing. In it he has achieved the summit and this has immortalised him. He equals many great ghazal writers of Urdu.

His language is literary and thought predominates over his feelings. His ideas are complex and terse and his language suits the expression of such mature ideas. In order to enjoy his poems one has to read them with concentration. The only defect in his poetry is that he often overloads it with socialist ideas. All the same Deep is a great star and still shining brilliantly on the horizon of Dogri poetry.

Jatinder Udhampuri: An Extraordinary Poet and Scholar

Popular estimation pictures Jatinder Udhampuri as a recluse, taciturn and unsocial socialist. No doubt, his exterior visage—bald head, long nose and chirping voice—belies the immensity of his great force and beauty of spirit within. Where he finds congenial and understanding spirits, he is pleasant at tete-a-tete and exhibits enough of joie de vivre. He is brave and stoic. Jatinder remarks: "If I had spent my time in idle chatting with people, how could I have done M.A. (History, Urdu, Hindi), M.Ed., Ph.D., Hons. in Urdu, Hindi and Dogri and then written fifteen books." These are:

- 1. Ik Shehr Yadden Da (Dogri poems)
- 2. Jitto (First epic in Dogri)
- 3. Banjara (Dogri poems)
- 4. Chettan De Surajmukhi (Dogri poems)
- 5. Kiash Kalvan Tere Naan (Dogri poems)
- 6. Geet-Ganga (Devotional Songs)
- 7. Peedan Di Buraat (Dogri ghazals)
- 8. Basti Basti (Dogri ghazals)
- 9. Chanani (Dogri couplets with Hindi translation)
- 10. Rusi Kavita-I (51 selected Russian poems in Dogri)
- 11. Rusi Kavita (Selected Russian poems of Bloke in Dogri)
- 12. Dogri Sahitya Da Ithas (First complete and comprehensive History of Dogri Literature)
- 13. Phool Uddas Hein (Hindi poems)
- 14. Ek Do Ek Vasant (Hindi poems)
- 15. Woh Ek Din (Stage play based on the Maharashtra earthquake)

Awards and Honours

About a dozen awards of Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy, Dogri Sanstha and other organizations have

been received by him. Then he was given Robes of Honour by the Governor and by other prestigious institutions.

As the poet Yash Sharma remarked: "Like the Ajanta painter, Jatinder is engaged in creativity in the seclusion of his house at Subhash Nagar, Jammu, far from the madding crowd and burning the midnight oil". From the early age when boys in Jammu fly kites on kothas, young Jatinder romped like a colt in the green pastures of Tagore, romantic English poets, Thoreau, Goethe and the Russian poets, revelling in their melodious beauties and sensory charms.

PRINCE OF LYRICISM

George Santanya says: "Poetry is something secret and pure, some magical perception lighting up the mind for a moment, like reflections in the water, playful and fugitive. Your true poet catches something or anything dropping the thing itself". This is true of Jatinder. His poetry is a record of experiences told in words that are intense and beautiful. Images in his poems are one of beauties of his type of composition. He generally prefers to speak through concrete images rather than through abstract ideas.

Poetry, as Wordsworth says, comes from the heart and goes to the heart. Heart is the centre of gravity in Jatinder's poetry and it is more an art of the emotions than of the intellect. Of course, he does not lose touch with the human problems in life. Compared to Jatinder's poetry the rational poetry of some eminent Dogri poets makes for dry reading.

Jatinder is the prince of Dogri lyricism, though not its innovator, for before him have gone Yash Sharma, Almast, Madhukar, Deep, etc. who have been good writers of lyrics. All the same, Jatinder is the most remarkable poet in quite a long line of talented lyric writers. How did he start writing lyrics? Before he was seventeen, Young Jatinder got acquainted with a bewitching lass who inspired his first lyric, after which he showed fondness for the lyric in which he excels. His songs, a few examples of which I have given below, are often direct transcripts from the personal experience, though the women who inspired him were rough toilers of Udhampur's fields and less of the sophisticated damsels of the Jammu city. These uncultured women sufficed to inspire him with the finest love poetry, including his ghazals in the Dogri literature. He has a wonderful photographic memory and it seems the cupboard of his mind is filled with the beautiful pictures of Udhampur. In his songs are to be found the true elements of romanticism, personal effusiveness and wealth of imaginative

fancy. As far as the devotional songs are concerned, in them he expresses the utmost yearning of his soul for the Supreme Soul.

His songs are melodious, filled with the warmth of the smiling sunshine of Jammu and the freshness of the air of Shivalik hills. The songs are noted for fluency, passionate feeling and precision. In his poetry in general and lyrics in particular are to be found the influence of Urdu, Hindi, English and the simple racy vigour of the Dogri language which produced in him the unique expression in the evolution of Dogri poetry. He pondered over and assimilated the Urdu and Hindi tradition and examples. Practically, he was alive to and felt the great value of a truly instinctive expression born of experience among the people. Truly, Jatinder has graduated from the School of Life. The words have a sincere quality when they are acquired by contact with the everyday life of one's people. Jatinder's lyricism never lost sight of reality; his lyrics are the sensuous manifestation of a lover.

In the lyrics he is not devoid of the pangs of heart. If Jatinder achieves the light winged music, he pours in by way of suggestion rather than by definable content, quality which is a passionate imagination all his own. His poems of pain are many but his soul is healthy and robust, too strong to be mortally wounded by the melancholic experience of life. In the ecstasy of love, too, he does not lose the emotional balance.

ESTIMATION OF HIS WORK

In his poetry it is his lyrical warmth which has elevated his poems from good to great. He is at heart a lover-lover of divinity, of beauty of human form and of Nature also.

Large number of Jatinder's poems abound in sensuous love but he does not make a tedious inventory of various parts of the body. Like a Pahari fresco artist he paints in broad sweeping strokes. He shakes us by his frankness, inflames our hearts by his suggestion. He throws out a suggestion and rest our imagination works out. He has thoroughly read Walt Whitman and quotes him: "The sexual life is to be glorified in, not be treated as if it glorified in, not be treated as if it were shameful". His poetry is marked by the genial buoyant spirit of the man.

It is the rapture and the mystery of love that we find in many of his songs. Here is the translation of some of the verses of his ghazals.

Happy maiden! there can be no compeer
 Of so good fortune to you
 Ah! flower-decked tresses and

Flowery bracelets round your wrists Lend grace to you! With a smile on the lips.

- Your smiling, your sulking And gliding with grace;
 Your blandishments are but My precious possessions all.
- 3. O, what havoc in my heart
 When from my mind you are apart
 In desperation my eyes are filled
 With fears and oceans of tears.
- 4. Smiles played on Love's lips
 And the peals of her laughter
 Were like the gentle airs
 On the strings of rabab.
 In what resort have
 I wasted my whole life?
 Futile is to narrate my strife!

YOUR STORY, MY STORY

Love and laughter is in store for you, I am destined for longing and separation! The Time wrote my story, The Time wrote your story.

Your's is the vast heaven of light, And mine the small earth of darkness, In your fate glory and joy, In my destiny the old pain!

Your flights with colourful wings, Every part of you full of beauty, I am but a prisoner in a cage, And lonely and forlorn is my cage!

I have but one desire,
My love may not be blamed,
And no stories in streets,
And my love may not be defamed

Love narrated my tale A turning on the way.

I directly asked Jatinder if he had experienced any romance in his youth. He replied in a serious tone that he could not write about love unless he had had the superb experience. "I was by no means a saint of self-denial and my youth cried out for the joy of life. I had my dream-girls". He believed in the words of Thoreau that "to whom sex does not inspire, there are no flowers in Nature". Jatinder is not a hedonist or an epicurean but he would like men and women to rejoice—not shun from—the great primal forces of life". Even his pain, of which so much has been made of, is a pleasurable pain of love. It is the pain of the darts of the Cupid that he remembers. To dub him as a lachrymose poet is to do him injustice. Undoubtedly, there is pathos but no tragic tears, no morbidity.

Divine Love

Jatinder's independent beliefs do not allow his soul to be impressed by orthodox precepts and outward show or austere demeanour. Therefore, his devotional songs or hymns do not smack of being in the straitjacket of religiosity. It is love of the moth for the light. He is fundamentally a spiritualist especially when informed by the general, buoyant spirit of the man. Though he is a moralist but he has no didactic tendency which would have ruined his gift of lyricism.

A firm believer in God, Jatinder is a votary of Bhakti Yoga and considers God as his Beloved, a "Hound of Heaven". He does not believe in orthodox rites and rituals but in direct, pure and unalloyed love of God. This is akin to Sufism. He sings (I translate into English):

My master, bestow me strength
 Gift me with devotion at your lotus feet!

I am alone, sad, forlorn, bulbul My life and work is your worship My beloved! where are you lost? Since many aeons I am in confusion; Show me the path to you; Master give me strength!

Neither a sage, nor a saint or sadhu My mind is intoxicated with your love

My longing is my prayer
My love, my temple and holy pilgrimage
Grant me *Mukti* to my soul
Master bestow me strength!

2. My Beloved!

My body and brain are burning
Longing for a glimpse of you
All to me is sorrow, sad, lone, y, forlorn.
You never came, you 'ever came!
I didn't sing, I didn't sing
Since many a day!

Love of Nature

Our poet had suffered much in life but through his love of Nature he entered a Paradise from which Man had been driven out. He did not ignore the material cares that cloy the spirit but in the enjoyment of Nature he felt rapture. Here are the translations of some of his nature-poetry:

1. MOONLIT NIGHT

O Moonlight come down
Making melodious music
Into the courtyard of my house.
Then all night you may dance and play
To your heart's content.

Silky soft, silvery white Moonlight Your blessings are for all For with both your benign hands Handfuls of gold you scatter all around.

Lo! rim jhim, rim jhim
Falls the spring rain,
All with showers wet through
O Moonlight, you look
Like a shy, shivering belle.

Morning of my Jammu
From the miraculous palanquin
Out of the darkness of night
So slowly, so softly, so calmly
With lingering shine
Comes down and down
Like the splendid and delicate
Shimmering with pure silky sheen
Of the newly-wed charming bride
The glorious and divine morn of Jammu!
And it strays and scatters all around

Radiance of fresh monumental thoughts Colourful dreams and visions Full of charms and sweet joys And lo! bouquets of hopes For you, for me, to take.

2. BEFORE AUTUMN'S ARRIVAL

Oh! I am in love with Mountains, woods; birds and blossoms The green turf like the carpet soft I clasp it in joy with all my fingers!

Oh! I am in love with Flights over heights
The trees of Chinar
The floating shikaras in the Dal And the full moonlight night.

Oh! I am in love with The crowd of children The days of childhood

The playing on flute
And the singing of shepherds
Your green bracelets
And your fair hands!

Oh! I am in love with
The rising morn of Jammu
And a right place at noon
At picturesque Patni-top;
To sit at evening by the Tawi
When noon lay bright
The strange dreamy night at Bhaderwah
And my maiden fair as Urvashi
And then her captivating company!

My mind desires
That I should collect them together
Before they all vanish or are in ruins
On the arrival of the Autumn!

Jatinder wants to die in harness and does not want in old age to go to some village and do tapsya. That to him is selfishness and smacks of hypocrisy. God has gifted some persons with some talent. Not to use them

to the full is sin and to escape to a jungle is sheer nonsense. He is not satisfied with his work. He feels that the best has still to come. These days he is working on Anglo-Dogri dictionary and on the folk art, culture and literature of Jammu region.

Padma Sachdev (1940-): The Renowned Poetess

One finds in her the constant preoccupation with misery and the futility of life, life which is sad and depressing. But her art is exquisite and her sense of beauty pleasant so that her depressing poems do not fill us with gloom, rather they elevate us.

Her poems like those of Habba Khatun of Kashmir are influenced by her own life. Padma, earlier called Padma Deep or Padma Sharma and now Padma Sachdev, was born in 1940 in a middle class family of Brahmins of Jammu. She has beautiful features like that of a Kashmiri lady, plump and fair, she sings melodiously even Kashmiri songs of Habba Khatun and she plays on a sitar. She is the daughter of late Pt. Jai Dev Sharma, M.A. who was a scholar of Sanskrit and worked as a Lecturer in the Mirpur College. He was killed there by the raiders during 1947. She immensely loved her father from whom she had imbibed the taste for reading and poetry and this tragedy unhinged her. She had to face poverty and the domestic unhappiness like Habba Khatun. This told upon her health and landed her in the tuberculosis hospital in Srinagar. She was forsaken by her relatives and more so by her husband whom she loved even as she was tossing on her sick bed waiting for her death. But she had a penchant for writing poetry and thus lying on her bed she wove her Dogri verses. This ideal occupation like the occupation of Kishori Kaul, the painter and Shri Ramanand Sagar, the film director, cured her of the dreaded disease and she emerged a poetess of talent.

Her famous poem Rajan Diyan Mandiyan is her masterpiece. It is related that she was sitting at her place and brooding when a beggar woman approached her and asked her if the palatial buildings of the Dogra rulers belonged to her. This set her mind to serious thinking which resulted in the composition of the poem. It is a visionary poem written in the fashion of stream of consciousness, going forward then moving backward and

following the association of ideas. There is, on the part of the beggar woman, vehement condemnation of the cruelties of the men in authority and the longing for her lover who was in prison. The poem is a revolt against tyranny and oppression. The old beggar woman may have been an imbecile or have gone crazy but she narrates what is truth and reality. Personal grief and delicate health made her to be sympathetic with the universal problem of pain and suffering.

There is another poem *Icchya* (Desire) wherein we find the blend of conciliation and defiance, weakness and strength as she is overwhelmed by the adolescent feelings. She is obsessed with love and is in quest of true love.

As she lay tossing in the sick bed, forsaken by those who should have cared for her, she feels the torture of separation from her lover. In her two poems Viyog (Separation) and Chamba Di Dalia we witness the agonizing separation. There is intensity of love, for her paradise lies at the feet of her lover.

Do Pakhroo (Two Birds) is a lyric written spontaneously. Here we find the true meaning of the lovers separated by the social taboos. They unite, one can hope, in their deaths.

Her description of the scene of a mother and her child is graphic and full of feeling. Man Di Pacchan depicts the feelings of a child for its mother. This is a lovable poem for its intimacy of style. Padma is adept in describing the ordinary domestic scenes with lyrical intensity and devotion.

The great defect in her poetry is her indulging in self-pity. She is obsessed with her domestic troubles. She has been forsaken by her husband, so the hub of her ideas lies in the despair and disappointments of life and her separation from Deep, her husband.

But then she mustered courage and faced misfortunes. She got a man of her heart and thought in Mr. Sachdev. Although outwardly she appears full of joy, smiling and laughing yet time has left many a scar on her heart which are hard to heal. But Time is a great healer and we find that she has become more mature and thoughtful and she no longer indulges in senseless sentimentalism. The melancholy has become subdued but we miss the immense vitality and the glory of colour in her poems that we find in other Dogri poets.

Yash Sharma (1927-): The Poet of Sweetness

Those were good old days when the P.W. College (now called G.M. Government College), Jammu had become the nest of the singing larks. In the forties there were students who wrote excellent Dogri poetry and Prof. Ram Nath Shastri himself, a marvellous poet, was on the teaching staff of the college. The poetic symposiums were held off and on.

On one mild evening boys and girls—there was co-education in those days—were assembled on the lawns to listen to the charming poetry of Ker Singh Madhukar, Ved Pal Deep, Yash Sharma and Prof. R.N. Shastri, etc. Everyone was present but Yash was nowhere to be seen. There was restlessness among the audience. But as his name was called, lo and behold! he emerged from the side, raising his hand with "hazir jinab" There were cheers and laughter. It was the blessed day of feeling. He sang his poem *Basant*. The words were simple, the subject was simple but when waves and waves of melody moved in the air, everyone felt a joy in it. Translated into English the poem is as follows:

BASANT

Goes today the belle for the Basant fair!
Goes today the belle for the Basant fair!
Behold the fair parts of her elegant figure
The beauty of eyes, the colour of her fair face.
May be she has a tryst with him who gifted her precious pearls.
Goes today the belle for the Basant fair!

Donned she is in yellow kurta and yellow chudidar Earnest to reach the fair, has left all her sloth.

Fairs afford the chance to meet the lover.

To come nearer him and sit in the bower together.

Goes today the belle for the Basant fair!

Wearing beautiful bracelets, no need to shed tears;
Arriving at the fair doesn't feel fears.
Sitting amongst mens she is listening
To ballads and drinking the spirit of Basant.
Goes today the belle for the Basant fair!
Heard the ballad but knew not the theme;
Ram alone knows what ecstasy, what agony!
May be they sing about some brave hero
Who lost his life in a foreign land.
Goes today the belle for the Basant fair!
Dressed in yellow and wearing yellow gold,

Decorated with flowers that fade and die not!

It was the music of the words which thrilled the audience. There was romance in the air and that day made me love the Dogri poetry. Yash is essentially a singer-poet and his poems have the quality of "singability" or capacity of being sung or set to music.

The influence of Keats and Bachan is clearly seen in his earlier poetry. He had all the elements of a romantic and sensuous poet in him. There were waves and waves of feelings and sentiments, realism and the emotion of love. Fluency was marvellous as if some bottle of old wine has been uncorked. Its melody could intoxicate the audience and he became popular among the youth. The poems *Mela*, *Banjara* and *Sanja De Deep* were on their lips and they used to hum them in their joyful moods. *Banjara* is his representative poem of this genre and translated into English. It is as follows:

BANJARA (BANGLE-SELLER)

Wandering as a bangle-seller, fate of its grace
May lead me to your delightful hamlet.
Would you come out to buy my bangles?
There shall be red bangles, may be necklaces too.
But tarry I can't for long anywhere.
Today here, tomorrow there but I stay no where.
Thus roaming and rounding about shall be my job.
My name shall be on the lips of the big and the small.
Would you not ever unknowingly call my name?
My love! come let us again visit the old spots
Where in bowers we smiled and wept and played together.
I remember your coming along with your companions

To fill the pot with water hoping to feel the joy of your seeing again your love there.

If from a far someone comes into vision

A new game starts with your play-mates

They would tease you with queries and say.

What is he to you, a relative or acquiantance or what?

But how to reply, whom to refuse and avoid.

You feel shy at every moment, I do remember.

When I shall come to your village

You will think whether I am he

Who played celebrating the wedding of toys.

Thus playing many games you reached the threshold of youth.

I am he whom you said in your joy

On oath that you are Radha and I am your Shyam.

Hearing my voice would you come out

Without your mother-in-law knowing.

Standing on the threshold of your door quiet and calm,

Would you venture to ask me who I am?

Adieu! sweet lady, joy has it been to see you again.

Your beauty I carry in my heart and I may see you no more.

It is a painful poem and in the background is a tragedy of separation. But the pathos and pain is suppressed but the wistful longing is yet on the surface. Here Yash is like a true lyrical poet—he expresses his personal thoughts and emotions in short but not in a fragmentary manner. Yes, Yash's lyrics are, in Milton's words, "simple, sensuous and impassioned". They went straight to my heart as did to many others in the college.

In the beginning he was a pure romantic with a love for beauty of Jammu's natural beauty spots. In those days he had no political sympathies and he lived in an enchanted world of beauty and joy. Basohli, to which place he belonged, was the sequestered land of beauty and provided him food for sensuous delight. He had no political or ethical inspiration. May be this eclecticism was the eclecticism of his youth and day-dreaming. Had he not drifted to the political subjects and patriotism, etc., he would have produced masterpieces, for his efforts had full promise in romance which was the fountainhead of Pahari painting based on love of Nayaka and Nayaki.

Yash Sharma, born in 1927 at Basohli, had the passion of a Basohli youth when he was a student and was the darling of the Dogri poetry. And when Jammu Radio started functioning he took part in the programmes for villagers (Grahin Prahavan Aaste). Then occured events of great

significance—there was political upheaval, the socialistic movement and the revolt of the poor and peasants against the feudal lords. This brought a churning in the mind of Yash. The earlier Yash was dead and from his ashes rose phoenix-like another Yash, the revolutionary.

Then he came with his songs of patriotism, socialism, equality and brotherhood. They were written in simple, fluent and direct style and he sang them in his melodious voice which moved the hearts of the listeners. The Duggar was threatened on all sides by the invaders and it had to be defended at the cost of one's life. Prof. N.L. Sharma says in this respect:

"His Karsa (Peasant) is a challenging poem, for it brings back glory and respect to the peasant who is the leader of the population and on account of whose generosity the selfish people have become rich and wealthy and have acted in a cruel fashion".

He loves the peasants with their simple innocent looks and he feels about their poverty, squalor and agony. And he describes men thus:

Some carry strong staff with hooks in their hands

On their heads they wear turbans heavy for their heads.

Somewhere there is banghara dance and the delights and smiles and laughter;

Some are full of food, some starve.

Yash describes the Arcadian beauty of his land:

The land of brooks, streams and green glens

And the parched places where men

Long and pine for a drop to drink.

In a long poem he says—

Uphill and downdale I see men in weary wandering

Among the fields I see men at work

I have the vision of my country

Men's forms of my country are not alien to me.

Yash gives the full description of his motherland:

On this earth I hear the bubbling springs

And where in the fields the greenery

Moves and explosives my mug

When the moon appears behind the woods

An alluring environment is created.

Sometimes Yash becomes revolutionary sounding a trumpet and beating the drum, Sare Sone Gi slarkan.

Kehri Singh Madhukar (1929-): The Great Poet

Kehri Singh Madhukar was born in 1929 in the village of Gura Salathian in quite a rich family. His father was an army officer and then he was married to the daughter of a highly placed civil officer. Being the only son of his father, Madhukar received great love and attention at the hands of his family and relatives. His earlier songs were those of romance and I have written about his romantic songs as under:

(These are the excerpts from the poem published in the Kashmir Times, Jammu on May 11, 1986.)

Gura Salathian was a stronghold of Rajputs who were loyal to the Rajput dynasty of the State and the feudal system. But, paradoxically Madhukar broke these chains which bound him to the oppressor and adopted the progressive ideas. Madhukar as a poet is basically a revolutionary. The decade between 1940 and 1950 was a period of

patriotism in the Dogra poetry. All the poets sing of the greatness of Dogri, Duggar and the Dogras. The State of Jammu and Kashmir was invaded by Pakistan, there was a great turmoil in the State and the threat of the Dogra culture to be crushed was evident. But Madhukar saw beyond the narrow nationalism. He thought that the Dogras had to come out of the narrow world of regionalism. He felt that the world was one whole and the workers had to be united.

Madhukar's poems were first published as Navi Minijaran (Collection of New Trends) in Dogri poetry. He enlarged the scope of Dogri poetry and experimented with new styles. Navi Minijaran is a poem about Charkha (Spinning Wheel). This poem is the story of a Dogra woman whose permanent companion and comforter is a spinning wheel. When at the age of seven she was placed in the palanquin, her mother gave her a spinning wheel with the dowry. When the remembrance of her father brought tears in her eyes, the spinning wheel singing brought solace to her like the lullaby of her mother and the threads that come out of the wheel were like the arms of her mother. When she gave birth to her child, she made the small kurta of these threads. With the passage of time when her husband died, this spinning wheel never left her company and continued to be with her till her end.

There are three chief characteristics which detach themselves from Madhukar's poetry. These are imagination, realism and feelings, all mixed in a unique cocktail which intoxicates a man. Whatever he says, he says with firmness and hope.

Madhukar like Hardy feels "the immutability of Nature, the mutability of human life; the bigness of Nature, the littleness of man; the inexorable character of natural laws, the puny struggles of human personalities trying to evade them". But, paradoxically, while all this leads Hardy to pessimism Madhukar takes it as a challenge and hopefulness. All the same, he does not sing like Browning "God's in His Heaven/And all is well with the world". In Ambar Kharotachup Chup Dikda, he complains against heaven sitting silent and static, looking at the agony of mankind and doing nothing:

Ploughing ever on the bosom of fields
He walks on never ending journey
With sweat of brow he collects heaps of grain
Yet he longs and pines for one grain
Heaven just looks, moves not,
Does nothing!

But then he sings the song of optimism in Sankatha:

The earth made many idols with hope

Which the Heaven ever and always broke

Heaven got exhausted but the earth was never tired

It continued to make its idols and images

In the light of hopes he carved his path;

Humanity is everlasting and its story is eternal.

The poet means that nature and destiny hurled mountains of miseries on men; there was dreadful darkness on earth but the sun never left spreading its rays of light.

Madhukar feels hope when he considers with what a great speed the country is achieving progress and prosperity. The spirit of awakening is spreading all around.

The dormant feelings have awakened

The rich oppressors are destroyed

The people come with new songs and melodies

Among the fearful men a new life has awakened.

The universality of Madhukar's poetry is evident from the following lines as if he hears the sweet music of the revolving planets:

At night when it is dark

The moon is silent, the stars are yawning

A light sound comes to my ears

I stand and suddenly feel

As if a torrent of music is flowing

Like the waves on and on and I realize and feel

The moon, the stars, the earth and the heaven

Are all united in the universal song and single

Symphony of music!

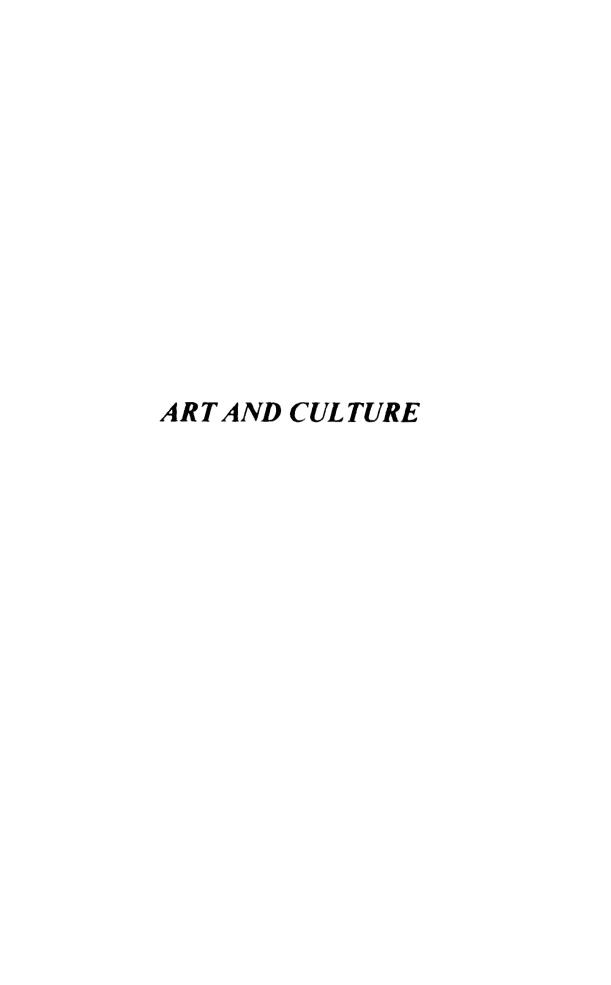
Thus Madhukar's vision is not darkened by the hostile forces of man or nature. In Nama Ithas he says good times are coming when new history will be written where in the achievements and the triumphs of men over misery, pain and suffering will be recorded as against the cruelties and despotism of the exploiters.

But alas! Madhukar, who was working in the Radio Station of Jammu, has left the service and seems to have gone into hibernation in his village.

SECTION II:

KASHMIR

Mahjoor, our own motherland Is a flowery garden, most lovely. Best we must love our dear land; Our land is a lovely garden!



30

Ghulam Rasul Santosh (1929-97): The Painter of Divinity

It is hard to believe that the people of Kashmir, who could have built such magnificent temples at Martand and Avantipur, could have lagged behind in the art of painting. But there exists some good work of pictorial art in Kashmir. Possibly, the cruel hands of Nature and Man destroyed it.

At present there are some talented Kashmiri painters who fill up this unfortunate deficiency very well. Among them are two artists, one male and another female—Shree Ghulam Rasul Santosh and Ms Kishori Kaul.

Ghulam Rasul Santosh

Santosh was born in Srinagar, Kashmir in 1929. He took to many devotions—painting, weaving, papier-mache and then to kashmiri poetry. For two years 1954-56, he went to Baroda University on the Government of India Cultural Scholarship to study under Prof. N.N Bendra. He was awarded Padma Shree in 1977 and then in 1978 he published a selection of poems in Kashmiri.

He exhibited his paintings in India and abroad. From 1963-66 he gave exhibitions of his paintings in New York, Kabul, Tel Aviv. Los Angels. In 1950 he had participated in a group exhibition of Indian artists in Eastern Europe. In 1959 he went to Canada, Zurich, Atlanta, Japan, South Florida, New Orleans, San Francisco, Honolulu, Hong Kong, Morte, Singapore, Cannes (France), Bulgaria, Germany and many other foreign countries.

In India he gave exhibitions in Kumar Gallery, New Delhi, Calcutta, Chemould Art Gallery, Bombay; Kanika Chemould, New Delhi; Pundole Art Gallery, Bombay; Bistidari, New Delhi; Portrait show, Gallery Chankaya; and in other galleries at different places.

Ghulam Rasul Santosh, no doubt, was moulded by Western ideals in

some subtle and direct manner, for art of painting in Kashmir had no moorings. This was in the beginning of his career. In the Amar Mahal Museum is one such painting in which Santosh has depicted Mona Lisa emanating from the creative brain of Leonardo da Vinci. The idea, undoubtedly, is a good one and the colouring superb like that of the original Mona Lisa but he could not imitate the figure of the original Lisa. Santosh also painted certain Kashmiri scenery in something resembling the Impressionistic style.

But in 1965 there was a metamorphosis in his personality. It was a spiritual nature, as he became aware of the true purpose of art, which forced him to do some thorough thinking. He thought that the *summum bonum* of life is happiness and that happiness based on material concepts and physical pleasures could be useless and ephemeral. Therefore, he felt that there was no alternative except to seek some spiritual solution. There he seems to have come under the spell of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, the two great mystics of Kashmir. He felt that the answer to all life's problems lies in religion.

Although he is a perfect Muslim believing in the tenets of Islam yet he is also a liberated Muslim. He could not shake off the Kashmiri tradition and felt the impact of the Trika philosophy of Kashmir. He says:

"That which activities the body (sareera) by the exhalation and inhalation (pran-apan) of breath is Tantra".

The unison of this vital process (prana-shakti, in the Mumbhaka) and its retention as a soundless state of sound creates the beautific sound, sabda. The soundlessness (asabda) of the void (sunya) which is the universal womb (Brahma yoni) reverberates with the primordial sound and leads to the birth of reverberating image (sabda skara).

Sound, centralized as a point, (nada bindu) is the primeval visual perception, is self-illuminated (atma prakasa) and is the abode of the male-female phenomenon (Shiva-shakti), The pristine geometrical concept (sabdabrahma). When the folded universe of subjective reality unfolds itself, it takes the limitless, complex forms as Nature (prakriti), the materialised world of sound-light-energy perceived and related to the senses".

Santosh further explains: "The Universal mind (Brahman) manifests itself by its own will and when transformed in an artist's mind becomes self-creative. The individual mind of an artist has the potential to transform the visual concept into the materialised creative expression: a work of art".

- G.R. Santosh is an authority on Kashmiri Shaivism and it is not known nor does he anywhere give a hint of his having studied the broad divisions of Kashmiri Shaivism:
 - 1. The Agma-Shastra
 - 2. The Spende Shastra
 - 3. The Pratyabhijna Shastra.

But he has been taking a good deal of interest in the Kashmiri Shaivism. All this search has given him a new vision which is reflected in his works.

Santosh's ideal seems to be modelled on that of Lal Ded; that is a supreme concern with and directed towards enlightenment and self-realization. The whole universe is due to the continual interaction of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. The *Samsara* is like a walnut with the two kernels so close that they look as one and the hole is covered by a single hard crest, difficult to be broken. The two halves of the walnut are Shiva and Shakti, and the hard crest being Maya. Self-realisation and liberation is the ideal of both Lal Ded and Nund Rishi.

But G.R. Santosh's tantric doctrine is anti-ascetic. He does not believe in the suppression of the senses but wants to increase their power so that they can be perfectly utilised in the service of achieving union with the Supreme. Thus Santosh asserts that sex and happiness are closely interrelated. He would not like to escape from the problems of the world and free to the Himalayas. He says:

"My inclination is to go through the phenomenal world which in any case no one can avoid. Then, why not accept it with equanimity, this world of Maya, and try to sublimate some aspect of experience of life... I am convinced that pleasure is no sin. In fact, contentment is bliss. Sex is an act of life and I regard it as a symbol of all desire... Sex and desire are never regarded as an end in themselves but a means of self-realization. (It is a question of knowing and knowing before transcending its hold.)

In the Amar Mahal Museum, Jammu is a superb painting done by Santosh in yellow, black and little red in which are shown out-spread buttocks of a female and in the centre, that is *Yoni*, is a Shiva Linga. The painting is titled as *Jivan Jyoti* (The Light of Life). Herein human sex is considered as a transcendental experience and a human form, in male and female aspect, in sexual union, is fulfilment of a perfect joyful trance. This is yoga and this produces the seed-tree which keeps the fire-flame of life living. This is the idea that is represented by Santosh on the canvas.

Santosh generally uses a square and a trident to emphasize his tantric or Shaivite symbol. He himself says that he uses it quite deliberately as a Shaivite symbol and owes it to the *Trika philosophy* of Kashmir which he has mastered. Actually, he, it appears, considers a square as a window or a screen to cover sometimes the necessity of showing *yoni* and *lingam*. Only it is given in suggestion. He uses trident because of his predilection for Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir. He uses black colour to symbolise the darkness and yellow is the colour of light or knowledge. Whatever Santosh paints, he does not think and form images. It comes to him naturally as he breathes unconsciously.

His paintings convey different things to different people. Someone may recognise the sensuous beauty in the paintings; the breasts, the buttocks and lingam—the immense symbols of sex. One may be led to think as if he wants to discover like D.H. Lawrence, the British novelist, "a free flow of the passionate life; it seems to have become for him almost "a mystical ideal, for there was fulfilment and there was power". Some may be affected by the intellectual power and moral force of his genius. But all will feel the haunting mystery of his lines and plain colours. All in all, there is "the hunger of the human soul for those inpalpable mysteries that touch the horizon of human thoughts".

Kishori Kaul: The Painter of Past Images and Present Impressions

"To verbalise the texture, hue, shadow area and sudden burst of colour of a fleeting image imprinted on the mind's eye is difficult at the best of times. To rediscover in words the gallery of images that unfolds along the corridor of time is nearly impossible. What returns to verbal language is mostly a montage, with large areas of association missing. The perception and aesthetic assimilation of any visual experience do not even return in words. They get into the colour technique and style and permeate the artistic persona".

- Kishori Kaul

Kishori Kaul was born in Srinagar in 1939. Her father was a Kashmiri Pandit of unorthodox views serving in the Government. She studied in Annie Besant School, Srinagar. The year 1953 was a year of great significance for her. She fell ill with tuberculosis and while she lay tossing between hope and disappointment, her grandfather, Narayan Mu, her grandmother whose father was Narayan Muratgar, a celebrated painter of the late 19th century, placed before her brush, colours and paper and thereby set the ball of aesthetic sensibility rolling in her mind. No doubt, Kishori already had a penchant for painting but now she got so engrossed in artistic work that she forgot about her surroundings full of sorrows and sufferings with the result that she got cured of her dreaded disease and, at the same time, emerged as a great painter. It was a marvellous occupational therapy for her which brought a cataclysmic change in her life and character.

Her first teacher was Som Nath Bhat and then she joined the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda in 1959. Soon her artistic excellence was recognised and she got awards and prizes galore. She received

Bombay Art Society Award and Bombay State Award (Poona). She also received Gujarat State Exhibition (Surat) Award. In 1963 she received Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree with distinction and then in 1966 Master of Fine Arts Degree, first class with distinction from Baroda University. In the same year her father died.

Kishori exhibited her paintings in Srinagar, Bombay and Delhi along with G.R. Santosh, Trilok Kaul, P.N. Kachru and others. In 1968 she fell in love with and married Mr. Inder Varma, scientist and journalist. She has held many exhibitions of her paintings in India and in foreign countries.

She generally works on canvas with oil and her remarkable paintings are:

1. Garden (1989); 2. Green Fields, 1991; 3. Light Allover, 1991; 4. Lotus Lake, 1992; 5. Tree on Hill Side, 1992; 6. Gladioli, 1992; 7. Amaltash, 1993; 8. Sunset, 1993; 9. Summer Flowers, 1993; 10. Srinagar, 1993; 11. Spring Amidst Snow, 1993; 12. Vegetables, 1993; 13. Autumn, 1993; 14. Flowers, 1993; 15. Blue Lake, 1993; 16. Still Life with Samovar, 1993; 18. Summer, 1993; 19. Reflections, 1993; 20. Gladioli in Vase, 1993.

There are three main characteristics in Kishori's paintings. One, the pictures of her childhood in Srinagar are etched in her mind and then by a magical trick she can associate the present with the past images. She appears to have a mental camera in which are reflected and kept secure the images of her earlier life. She lived her earlier life in Srinagar, Her house was situated on the bank of the river Jhelum and she loved to watch the boats floating on the surface of the water. She would also enjoy the quarrels of the families of the boatmen. She had her deaf aunt who was quite eloquent in narrating tales of wonder.

She remembered the songs of the peasants of her mother's village where her parents lived and, according to Kishori, the sun, the sky and the water and mountains would assume life and form. From another woman she heard the stories of love and separation. All these experiences gave her unique joy. Nothing seemed to depress her. She recalled with nostalgia the colour of the fields in Dal Lake when the children were taken for a four or five days' picnic in a *Doonga*; the gold spangled waters made her feel that she could walk on the surface; the needling of petals into necklaces in Nishat as *Kawa* would be poured out of a samovar she also well remembered.

The fountainhead of her art lies in her childhood experiences and the images she preserved in her mind. Her mother's guidance and criticism in the beginning also helped her to fashion her work. Above all, Nature was her great teacher. She writes:

"My process of conceiving a work is linked with Nature's inherent structures and their ability to strike a deep resonance within my memory. The downward rush of the crystalline water or a mountain stream, splattered with light streaking through the overhanging branches of trees, determines the structure of a painting...The sudden, swift flight of a bird, the limb of a tree cutting across space, the little world of my garden in the middle of the city—all become starting points for the reconstruction, through colour, of fleeting but profound sensations".

Although Kishori has a photographic memory yet her art creations are emotional representations of images and ideas. Her mind is biased and it colours according to her emotional prejudice. If we contemplate on her painting: "Earth, 1953", we see that there grow flowers all over the earth of varied hues and then at the back are hazy hills and the few cottages and the ground flooded with sunshine. It is an isolated piece of earth where there is peace and calm. There is no room for sorrow, only beauty is sprinkled all over. Kishori in this painting appears a mistress of colour and the lines are misty. In her painting Kishori stands like a rock refusing to be carried away by the tides of cheap commercial art.

If we see her another painting, "Still Life with Blue Vase, 1993" we find that her painting reveals a whole gamut of colours in many nuances and shades. This also confirms that Nature is the vast reservoir of colour and beauty which provides her the inspiration. Her quest has been to capture the evasive mystery of colour that she finds in the play of light on the natural objects. Her landscapes, though instinctively belong to Kashmir, yet they go beyond the topography of Kashmir but the contemplations of the varying moods of nature.

When we see Kishori's other paintings like, 'Lotus Lake,' 'Green Fields,' 'Sunset,' 'Autumn,' 'Still Life with Samovar', we find that she is a product of the social milieu and the environs of Kashmir determine her basic consciousness. The evolution of varieties of landscape form created out of soft line and delightful colour constitutes the essence of her art. She has an extraordinary gift for colouring.

Kishori has now grown quite mature and it has now become easy to assess her art and her predilections. Kishori Kaul cannot be classed in one particular group. She has her own individual style based on her earlier impressions and influences and keen observations of her environment cast in the mould of her passionate imagination. She does not brood over the miseries, personal or of others. There is not in her the attitude of Keats: "O what can ail thee.../Alone and palely loitering?/ The sedge has withered from the lake/And no birds sing," as we find in Ram Kumar. Her paintings smile with vital lyricism. It appears as if her dreaded disease T.B. consumed in its fever all her disappointments and hoplessness. That she has come out quite healthy and free of the disease, has given her hope and thereby the proof of Divinity. She succeeded in inviting exquisite sensitivity with a superbly vigorous technique.

When we look at the face of Kishori herself we find her sparkling eyes and gentle smile bespeak of her poetic temperament and the optimistic attitude— "All is well with the world". This attitude is diametrically opposite to Padma Sachdev's poetry, who, too, was suffering from T.B. in her young age.

In the Amar Mahal is the picture of a woman, her two braided tresses hang in front on both her sides. The face is only suggestive, for it is misty. The lady appears reflecting on the pleasures of life. The on-looker on contemplation of the picture is led to follow his own train of ideas by the psychological process of association.

What is significant about Kishori, it may be repeated for emphasis, is that she accepted Nature which became her inspirational source. It may safely be insisted that her imagination had its roots in the observation of Nature and her creations belong to a world never wholly divorced from reality. Secondly, reminiscence stimulates her imagination and her most beautiful landscape. Recently she has tried her hand on portraiture, which is free from any semblance of imitations.

32

The Holy Cave of Shree Amarnath

Kashmir has, since times immemorial, been the abode of gods and goddesses. The most sacred and famous one is the holy cave of Shree Amarnath, the Eternal Lord, which is situated at a height of 13,000 ft. from the sea level. It is about 45 kms. from Pahalgam, the famous tourist resort of Kashmir.

The origin of the pilgrimage is described in a Sanskrit book Bringesha Samhita. Herein is stated that rishi Bringesha told his disciples the importance of the Amarnath cave and instructed them to go to the holy cave and have darshan of the sacred ice-lingam. The pilgrims, however, were harassed by the Rakhashas. Thereupon, the rishi Bringesha prayed to Lord Shiva. The Lord gifted the rishi a sceptre to ensure safe journey. This has ever since been the symbol of protection to the caravan of the pilgrims and now it is called Chhari Mubarak. The traditional Yatra (pilgrimage) generally arrives at the cave every year at Rakhsha Bandhan Purnima (full moon), which occurs near the last week of August. The Chhari is accompanied by a large number of pilgrims and sadhus chanting mantras.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CAVE

The cave is quite large. Its entrance is about forty yards horizontally and in height it is about 75 feet and is sloping 80 feet deep down inside the mountain. In the cave is an ice-lingam of about five feet high and at the top it forms a cone. This obviously symbolises Lord Shiva and to the left of the lingam is a small ice block which stands for Lord Ganesha and to the left of the latter is a small ice formation representing goddess Parvati. These ice formations are formed during the summer days and wax and wane alongwith the moon. On the full moon day they are complete in form whereas on moonless days they altogether vanish.

THE IMPORTANT PILGRIMS

Lakhs of great men and common men, both old and young, have undertaken the hazardous and exhausting trekking to the cave for centuries. Most notable among them are Swami Vivekananda who visited the holy cave in 1898, Swami Ramatirtha and, above all, Swami Shankaracharya, the great saint who journeyed from the south to have darshan of the icelingam. About Swami Vivekananda's pilgrimage to the holy cave, Margaret Noble, better known as Sister Nivedita, gives interesting details in her "Notes on the Wanderings of Swami Vivekananda". She says that the Swami was much moved inside the cave so that his whole body shook and he swooned with intense emotion. Sister Nivedita also writes that "the place was vast, huge enough to hold a Cathedral and the great ice-Shiva was in a niche of the deepest shadow, sacred as if throned on its base. The Swami, she says, told her that he had a strange mystical experience in the cave. Lord Shiva himself appeared before him and he granted him the boon that he would die whenever he desired".

THE DISCOVERY OF THE CAVE

There are many legends regarding the Amarnath cave given in Amarkatha, a Sanskrit text. It also gives the significance of the Yatra. This Amarkatha is said to have been narrated by Lord Shiva himself to his consort Parvati. The discovery of the cave has been attributed to a shepherd who while searching for his flock of sheep, saw the cave and on entering it found the ice-lingam. The case was rediscovered by a Muslim of Balkote village, situated below Pahalgam, at a distance of seven kms. The cave's location had been lost for over a century and as a reward the family of the Muslim, Malik, continues to get one-third of the share of offerings at the cave every year, while the rest is equally divided between the Mahant of Dashamani Akhara, Srinagar and the Pandas of Mattan, a village in South Kashmir.

The pilgrimage is undertaken in the following stages: (i) Pahalgam, the base camp; (ii) Chandanwari; (iii) Sheshnag; and (iv) Panchtarni.

PAHALGAM

Pahalgam is a picturesque village surrounded by mountains covered with deodar and conifer trees and is situated on the bank of the river Liddar. It is said that in the vicinity of Pahalgam is Mahadevgiri mountain and at its base is a big flat stone. A stream runs besides it. "In the 9th century A.D. a saint named Vasugupta had a dream in which Lord Shiva appeared to him and told him the whereabouts of a rock with a series of teachings inscribed on it. These teachings which were named as Shiva

sutras form the foundation of Kashmiri Shaivism. Swami Mukhtananda who visited Kashmir found the rock. The intervening years have wiped away the writings which were found on the rock but the feelings remains".

Kashmiri Shaivism describes one's own nature, the nature of the world around him and God. Self-realization is the aim of this system of Kashmiri Shaivism.

CHANDANWARI

Then the pilgrims leave for the next stage, Chandanwari, which is eight kms. from Pahalgam and one has to climb up the valley which, on both sides, has thick forests of tall pines and birches and green grass so that the whole panorama looks like an enchantment of greenery.

SHESHNAG

From here the pilgrims move to the next stage, that is Sheshnag, which is situated about 13,000 feet above the sea level. Here the pilgrims stay for the night. One finds a big lake here. It is about a mile long and a quarter of a mile broad. There is a meadow overlooking the lake. Behind it rises a huge glacier with three silent pinnacles of ice. There is a legend concerning this lake. It is said that a powerful Asura (demon) brought about a havoc among the Devas (gods). In distress they prayed to Lord Shiva, but he could not help them as he had granted a boon to the Asura (demon) that he would not be killed by the Lord. He advised them to approach Lord Vishnu. They prayed to Lord Vishnu as a result of which the mighty snake residing in the lake destroyed the Asura (demon) at the command of Lord Vishnu. Thus the spot containing lake and the mountain behind, is known as Sheshnag. The pilgrims bathe in this lake as it is considered auspicious.

Then the pilgrims have to climb the Mahagunus mountain which is about 13,000 feet high. The mountain is covered with beautiful buttercups and here are heard the shrieks of the marmot animals which cannot be seen as they run into the holes as soon as they hear the footsteps of a human being.

PANCHTARANI

Then from here one has to travel a mile's decline to Panchtarani. The whole scene is one of barren mountains and no trees are found here; it is covered with green grass only. The pilgrims reach the plain of Panchtarani which is a mile long and a quarter of mile broad. A stream runs here and four other streams also join it. The tradition goes that Lord Shiva was performing *Tandav Nritya*, the cosmic dance of destruction. "While

dancing his locks got dishevelled and from them the five streams came down. These are considered holy and bathing in them is considered as auspicious. Some very rare types of wild flowers of variegated colours and kinds are found here. The pilgrims, leaving Panchtarani behind, go up. Here goats and horses which belong to the Bhakarwals graze. After passing this stage the pilgrims go up to the holy cave. At the left of the cave flows the Amarvati stream in which the pilgrims bathe before entering the cave.

Outside the cave are seen two pigeons which are present there throughout the year. There is a legend that Lord Shiva was in deep meditation when he was disturbed by his two devotees. Lord Shiva got furious and transformed them into pigeons and now they are seen there since many years.

It often happens that the weather gets overcast with dark clouds and it rains excessively but in spite of it the devotees with strong determination go up the cave and are rewarded with the *darshan* of the Lord's icelingam. Those who have true devotion and faith in Lord Shiva never turn their back during the Yatra but go steadfast up to the cave.

The Sun-Temple of Martand in Kashmir

The temple of Martand, the most magnificent and impressive of all the temples in Kashmir, is situated at a distance of five miles to the east of Anantnag town. Although the temple stands in ruins yet it still looks full of grandeur.

SITUATION

It is situated at the top of a high plateau and overlooks the plains of the Valley which wear the garment of verdure. These plains contain clusters of lakes, streams, springs and rivers and the whole Valley is surrounded by snow-capped mountains. In spring particularly, the perfumed air at Martand caresses one's face and seems to reach the heart and one feels a vague longing for an undefined happiness of divinity. It is a masterpiece of the site and beauty of Nature which gives the Suntemple its unique and superb grandeur.

Cunningham feels that the erection of the Sun-temple was suggested by the "magnificent sunny prospect which its situation commands. It overlooks the finest view of Kashmir, perhaps in the known world". Beneath it lies the Paradise of East with its sacred streams and glens, its orchards and green fields, surrounded on all sides by vast snowy mountains whose lofty peaks seem to smile upon the beautiful Valley below. The vast extent of the scene makes it sublime, for this magnificent view of Kashmir is no petty peer on a half-mile glen, but the full display of a Valley 30 miles in breadth and 84 miles in length, the whole of which lies beneath the ken of the wonderful Martand".

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

Much has been speculated on the date of its construction. Pandit Anand Koul, a great Kashmiri scholar, remarks in this connection: "The true date of the erection of this temple—the wonder of Kashmir— is a

disputed point of chronology, but the period of its foundation took place probably between 370 A.D. and 500 A.D. The colonnade is recorded in the *Rajatarangini* as the work of the famous Lalitaditya who reigned in Kashmir from 724-760A.D. From the same authority we gather—though the interpretation of the verses is considerably disputed—that the temple itself was built by Ranaditya who reigned in 223 A.D. and side chapels or at least one of them, by his queen Amritprabha".

Cole, on the other hand, is of the opinion that "the large temple dedicated to the Sun, was probably of an earlier date, and may possibly have been erected by Samdhimati-Aryaraja (35 B.C.), who with the exception of the Buddhist Prince Meghavahana (12 A.D.) was the only rich predecessor of Ranaditya (223 A.D.) and a worshipper of the emblems of Shiva".

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE

Martand temple consists of a courtyard with main temple in the middle and colonnaded peristyle, which is 220 feet long and 142 feet broad. It has eighty four fluted columns facing the courtyard. The peristyle is externally plain, except on the west side, which originally had a row of columns. Bates feels that the interior must have been imposing as the exterior.

The Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1848, Part II contains the best description of the temple. It mentions that the entrance of gateway, stands in the middle of the western side of the quandrangle and is of the same width as the temple itself. This proportion is in accordance with the ideas of Hindu architectural grandeur, for the rules laid down by them as quoted by Ram Raz, give different proportions from six-sevenths to tenelevenths of the width of the temple for each style of the gateway from the most simple to the magnificent. Outwardly, the Martand gateway resembles the temple itself in the disposition of its parts and in the decoration of its pediments and pilasters. It was open to west and east, and was divided into distinct portions forming an inner and outer portico, by a cross wall with a doorway in the centre, which was no doubt closed with a wooden door. On each flank of the gateway pediment was supported by massive fluted pillars, 17.5 feet in height, or 8 feet higher than those in the quadrangle. One of these is still standing to the south of the entrance; and the style of the architecture and the entablature which connected these pillars with the gateway must have been same as the achitecture in the Avantiswami temple described above. I surmise that the front and the back pediments of the gateway were supported on similar large pillars but it is possible

that the square foundations which observed in the front may have been only the remains of the wing-walls of a flight of steps. The roof was pyramidal; for a portion of the sloping mouldings of its pediment was still to be seen on one side.

The walls of the gateway are profusely decorated, internally and externally, the chief motif of decoration being rows of double pedimented niches alternating with rectangular of the inner chamber of the gateway which contains the tall figure of a three-headed Vishnu standing between two attendants. Immediately below is the long rectangular panel decorated with a row of dancing urchins striking a variety of attitudes. The temple proper is 63 feet in length and 30 feet in width at the eastern end and only 27 feet in width at the western entrance end. It contains three distinct chambers of which the outermost, named ardhamandapa or half temple, answering to the front porch of classical fanes is 18 feet and 10 inches square; the middle one called antaral or "middle temple", corresponding to the pronads of the Greeks, is 18 feet by 4.5 feet, and the innermost called garbhagriha, or womb of the edifice, the naos of the Greeks and the cells of the Romans, is 18 feet and 5 inches by 13 feet and 10 inches. The first is open and highly decorated in accordance with its name mandapa, meaning 'literary ornamented'. The middle chamber is decorated in the same style; but the inner chamber is plain and is closed on three sides. The walls of the temple are 9 feet thick and of its entrance chamber only 4.5 feet thick, being respectively one half and one fourth of the interior width of the building".

It is said that a constant supply of fresh water was kept up through the canal from the river Lider which was conducted along the side of the mountain for the use of the village close by.

IMAGES OF THE TEMPLE

The Journal of Asiatic Society Bengal mentions: "Among the images carved on the walls of the antarals and the antechamber, we notice on the left wall of the former a well executed image of the river-goddess Ganga standing upon her vehicle, the crocodile, which is looking up towards her. A female attendant on her right and a chauri-bearer is on her left. She holds on her right an umbrella over her head. She holds her usual emblems, a water pot in the left hand and the stalk of a lotus flower in her right hand. She is crowned with a double conical tiara; on the opposite of the antarals is the river goddess Yamuna, with her vehicle, the tortoise. Above the niche on the north wall is a relief consisting of a pair of Gandharvas in flight with an umbrella over them. The statues on the

western wall of the antechamber are undoubtedly representatives of Vishnu and what Ferguson mistook for hoods of snakes are in reality points of their coronets. Each of them is three-faced, like the Vishnu image found in the Avantiswami temple, the left face being that of a boar (varha) and the right one that of a man-lion (narsimha). Both are eightarmed and their lower hands are placed on the heads of the chauri-bearer. as in other images of Vishnu found in the Valley. Furthermore, they wear the garlands (vanmala) and we also notice the bust of the earth-goddess (prithvi) between the feet of the statue on the north wall. Most of the images have hands which are unfortunately broken and weather-worn. and the emblems they hold can no longer be identified. Nor can the fourteen-seated figures which occur on the walls of the antechamber below the cornice be identified with certainty. Twelve of them occur in the north and south walls, i.e., six on each and two on the east wall. The one on the right seems to represent Aruna, the charioteer of Surva, holding the reins of his seven horses. The pilasters of the great trefoil arch of the antechamber contain images which cannot yet be identified. The chapels of the north and south of the antechamber each contains two niches 5 feet 9 inches by 4 feet internally, which face to the east and west respectively, possibly an illusion to rising and setting sun".

FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE

As is usually common in the temples of Kashmir, the roof appears to have been of the pyramidal type. Such was the magnificent mass of building dedicated to the Sun, a mass 75 feet in height, 33 feet in length and the same in width including the wings. Entrance was gained by a wide flight of steps which are now covered by ruins. On each of the other sides was a closed doorway surmounted by a trefoiled arch and covered by a pediment which rose to a height of 60 feet. At the angles of the buildings on each side of the doorway were stout pilasters, which were divided into panels, each decorated with a miniature representation of the Aryan style of temple. These pilasters sustained the entablature, and gave a look of strength and solidity to the walls which was fully needed for the support of the vast massive roof. This lofty pyramid of stone was itself rendered lighter and more elegant in appearance by being broken into two portions separated by an ornamented band and by the addition of small niches with pointed roofs and trefoiled recesses, all of which were in strict keeping with the general character of the building.

The peristyle is the largest example of its kind in Kashmir. In the middle of its larger sides there are a pair of large fluted pillars, 13 feet in height and 10 square parrallel pillars which, with the four pillars of the

central porches, make up the number of 84, that was sacred to the Sun...Of these about one half, all more or less imperfect, now remain standing. Each pillar was 9.5 feet in height and 21.5 feet in diameter with an intercolumnation of 6 feet and 9.5 inches... The imposts (behind) were surmounted by human-headed birds facing each other, and a smaller bird, looking to the front, ornamented the horizontal mouldings of the pediments.

About one-third of the entablature still exists principally on the north-eastern side of the quandrangle.

The other walls of the quandrangle are ornamented by a succession of trefoil-headed panels similar in shape and size to the recessed opening of the interior.

Pandit Anand Koul remarks: "In the wall of the longer interior chamber is a window reaching the floor and about eight feet in height. The walls thus divided quarterly are filled with single figures in relief, two of Surya and two of Lakshmi, one each panel".

Some time back the courtyard of the temple was excavated and stones and debris were cleared. Shree R.C. Kak, the renowned archaeologist, relates that "removal of the accumulated debris of centuries from the base temple has also brought to light a very important fact, viz., that previous to the construction of the present temple there existed another temple of somewhat smaller dimensions at this site. When the new temple was built, the older temple base was not demolished but was enveloped by a new base with larger dimensions, as is borne out by the existence of both the bases, side by side, one within the other, on the east side of the temple. The older temple was probably the one built on this side by Ranaditya".

Dr. Goetz, however: says, "Martand stands not quite isolated. It was a smaller counterpart in the plains, the temple of Malot in the Salt Range. Malot raises the problems of the Martand temple even more acutely. For it was a facade of purely Roman-Cornitian half-pillars enclosing trefoiled archway crowned by a set of *shikhara*. If the first has already been proved characteristic for Lalitaditya's reign, the second was possible only in a time of the closest contact with Bihar and Bengal, i.e. when the king of Gauda had become Lalitaditya's vassal and prisoner".

34

The Holy Shrine of Kheer Bhawani

From ancient times, the shrines, centres of worship and *maths* have played an important role in the lives of the people. These are the centres of the community life and have also enchanced the national integration. Moreover, the religious shrines have influenced our spiritual education and have been a source of inspiration. At present, too, pilgrims in lakhs go to the holy spots to worship with full faith.

The area of Jammu and Kashmir is the abode of gods and goddesses and famous for scenic beauty. The temple of Kheer Bhawani and the pilgrim centre of Maharagya Devi is situated at a distance of 14 miles east of Srinagar against the background of natural sight near the village of Tula Mula. This temple, made of marble stone, is located in the middle of a spring, around which there is a vast area whose floor has been covered with smooth and beautiful stones. In it exist large and old chinar trees beneath which the pilgrims sit or sleep on mats of grass. The colour of the spring goes on changing and it is said that whenever any horrifying and unfortunate event has to happen, the colour of its water becomes black.

Maharagya Pradurbhave is the history of Kheer Bhawani itself. In it is written that Maharagya was pleased with the devotion of Ravana and appeared before him and Ravana got an image of the goddess installed in Ceylone. But the goddess became displeased with the vicious and licentious life of Ravana and so didn't want to stay in Ceylone. Therefore, under the command of the goddess, Hanuman got the image from Ceylone and installed it at the holy spot of Tula Mulla. In those days there was a deep relation between Kashmir and Ceylone, therefore the father of Ravana, Pul Satya Muni, lived in Kashmir and performed his meditation (tapasya). Walter Lawrence writes that Kheer Bhawani is the great goddess of Kashmir and the spring of Kheer Bhawani is considered very pious but it is little known that the cult of worshipping this goddess has started from Ceylone.

The hymns and devotional songs of this goddess are found in the Sanskrit Book *Rudrayamala Tantra*.

The mention of Kheer Bhawani is found in Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*. Kalhana writes that the sacred spring of Tula Mula is situated in a marshy ground. The name of the spring is Mata Ragini Kund.

Maharagini is the form of Durga Bhagvati. The Brahmins of Kashmir worship this spring and pilgrims from every corner of the country visit to have the *darshan* of the place.

Further, it is written therein that Jayapida who ruled for thirty-one years in the last part of the 18th century also founded the town of Inderkot, This Jayapida confiscated the lands of the Brahmins of Tula Mula and ninety-nine Brahmins committed suicide for this reason by jumping in the river; but it had no effect on the king and he did not return the Brahmins their lands.

One day when the Brahmins of Tula Mula went with a complaint to the king, the guards of the palace beat them but still they were successful in sneaking into the palace. They told the king that if the Brahmins got angry they could unite the earth and sky together and make the mountains level with the plains and also finish the king.

Hearing this the king became red with anger and rebuffed them by saying that they were being vicious. Although they lived by begging they talked like *rishis* and *munis*. At this one Brahmin whose name was Diyannu Attal replied, "If we are not so spiritual as were our ancestors neither are the kings any longer so great". The king replied that he was no Vishvamitra or Agnsth. The Brahmin replied that he could also show prowess like Vishvamitra. Diyannu Attal shouted at the king, "Oh unfortunate Raja! May goddess destroy you before my very eyes". So, according to Kalhana, the heavy pole of the throne's canopy fell down on him and after a few days of great agony he died.

In Rajtarangini Tula Mula is considered very sacred and the Brahmins of Tula Mula were very great and powerful. The spring of Maharagya was very sacred. Thousands of years ago many floods occured in Kashmir and the sacred spring of Tula Mula also was inundated under its sway and the holy place could nowhere be traced. All around was water. At last Kashmir's Yogi Krishna Pandit had a dream in which the goddess appeared to him and ordered that she would swim in the form of a snake at the proper place and that he should stick large poles and when the water subsided there the holy spot was discovered. This event happend during the Samvat 4041.

According to Jona Raja Sikander, the iconoclast destroyed most of the temples and tried to make this temple as well the target of his impious action but failed. Kamudi in her book, "Kashmir—Its Cultural Heritage" writes that this temple remained lost for quite a long period and no pilgrim visited this place till one Pandit Krishna Taplu again discovered it and once again its prominence rose and pilgrims started coming here.

The mention of this temple is also found in Abu-i-Fazal's book Ain-i-Akbari in which is written that the area of Tula Mula extended over the area of hundred bighas of land, which got sunk in the summer season and formed into a marsh. The advisor of Dara Shuku was Sham Sunder Koul about whom Shri Balkak Dhar writes in an article that Sham Lal Koul was a great saint and a devotee of Shakti cult and used to make the offering of meat and wine to gods and goddesses. When one day he came to Tula Mula he offered the same things according to the precepts of his cult but what is astonishing that the meat, etc. were changed into vegetables.

In his article Mr. Dhar has further written that a devotee Krishna Kar, who contemplated on this goddess got a high spiritual power. This very Krishna Kar was the Guru of the famous Rishi Peer Pandit Padsha whose birth place was in Batta Yar, Ali Kadal. Both the Hindus and the Muslims used to come to pay their devotion to the goddess. Swami Rama Tirtha and Swami Vivekananda also visited here to have the darshan of the place.

With the pouring of milk and throwing of sugar candy in the spring by the pilgrims, a thick and solid layer was formed at its bottom. When it was cleared, the ruins of an old temple and shrine slabs engraved with figures were discovered. Here many images were also found but nobody rebuilt the temple till the *Samvat* 1969 when Maharaja Pratap Singh, who was the disciple and worshipped this goddess, got a marvellous temple of marble made in the midst of the spring which shines like a pearl in a shell.

Pandit Aftab Kaul has written in his book "At the Feet of the Master" that for spiritual knowledge, spiritual perfection and salvation there are four prescribed stages in a journey from Srinagar to Kheer Bhawani. First stage is the holy spring of Vichar Nag; second, is the Kawaj Nar (the Land of Lire). From Vichar Nag on the right side of the road is the beautiful Lake of Anchar (Achar) which before the opening of the motorable road, was a short-cut and a charming way to Tula Mula. After this the next stage is one of Tengul Bal (the Hill of the Burning Embers). After crossing all these stages the pilgrim reaches at the feet of Maharagya Kheer Bhawani. This is like "Pilgrim's Progress" written by John Bunyan.

Some people are of the opinion that there was a mulberry tree near the holy spot of Kheer Bhawani which, in Kashmiri, is called Tul Mul. But Tul Mul is also derived from the Sanskrit phrase-Tul Muli-that is of great value. This means that all other pilgrim centres are of lesser value than this one. It is said that after Ravana finished the worship of the goddess he offered the kheer (rice pudding) to the goddess which she accepted and since then it is called Kheer Bhawani. The worship of Kheer Bhawani can be done under Vedic mantras as well as Tantric mantras. According to Tantric system, the mantra of Maharagya Kheer Bhawani is:

Om Heem Shree Kaleem

Bhagvatya Ragya Swaha.

All the desires and hopes of a person are fulfilled by repeating this mantra.

The Bhagvati Parvati has got nine forms:

1. Shailputri 2. Vrhama Charini 3. Chander Ganta 4. Kashmandi 5. Kumari 6. Katyayani 7. Kamaratri 8. Mata Gouri 9. Siddhi Datri. It is said that Ragya form is more eminent than all other eight ones.

The sacred place of Kheer Bhawani has been the centre of Sanskrit learning and literature since many ages. The Brahmins of this place had achieved excellence in religious and *yoga* knowledge.

The festival of Bhagvati Kheer Bhawani is held in the Ashtami of Jeth and Har. Therefore, in these two days, crowds of people go there in buses and doongas. Three or four days before the festival, large markets come into existence. The road journey to the village from the Kheer Bhawani is lined with decorated shops containing many things of common use. The pilgrims before worshipping bathe in the nearby holy stream. There is a separate arrangement for the bathing of women. The eating of meat is strictly forbidden here. It is said that anyone who does not act on this precept is severely punished by the goddess.

It is a matter of experience that the effect of piety on the mind of the man by going to this holy place and by bathing in the stream, is one of peace and joy. Even an atheist, when he comes here and looks inward and does introspection, gets immense pleasure and is aware of the divine power. It is such a place where lakhs of people sing the same kind of prayer. In the evening when the fragrant breeze blows and lakhs of oil lamps shine and flowers of various hues swim on the surface of the spring, one feels a unique influence and forgets all sorrow and griefs. Although

many hymns have been written in praise of this goddess in Sanskrit, Persian and Kashmiri yet the best one is known as Ragini Sabassai Nama.

The management of this holy place is under the Dharmarth, which has done a lot for the improvement of this holy spot. More land has been purchased to give extension to the place so that large number of people can be accommodated here. Now there is more than twelve *kanals* of lands around the spring. *Dharmashalas* on modern lines have been constructed for the pilgrims to stay here without rent. The needy are given blankets as well. Many new shops have been constructed and taps also arranged for the supply of water.

This is a paradise for those people who want to derive pleasure from the natural scenery. It is a peaceful place for those who desire mental peace. For spiritual upliftment and worship this is an excellent place. One undertakes the pilgrimage both by road and river. Around Kheer Bhawani flows the bubbling brooks and murmuring streams and far away are seen picturesque mountains. In short, this is the most captivating place for anyone. The people have great faith and respect for this holy place. The atmosphere of this place at night, too, is marvellous. At different spots here groups of people sing hymns in Kashmiri with a melodious voice. These devotional songs have such a sweet charm as can be seen from the few verses of the devotional songs written by Krishna Razdan. Its English rendering is as follows:

Devi, remove all my sorrows!

I offer the flowers of devotion.

Bestow me your benign darshan

And my illusion will be dispelled.

Goddess, remove all my sorrows!

Devi, favour me with your kind look;

Goddess, remove all my sorrows!

Before you all the time sit Rishis;
Thus have they your darshan
They sit bowing their heads
Goddess, remove all my sorrows!
They ignite incense before you
And play on sitar and santoor;
Drums and varied musical instruments.
Goddess, save me from all sorrows!

I have no knowledge Nor incantation of Mantras Save my life's boat everytime Goddess, remove all my sorrows!

Jama Masjid: The Grand Old Mosque of Srinagar

The conception of Jama Masjid for personal as well as for congregational prayers occurred to the mind of Sultan Sikandara. The king wanted to build the mosque at the present site of Mazar-i-Salatin where water was available for the use of the people. His queen, however, suggested the vacant land of Maheshwari near her palace for the purpose. The king approved her suggestion and thus the construction of the mosque commenced in 1398 A.D. in consultation with Mir Sayyid Hamdani who had come to Kashmir in 1374 A.D. Sultan Sikandar invited the great engineer Sayyid Mohammad Sadr-ul-Din from Khurasan and it was he who drafted the plan and made estimates for the project. He planned a mosque which could accommodate 40,000 worshippers at a time. The king was delighted with the plan and construction of the mosque was begun and completed in 1405 A.D.

Jama Masjid of Srinagar is an old magnificent mosque. According to one version the ground on which the mosque has been constructed was sacred to the Buddhists, especially to those who came from Ladakh. They called it Tsisung Tsublak King and the Masjid until late 19th century was called Bodo Masjid. But from the Tibetan Notes of A.H. Franck it is evident that the mosque in question was formerly a Buddhist temple. This mosque was called Bota Masjid and 'was somewhere below the castle hill of Srinagar'.

On the door of the Jama Masjid are verses which indicate that it was first built by Sultan Sikandar in 1398 A.D. and completed in 1402. Sultan Zain-ul-Abiden added to its aesthetic attraction. He also established an Islamic school as an appendage to the mosque and assigned it some estates to pay for its upkeep. A large fire destroyed the mosque in 1479 A.D. The then king Sultan Hassan Shah started its reconstruction but before he could complete it he died. Then the commander-in-chief of the

Kashmiri army, Ibrahim Magre, completed it in 1503 A.D. in the reigns of Muhammad Shah and Fateh Shah.

In 1620 A.D. it was again destroyed by fire just on the day of the Idi-Ramzan during the time of Emperor Jehangir, who was present at that time in Kashmir and also helped personally in extinguishing the fire. The reconstruction of the mosque was carried on at the command of Jehangir and under the supervision of the historian named Ra's-ul-Mulak, Haider Malik of Chadura. The Emperor also donated munificent grants of land not only for its upkeep but also to provide allowances for its caretakers. It took seventeen years to build it. Then again during the reign of Aurangzeb it got burnt and it is said that when he heard about the fire he enquired whether the chinars were safe. It was rebuilt within three years as all the brick layers and masons of the city were pressed into service. The Mughals, it is recorded, adhered to the original plan of Sikandar.

During the time of Pathans Jama Masjid was neglected but from time to time minor repairs were done from the rents received from the shops around the mosque. During the Sikh rule it was closed for 25 years as per the orders of Dewan Moti Ram in 1821. Its jagirs were confiscated. Later a memorandum was submitted to Sher Singh of the Punjab by Maulvi Amir-ud-Din and Maulvi Nasir-ud-Din Wazapuri to open the mosque for the Muslims. Sher Singh ordered Sheikh Mohi-ud-Din, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir to open the mosque for the use of the Muslims of Kashmir. The Sheikh undertook the repairs of the mosque spending a lakh of rupees.

Then during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh a Construction Committee consisting of Khawaja Rahim Shah, Gofor Shah, Naqashbandi and Azim Drabu was formed to get the mosque repaired and renovated. Maharaja Ranbir Singh contributed six thousand rupees and later donated further nine thousand rupees. Early this century under the Chairmanship of Bakshi Parmanand and Maulvi Rasul Shah and Samad Joo Kukroo as its members. who donated Rs. 13,000, the Committee was again constituted. But it was due to Sheikh Maqbul Hussan Qidwai, formerly Revenue Minister of the State, that the mosque was restored to its original status by subscriptions raised among the zamindars of the Valley. The technical advice was given by Col.H.A.D. Frazer, the State Engineer. Mr. Thad Averay was the contractor.

The grandeur of Jama Masjid lies in its four cloisters, each about 120 years in length and in its spacious quadrangle. P.N.K. Bamzai, the historian, gives the following description of the mosque:

"Roughly square in shape, its northern and southern sides are 384 feet long. A larger Gothic arch opens from the patio on the principal altar over which the steeped roof is much higher than elsewhere. Three more pagoda-shaped steeples in the middle of each cloister serve as minarets from which the Muezzin calls the faithful to prayer. The roof of the four surrounding cloisters, each 360 feet long, is supported by two rows of pillars, numbering 378. The pillars under the domes and spires are more than 40 feet in height. The rows of straight deodar pillars lend an air of grandeur to the interior of the mosque. It looks like a forest trimmed and transplanted from the mountain side to its present position".

The present compound is bisected by the broad paths planned according to the pattern of Mughal gardens.

R.C. Kak in his remarkable book "Ancient Monuments of Kashmir" writes: "Formerly a small canal which entered through the eastern entrance used to feed the large but now there is only a dilapidated tank in the compound. The canal fell into disuse when Srinagar Water Works system was installed. Its place is now taken by an ordinary PWD water supply. The water from the tank flows down a small ornamental stone chute, and passing out of the channel leaves the mosque by an underground passage in the west wall. After a meandering course of a quarter of a mile the pretty little rill, now replaced by the usual gutters, emptied into the Mar canal. The streamlet was in existence as recently as thirty years ago and bore the name of Lachhma-Kul. It was originally brought from the Sindh by king Sultan Zain-ul-Abiden and its name was Zaina-Ganga".

The charming feature of the compound is a group of shady chinar trees which tradition assigns to Zain-ul-Abiden's and Hussan Shah's reign, a fact which appears doubtful.

36

Khanqah of Shah Hamdan

"But the most prominent among the Sufi missionaries was Sayyid Ali Hamdani who, by his learning, piety and devotion, is said to have made 37,000 converts to Islam. Known to Kashmir as Shah Hamdan he may well be said to have practically established Islam in Kashmir and laid its foundation well and truly", writes P.N. Kaul Bamzai, the renowned historian.

Shah Hamdan mosque is one of the most magnificent mosques of Kashmir, which has a rich architectural design and glorious historical background. The Khanqah of Sayyid Ali Hamdani, better known as Amir-i-Kabir Shah Hamdan, stands between Fateh Kadal and Zain Kadal in Srinagar city on the right bank of the river Jhelum. It is accessible by road as well as by river. As one floats down on a boat on the river Jhelum, the mosque readily arrests the attention by its grand construction. Shah Hamdan, it is said, hailed from the city of Hamdan in Persia (modern Iran). He was really a descendant of the Holy Prophet.

There is a legend that in the city of Samarkand, once Timur was going round the streets of his capital in disguise. He overheard a family talking about their poverty and starvation. Timur was moved to pity and took off his armlet and threw it in the house and went back to his palace. The next day a Sayyid came to the house and accused them of having stolen the armlet and so he took it away. Timur heard about it and ordered the Sayyid to undergo the ordeal of hot iron. The Sayyid refused the orders and was put to death. Later on, other Sayidds also were put to death by the Royal firman of Timur. Sayyid Ali or Shah Hamdan accused Timur of his impious deed and thereafter left the country and came to Kashmir along with seven hundred more Sayyids.

Sayyid Ali was born in 1314 A.D. His genealogy can be traced to Hazrat Ali through Imam Hussain. He was born in a family which had a tradition of scholarship. Sayyid Ali is known to have learnt the Holy

Quran by heart while in his teens. He learnt theology doctrines and practice of Sufism under his learned uncle Sayyid Alau-ud-Din Simanani Later, he became the disciple of Sheikh Sharaf-ud-Din Muzoagani who advised him to travel to different countries. Accordingly, Sayyid Hamdani travelled for twentyone years to many countries and met many religious scholars. When he returned home in 1370 A.D. he found that a cataclysmic change had taken place in the political situation in Persia and Timur had unleashed a policy of repression against Sayyids as a result of which most of them including Sayyid Ali Hamdani had to leave the country. He was followed by 700 more Sayyids in order to escape the persecution at the hands of Timur. They came to Kashmir in 1372. In those days Sultan Shihab-ud-Din ruled over Kashmir but the Sultan, at that time, was away on a military expedition against the ruler of Kabul. But his brother Outubud-Din received the party of Sayyids and attended to them for four months after which they left for Mecca. Shah Hamdan again visited the Valley after seven years in 1379 A.D. and stayed here for over two and a half years. He paid a third visit to Kashmir in 1787 A.D. but had to leave soon on account of his health. While at Pakhli in Hazara district he fell seriously ill and passed away in 1384 A.D. His disciples carried his dead body to Khutlan where it lies buried.

R.C.Kak in his book "Ancient Monuments of Kashmir" relates a strange tale about the advent of Shah Hamdan. He says that Shah Hamdan accused Timur of impiety and told him that he would leave the country and by virtue of his divine power he was able to astrally transport himself to Kashmir. He alighted there where the mosque now stands and told the Hindu Fakir who lived there that he should depart. The Fakir refused. Then Shah Hamdan told him that if he would bring him news from heaven he would believe him to be a great man. The Fakir despatched one of his images up to heaven but Shah Hamdan kicked his slipper after it with such a force that the image fell down to the ground. He then asked the Fakir how he had become such a great man. To which he replied that he had acquired greatness by doing charitable actions. Shah Hamdan thought him worthy of conversion to Islam. In a few days so many Hindus followed his example and two and half kharwars (kharwar is equal to nearly two mounds) of Jeneos or sacred threads were delivered up by the Hindu proselytes. The converted Fakir called himself Shyk Baba Wuli (Sheikh Baba Wali), and a penance of forty days performed at his shrine is considered as most meritorious.

In 1372 A.D. Sayyid Ali's visit, accompanied by 700 Sayyids who had to leave Persia when Timur attacked it and had decided to exterminate

the Alavi Sayyids of Hamdan, had a deep influence on the spread of Islam in Kashmir.

"A leader of the great Naqashbandiya Order of Sufis, founded by his contemporary Khwaja Muhammad Vahu-ud-Din Naqashband (1319-89) of Bukhara, Sayyid Ali Hamdani put great influence over the ruler Sultan Qutub-ud-Din. He was received with great honour by the ruler and lodged along with his followers in a hospice in the Alaudinpura quarter of Srinagar. Many of his followers journeyed through many villages of Kashmir converting Hindus to Islam".

Bamzai writes: "That Sayyid Ali Hamdani's deep scholarship and his spiritual attainments were responsible for the furtherance of the conversion of the Valley to Islam goes without saying. He came in contact with the popular Saiva teacher Lalleshwari and the great Sufi Saint Sheikh Nur-ud-Din and had long discourses with them on spiritual and philosophic subjects. Lalleshwari's association with Shah Hamdan was due to an identity of the faith of Sufis, Hindu mendicants and saints in Kashmir. The Sufis had charm of manners and attractive personalities and, treating all religions alike, they naturally preferred the faith to which they themselves belonged and which their patrons favoured. It was, therefore, natural that they should have influenced the people among whom they lived and worked and thus facilitated the peaceful propagation of Islam among the general mass of people in Kashmir".

As a matter of fact Sayyid Ali Hamdani, undoubtedly, was a profound scholar and a prolific writer. He wrote profusely on Sufism and commentaries on the earlier works on the subject. He was versatile and wrote on such secular subjects as jurisprudence, political science and even on the science of physiognomy. He wrote about a hundred books on philosophy, logic and ethics in prose. He also wrote Persian poetry of high standard. His verses regarding Sufism and Mysticism illustrate the humanistic outlook on life and religion.

Sayyid Ali Hamdani had so much influence over Qutub-ud-Din that he objected the latter's having married two sisters, which was against the tenets of Islam. So on the advice of Shah Hamdan the Sultan divorced his one wife and kept only the other one. The king visited the Sayyid daily. He gave the Sultan a cap which he always wore under his crown. The subsequent Sultans also followed the same practice until the cap was buried along with the body of Fateh Shah, according to his will.

Apart from the occasional alterations and additions to the Khanqah of Shah Hamdan done by the present-day care-takers, the original

building is a square structure. The singular thing about the mosque is that most of its part it is built of wooden balk. The spaces between the balks are filled with small bricks. The doors and windows are decorated with fascinating wood carving and the wooden cornice of the plinth in a piece of wonderful art.

The interior consists of a single large hall, 63 feet by 43 feet. On the southern and northern sides are fourteen chambers. The walls, covered with wood work, have become of a rich brown colour. The ceiling is supported in the centre on four wooden columns, covered with pieces of wood arranged in fish-bone patterns which originally bore painted inscriptions.

"The pyramidal roof is broken into three equal portions ending in a graceful steeple, 125 feet from the ground with the gilt umbrella and other ornaments at the top. The four corners at the roof are adorned with wooden tassils. Besides, there are arcades, verandahs and porticos with their openings filled with lattice work and enriched with carved wooden insertions".

About the style of the Khanqah, Dr. G.N.D. Sufi, the great historian, writes: "The heavy corbelled cornice at Shah Hamdan's mosque bears a strong resemblance to that of the mosque of Madani and a similar little mosque at Pampor, which go to confirm the view that the mosque of Shah Hamdan is a true example of the style of wooden architecture of Kashmir. Some travellers suggest that this wooden style indicated a Chinese origin, but, according to Mr. Nicholls, it would not be unreasonable to suspect that the wooden style of Kashmir owes much of its character to the influence from Ghazni".

Actually, Khanqah of Shah Hamdan is a typical example of medieval style of architecture in wood. It was originally built in 1395 during the reign of Sultan Sikandar to commemorate Shah Hamdan's visit to Kashmir. The mosque was twice destroyed by fire in 1479 and 1731. The present mosque was reconstructed by Abul Barkat Khan in 1732.

Access to the balconies is by means of two ladders at the sides. The upper floor does not possess any point of interest, except that this storey commands a panoramic view of the Srinagar city in general. A chamber, adjacent to the main hall, contains the mausoleum, the external surface of which is decorated with glazed glass-work. On the doorway of the shrine is carved an inscription which indicates 786 Hijri, which corresponds to 1384 A.D., as the year of Shah Hamdan's death.

Quoting Percy Brown's remarks about this mosque, Dr. Sufi says: "The mosque of Shah Hamdan in Srinagar is an example of the wooden architecture of the country. Standing on the right bank of the Jhelum river, an irregular masonary foundation composed of ancient temple materials, this building with its surroundings and background of distant snowy mountains presents an enchanting spectacle. On the day of festival with a gaily coloured crowd clustered about its water-front and the picturesque cahtilever bridge in the slow-flowing river is a sight to be remembered".

37

Around the Dal Lake: Temple of Shankaracharya, Mughal Gardens and Hazratbal

There are many beautiful lakes in the Kashmir Valley which yield plenty of water-nuts, lotus roots and fish. Some of these lakes contain floating gardens producing pumpkins, water melons, musk melons, cucumbers and other vegetables. In them are also found geese, duck, teal and other game birds.

Dal Lake is situated on the outskirts of Srinagar and is a vast expanse of water, five miles long and nearly half a mile broad. It is divided by causeways into several portions, each of which has a number of minor offshoots with floating gardens. The lake is surrounded on all sides by places of picturesque beauty and charm. As we start from the Dal Gate along the famous boulevard, the replica of Marine Drive, we see on our right a pyramidal hill, one thousand feet in height, at the top of which stands the ancient stone temple of splendid charm.

Rajtarangini states that it was first built by Jalauka, the son of great Emperor Ashoka, about 200 B.C. The temple was later rebuilt and dedicated to Jyesthesvara by Gopaditya, who ruled from 253 A.D. to 328. The hill was called Gopadri and the village at its foot on the south is still called Gopkar.

It is also said that once Shankaracharya, a famous Hindu saint, came to Kashmir from South India to revive Hinduism. He stayed on the top of the hill for some time and the hill thus came to be known as Shankarachary hill. The Kashmiri Muslims call it Takhat-i-Sulaiman or Solomon's Throne. It is said that the prophet Sulaiman, while flying in the air, used to take rest on the top of the hill.

This temple stands on a solid rock and consists of an octagonal basement of 13 layers. Each of the four sides has two projections which terminate in pediment and agable, the latter intersecting the main roof half way up its slope.

Bamzai, the great historian, gives the following description of the temple:

"The body of the temple is surrounded by a terrace enclosed by a stone wall or parapet, $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. This in following the outline of the basement, preserves its octagonal shape. The surrounding of the temple is reached by three flights of stone steps, numbering respectively 6,7 and eighteen, the last being encased between two walls. From the terrace another flight of ten steps leads to the door of the temple. The interior is a chamber, circular in plan, with a basin containing a lingam. Its general shape is that of a cone with four sides formed by the rectangular adjustment of gable-shaped slabs of masonry.... The interior of the temple is 14 feet in diameter; the ceiling is flat and 11 feet high; the walls which are $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick, are covered with white plaster composed of gypsum, and the roof is supported by four octagonal limestone pillars. The whole of the building is of stone, which is laid throughout in horizontal courses, no cement appearing to have been used ".

The temple shows the early Kashmiri style. "It tries to introduce the early Sihara style and has still one-storeyed gable pediment which is evident even now. Here we find the early specimen of the horse shoe arch, prominent in the final stages of this architecture, as, for example, in Martand".

Leaving the Shankaracharya hill behind, we see, on the right side of the boulevard, a line of magnificent mansions, some of which contain hotels and some showrooms of the big business houses of Kashmir. There are also magnificent palatial buildings which have been converted into a hotel, known as Oberoi Palace Hotel. Above on the height, close to Shankaracharya, is Dr. Karan Singh's Palace, known as Karan Niwas.

PARI MAHAL

Next to Maharaja's palace we find the ruins of Pari Mahal, "the fairies abode", upon the mountain slope. It is situated to the west of Cheshma Shahi and a ruined garden palace. The construction of this palace is ascribed to Dara Shikoh, who was beheaded in 1659 by Aurangzeb. The garden consists of six terraces, with a total length of about 400 feet. The width of the terraces varies from 197 feet to 205 feet.

In the uppermost terrace are the ruins of two structures, a baradhari, facing the lake, and a water reservoir, built against the mountain side. The reservoir was fed by a spring which has since gone dry. In the middle of the second terrace exactly in front of the baradhari is a large tank with brick sides measuring 36' -6" by 26'-6".

The third terrace is quite an interesting part of the garden. The entrance arched in front and behind with a central domed chamber, is in the middle of the east. It is painted with white plaster. On either side of it are a few large rooms, one of which appears to have been a hammam. Its interior is most decorated. On the south of the entrance are a few other chambers.

CHASHMA SHAHI

Aldous Huxley says that Chashma Shahi is "architecturally the most charming of the gardens near Srinagar". High up in the hollow of the mountain which overlooks the Dal Lake is Chashma Shahi, the small garden containing the Royal Spring. It is at a distance of five miles from Srinagar. Shah Jehan built a pavilion and laid out this garden in three terraces with fountains and waterfalls. The spring, famous for its pure, digestible and cold water, is situated in a small garden on the slope of the Zabarwan mountain. It is said that the garden was actually laid out by the Mughal Governor, Ali Mardan Khan at the behest of Shah Jehan in 1632 A.D.

Each of the three terraces of the garden is separated from each other by a height of 18 feet. The pavilion and reservoirs were later repaired by the Sikh Governor Sheikh, Gulam Mohi-ud-Din in 1258 A.D.

NISHAT BAGH

Morning in the shadow of the Nishat Bagh

Evening in the breezes of the Nasim

Shalimar and its tulip fields

These are the places of

Pleasure in Kashmir and none else.

Nishat Bagh, meaning the Garden of Gladness, is situated at a distance of about seven miles from Srinagar. The garden was laid out by Asaf Khan, brother of Queen Noor Jehan in 1634 A.D.

Originally, this garden had 12 terraces rising higher up the mountain side from the eastern side of the Dal Lake but the lower terrace, which stretched down to the lake, no longer exists now, having been cut off by

the modern road. The garden, thus, consists of only nine terraces at present.

The brightest spot in the garden is the second terrace. This, in the words of R.C. Kak, "with its thick groves of Persian lilacs, its high, broad and vertical cascade of sparkling water and its beds of brilliant pansies, is the most fragrant beauty". R.C. Kak further says that the "twenty-three small niches in the arched recess immediately behind the cascade were originally intended for rows of lamps, whose flickering light, reflected and multiplied in the transparent sheet of water behind which they lay, must have presented a singularly pleasing spectacle at night". Mrs. Stuart, in her poetic language, quoted by Dr. Sufi, says: "The stream tears foaming down the carved cascade, fountains play in every tank and water-course, filling the garden with their joyous life and movement".

There are two main pavilions, one at the lower and the other at the upper end of the garden. In the middle there is a reservoir of about 14 feet square and three feet deep with a few fountains.

SHALIMAR

"The best example of the existence of a garden tradition in Kashmir from ancient times is provided by the famous Shalimar on the Dal where as early as the time of King Pravarsena II, the founder of Srinagar, there is said to have been a villa called Mar-Shall or the "Hall of Love", so says Mrs. Stuart in "Gardens of the Great Mughals". At Harwan, it is said, a saint called Swami Sukram lived and the king on his way to or from that place used to rest in the villa. The villa disappeared but round the villa grew a village which came to be known as Shalimar.

Jehangir laid out a garden there in 1619 and eleven years later Zaffar Shah, Governor of Kashmir in the time of Jehangir, extended the garden. Shalimar is a typical Mughal garden where the water flows down a canal from higher level to lower forming a beautiful cascade. There are shady walks, charming chinars, lawns and flower beds on both sides of the canal.

There are four terraces rising one above the other and nearly of equal dimensions. Bamzai, giving the graphic description of the garden, writes: "There is a line of tanks or reservoirs along the middle of the whole length of the garden and these are connected by a canal, 18 inches deep and from 9 to 14 yards wide. The tanks and the canal with their scheme of fountains and cascades, are lined with polished limestone, resembling black marble. The water to feed these is obtained from the Harwan stream behind the garden".

The fourth terrace was the private portion of the garden. The ladies stayed there. "It contains in its centre a magnificent black stone pavilion on which is raised a platform, a little more than three feet high and sixtyfive feet square. Its sloping roof is almost 20 feet high and is supported on each side by a row of six elaborately carved black marble pillars, which are polygonal-shaped and fluted". It was used as a banquet hall.

It was in this garden that the Emperor Jehangir enjoyed the intense delight of making up the quarrel he had with his queen, Noor Mahal, "the Light of the Palace". The poet, Thomas Moore, has immortalised the scene thus:

"And well do vanished frowns enhance,
The charms of every brightened glance,
And dearer seems each dawning smile;
And happier now for all her sights
For having lost its light a while;
And happier now for all her sights
And on his arm her head reposes
She whispers him with longing eyes
"Remember, love, the feast of roses".

About the middle or third enclosure Mrs. Villiers Stuart writes in 'Gardens of the Great Mughals', "Here the whole effect culminates with the beautiful black marble partitions built by Shah Jehan which still stands in the midst of the water shining in the smooth polished marble, the deep rich tone of which is repeated in the cypress trees. Round the baradhari the whole colour and perfume of the garden is concentrated with the snows of the Mahadev for a background".

NASIM BAGH

Nasim Bagh is situated at a distance of seven miles from Srinagar. It is the "Garden of Morning Breezes" as its name indicates. It has no fountain cascades, spring or terraces but has hundreds of lofty shady chinar trees. Nasim Bagh is the nearest excellent camping ground from Srinagar and its chief lure lies in its calm and tranquil atmosphere and bracing breezes of the lake fragrant with the essences of flowers of hills, dales and lotus of the lake. Looking out from the shade of chinars, we catch sight of Shalimar Bagh across the Dal Lake with the snowy Mahadev Peak towering above.

This garden was laid out by Shah Jehan in 1635 A.D. and is situated on western bank of the Dal Lake. About 12,00 chinar trees were planted in this garden.

THE SHRINE OF HAZRAT BAL

The shrine of Hazrat Bal is the most noble shrine in Kashmir. Its building was originally erected by Sadiq Khan in 1634 A.D., one of the nobles of the Emperor Shah Jehan, in 1634 A.D. and so was known as Bagh-i Sadiq Khan. It is said that the Emperor performed his ablutions and then prayed there and declared that it was a befitting place for worship. Later on during the reign of Aurangzeb the sacred hair of the Holy Prophet was brought from India and deposited in the pavilion there. The poet Mirza Beg has given the year 1111 A.D. as the year of its arrival in Kashmir.

The story of its arrival is interesting. Originally the sacred relic passed on to the descendants of the Holy Prophet from father to son till it reached Sayyid Abdulla, the Mutawali of the prophet's shrine in Medina. In 1634 A.D. the Sayyid along with his family came to India and arrived at Bijapur (Deccan) two years later. He was granted a jagir by the ruler there and lived for 23 years there. On his death the relic passed on to his son, Sayyid Hamid. When the kingdom was conquered by Aurangzeb in 1692, Sayyid Hamid went to Jehanabad to get his jagir restored. A rich Kashmiri trader, named Khwaja Noor-ud-Din Ashawari, was doing his business at Jehanabad. Sayyid Hamid sought his help from the Kashmir trader which was readily given to him and Sayyid gave the relic to Khwaja Nur-ud-Din, who left for Kashmir with the relic but at Lahore Aurangzeb detained him and demanded the relic. Aurangzeb wanted to keep it at Ajmer. The Khwaja was shocked at this turn of fate. He died at Lahore but told his friend Khwaja Medanish that should he succeed in getting back the relic, it should be carried to Kashmir and lodged at some beautiful place. Aurangzeb also was directed in a dream by the Prophet to restore back the relic to Khwaja Medanish, who carried it to Kashmir. At first it was lodged in the Khanqah of Naqshbandi and finally placed in the mosque built already by Shah Jehan at Hazrat Bal. The body of Khwaja Nur-ud-Din was also buried near the ziarat.

The authenticity of the sacred hair (or *moh-i-muqadas*) has been tested a number of times so far. The arrogant Afghan Governor, Azad Khan, doubted its reality and wanted to test it by throwing it into fire. But the sacred hair could not be brought out of its glass case and the Governor was beheaded within forty days of his having done so.

The deedar of the sacred hair is held on six different occasions in a year. On all these occasions and on Fridays following Id-i-Milad and Meraj-i-Alam thousands of Muslims throng the main shrine and its spacious grounds in order to offer congregational prayers and have a glimpse of the sacred relic.

38

Legacy of Islam in India and Kashmir

India's civilization is one of the world's oldest dating back to the beginning of the fourth century B.C. and it has often been swayed by the fury and storms of the invading forces—first came the Aryans who were followed by the Greeks, Huns; then came Arabs, Afghans, Turks, Mughals and last came the Europeans. All these left their artistic and cultural impact on India.

S.A. Ali, Secretary, Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, Delhi says: "The contribution of the Muslims in enriching the Indian life has been as large as their presence on the subcontinent; there has been no field of human activity in which they have not contributed significantly and in many fields they have displayed unsurpassed devotion and excellence".

The contribution of Muslims in enriching the Indian life, no doubt, has been very large and in many fields they have made immense contribution. Two such spheres are art and literature.

India has excelled in painting which can be seen in the frescoes of Ajanta. This tradition continued for about 1,000 years and then it dwindled and began to show decay in the 11th century. The coming of the Mughals inspired and brought rejuvenation in the lives of the artists. The Timarid style of miniature painting introduced by the Mughals was wholeheartedly welcomed by the Indian artists, for whom it was a new and wonderful artistic practice. It has often been remarked that how closely the fortunes of the Mughal Empire were bound with the personalities of the successive rulers and that it was indeed a creation of their personal wills. Humayun who was interested in painting and who was driven out of India took refuge at the court of Shah Tahmasp, the Safari ruler of Persia. There he persuaded Mir Sayyid Ali, the painter, to come to India when he recovered his throne in 1555. Another great painter and caligrapher of Persia who met Humayun at Kabul in 1549 also came to India. Both the masters undertook to train the princes and others

in the art of painting. Two more painters of Iran, Mir Syed Ali and Kh. Abdus Samad also, were brought by Humayun.

But it is only when Emperor Akbar ascended the throne (1556-1605), that Muslims greatly influenced Hindu art. Akbar appreciated the beauty of the Hindu art and created a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim civilizations. His age was a golden age so far as art and architecture is concerned. Pall Mal Encyclopaedia of Art mentions: "Islamic painters worked under the ban of theologists, the prohibition being based on the theory that the painter in producing forms of life was usurping the Creator's function. It is remarkable proof of Akbar's independence of mind as well as an example of the mystical side of his complex nature that he expressly opposed the orthodox view, saying that the painter had peculiar means of recognising God and of realising his inferiority to the only Giver of Life. He set up a royal atelier where 100 painters worked and rewarded them generously. In detail, general finish and boldness of execution in the miniatures were superb.

The artists chose great works of literature for illustration. These were, Hamza Nama, Tuti Nama, Zafar Nama, Ayar Danish, Nala Daman, etc. After about 500 years a great stride had been made. The Mughal style of painting throbbed with life. The vibrant colours, the beauty of surroundings with rocks, shrubberry, flowerbeds and the sailing clouds and azure sky above, the graceful movements of birds and beasts, the floriated and illuminated borders were some of the distinctive features of the Mughal painting which had never been conceived and tried before by the native artists.

The patronage of the subsequent rulers also continued. Jehangir made the artists to depict the hunting scenes and birds. When the Mughal rule dwindled, the artists migrated to the hill states of the Punjab. The Pahari art, under the influence of Mughal painters, reached its zenith in the Kangra style of painting.

ARCHITECTURE

From about 13th century India was covered with mosques and minarets, mausoleums, palaces and fortresses that followed the cannons of Islamic art. This official art gave India an architecture of rare significance. The notable structures of Muslim art are:

i. Taj Mahal. The total elevation of the Taj presents a glorious vision of a Pleasure Dome of Xandu, a magical dream image that hardly rests on earth. For the construction of this unrivalled specimen of Mughal architecture, masons and artists from all over India as well as artists from

Iran, Turkey and Arabia were engaged. It is said that Isa Afandi was the designer and Amanat Khan Shirazi, the Tughra writer. The dome-maker was Ismail Khan of Turkey while Muhmad Khan, a calligrapher came from Shiraz. Isa Afandi made several plans and designs and from the one selected, constructed a scale model of wood. In all nearly 20,000 men were employed on and off. The Taj was completed in 22 years.

- ii. Agra Fort. The colossal fort of Agra, built over an old fort, was really founded by Akbar. All the successive Mughal Emperors, even Aurangzeb also, contributed towards its final form. It contains beautiful buildings like Moti Masjid, the Diwan-i-Khas, the Nagina Masjid or the Gem Mosque, the Diwan-i-Khas, Musamman Burj and the Khas Mahal, etc.
- iii. The Tomb of Itmad-Ud-Daula. The tomb is a lovely building and was begun in 1622 and finished in 1682. It was built by Noor Jehan in memory of her father Mirza Ghias Beg.
- iv. Fatehpur Sikri. It is the deserted capital of Emperor Akbar at a distance of 27 miles from Agra and includes magnificent constructions of Bulund Darwaza, the Great Mosque, the Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas, the Panch Mahal, the Palace of Jodha Bai, Tomb of Sheikh Salim Chisti, etc.
 - v. Qutub Minar. The high tower is situated in Delhi.
- vi. Husainabad Imambara. Known as "The Palace of Light" it is at Lucknow. Char Minar of Hyderabad, Gol Gumbaz of Bijapur are other remarkable buildings.
- vii. Bibi Ka Maqbura. It is the mausoleum of Rabia Durani, the wife of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb at Aurangabad. At Hyderabad is also a wonderful building of Mecca Masjid.
- viii. The Red Fort, Delhi. It dominates the city and stands as a mute symbol of the Mughal glory. Inside, a man can see the relics of what was once the Imperial Palace of Shah Jehan. The two Audience Halls with their fine pillars and beautifully inlaid walls and ceilings are still a feast for the eye. On the walls of Diwan-i-Khas is inscribed in Persian a couplet which reads: "If a Paradise be on the face of the earth, it is this, it is this." Other buildings within the Fort are the Rang Mahal, the Haman, the Pearl Mosque and the Mumtaz Mahal which houses a museum containing relics of the Mughal period.

The list of the Muslim magnificent buildings can be very long.

LITERATURE

There is no doubt that India possessed a glorious literature of its own but it was made richer by the contribution of the Muslims. The Muslim rulers and noblemen spent generously in encouraging the literary pursuits of men. They did not show any distinction between one language and another. Thus, there are a great number of examples where Muslim rulers took great interest in the development of local languages and themes. Some of the famous poets achieved high political positions because of the patronage of the Muslim rulers. "Bhankura was patronised by Sher Shah and Nizam Shah, Akbariya Kalidas by Akbar, Mirtadatta by Shahbuddin, Pundariks Vithal by Burhan Khan, Jagannath Pandarija, Harinarayan Mishra and Vamsidhara Mishra, all three by Shah Jehan, Caturbhuja by Shaista Khan and Laksmipati by Muhammad Shah.

Punjab produced many Muslim writers like Bule Shah who took to local tales and turned them into great classics by introducing mystic elements, stressed by the Sufis. The story of Hir and Ranjha was written by Waris Shah which has become the great epic of the Punjab. Another folk tale Soni Mahival was written by Hashim Shah and Fazi Shah. Hasim Shah also wrote Shirin Farhad and Sasi Panu in Punjabi. These folk tales were turned into classics by the poets through deft handling of words, vivid imagery, subtle expression of emotions and mystical lines. The Punjab has produced such eminent poets as Iqbal and Faiz.

The translation of Sanskrit religious texts into Bengali was undertaken when Nasir Shah came to power at the end of 13th century. He ordered the translation of *Mahabharata* into Bengali. Maladhara Basu, under the instruction of Emperor Hussan Shah, undertook the translation of *Bhagvad Purana* into Bengali. Much of the development of the Bengali literature was due to the efforts of the Muslim writers. Yasoraj Khan wrote *Krishna Mangala* in the later half of the 15th century. *Padmavati* was written in Bengali by the renowned Bengali poet Al' ul. Some other noted writers who wrote in Bengali are Nasir Mahmood, Fakir Habib, Sayyed Murtaza, Fatan, etc. Among the modern writers of Bengali mention may be made of Qazi Nazrul Islam.

There are many famous poets and writers who wrote in our national language, Hindi. In the 13th century Amir Khusro wrote very many beautiful verses in Hindi. The other few writers are Abdul Rahim Khan Khanan and Syed Ghulam Nabi Rashim. *Padmavati* by Malik Moh'd, *Chandayan* by Mulla Da'ud, *Chitrawali* by Uthman, *Mrigvati* by Kutuban, *Madhumati* by Manjhan, *Anugrag Bansuri* by Nur Mohammad, *Prem*

Darpan by Khaja Nasir, Giyan Deep by Sheikh Nabi and Alakhabani by Rizvi.

In Kashmir under Sultan Zain-ul-Abdin much Sanskrit literature was translated. In fact, he established a separate bureau for the translation of the Sanskrit classics. Other Sultans also patronized the Hindu and Muslim writers. The list will be endless.

NEW LANGUAGE

The Muslims, besides playing a dominant role in enriching several regional languages of India, also helped in the evolution of a new language which has become the *lingua franca* of India. It is Urdu which is spoken widely and understood throughout the country. It has become the dominant language of our films. The lyrical poem, ghazal, has deeply influenced the other Indian languages, which stand indebted to Urdu for the richness of its symbols, the happy turns of expression, the depth of thought and emotion, which one finds in the works of the great poets from Mir Taqi Mir and Mirza Ghalib to Jigar Muradabadi and Hasrat Mohani.

LEGACY IN KASHMIR

. With the advent of Islam in Kashmir there was a cataclysmic change in the social and cultural life of Kashmir. The old order started changing rapidly with the beginning of the Muslim rule. Percy Brown observes that there was "a clashing of fundamental convictions, a conflict of reality with idealism, of the material with the visionary, of the concrete with the abstract". New values were set up in art and literature and there was a rejuvenation in the cultural health of the community. This left a rich legacy in every aspect of Kashmiris which was actually a gradual and imperceptible synthesis of the two fundamentally opposite cultures, one of Hinduism and the other of Islam. The Islamic influence was as follows:

- i. Persian Literature. During the Muslim rule Persian became the court language and both the Muslims and Hindus began to study this language and in course of time Kashmir produced many great scholars who produced 350 important books on philosophy, religion, history, geography, medicine written in Persian. During the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin Mulla Ahmad Allama translated the *Rajtarangini* and *Mahabharat* into Persian. Moreover, there are some important biographies of the Muslim period.
- ii. Poetry. Persian poetry blossomed in Kashmir. Numerous poets, both Muslims and Hindus, have left their marvellous works. Sarfi, Mula Ashraf, Ghani Bahau, Din Mattu, Maulana Mazhan, Mulla Tayub and

Mulla Garoghi made their names by writing poetry of excellence. The Hindus like Birbal Kachru, Narain Dass Okhal (Wokhal), Munshi Bhawani Dass Kachru whose new style of Bahari Tavil in Persian is held in great esteem. Pt. Taba Ram Turki "Betab" (1840 A.D.) whose Jang Nama equals Shah Nama of Firdousi. Pt Raj Kaul Arzbeghi (1887 A.D.) whose poetry is second only to that of Ghani from a literary point of view also a Kashmiri.

- during medieval period and wrote about 25 books mostly dealing with religious customs and practices among Muslims. Notable among Arabic writers is Mulla Mubsin Khushu, who lived in the reign of Aurangzeb.
- iv. Kashmiri Poetry. It was cradled and nourished by Muslim rulers. Notable poets are Lal Ded, Habba Khatun and Arin Moland Sheikh Noor-u-Din Wali.
- v. The Order of Islamic Rishis. Nund Rishi founded an Order of Rishis. It has members from amongst Muslims and Hindus. Janak Rishi of Aishmuqam, Rishi Mol of Anantnagh, Bata Mol, Rishi Pir, Thagbaba Sahib of Srinagar belonged to the same Order and have left behind principles and precepts which form the basis of Kashmiriat.
- vi. Architecture. Muslim architecture in Kashmir must be, says M.D. Sufi, pronounced as rather disappointing in comparison with the grand edifices of Hindu rule like the temples of Martand, Avantipore, Pattan and Tapar, etc. But the wooden architecture of Kashmir that commands our admiration to this day originated in its present form with or rather was popularised by the Muslims. Muslim architecture, according to W.H. Nicholas, falls into three categories: the pre-Mughal masonary style, the wooden style and the pure Mughal style. Of the first, the tomb of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's mother and the tomb of Sayyid Muhammad Madani in Srinagar are the notable examples.

The wooden architecture of Kashmir takes the form of either a mosque or a tomb. The mosque of Shah Hamda in Srinagar is the best example. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin made palaces and other construction of wood which no longer exist. The Jama Masjid of Srinagar is another instance of the wooden style. The Mughal architecture of Kashmir is represented by Shai Masjid by Nurjahan in 1622 A.D. The mosque of Akhun Mulla Sahah and the large *Baradhari* in Shalimar are the other examples of Mughal style of building.

vii. The Hammam or the Turkish Bath. The Hammam has been a great institution in Kashmir and was introduced by Mirza Haidar Dughlat.

- viii. Bridges. The permanent bridges of Srinagar were also constructed by Muslim rulers. Baron Hugel wrote in 1835 A.D. that these bridges were found already laid across the river Jhelum by the Mohammedans.
- ix. Gardens. The beautiful gardens which attract visitors from India and abroad were laid out by the Muslims, particularly by the Mughals. Among these Shalimar, Nishat, and Chashma-Shai gardens are most notable.
- x. Music. Sufi writes: "According to Abul Fazal, schools of music were founded in Kashmir by Irani and Turani musicians under the patronage of Zain-ul-Abidin. As a direct result of the influence of these schools, a good number of melodies were imported in Kashmiri music. They are Rast, Chargal, Iraq, Rahani, Shah Nawaz, Nauruzha, Yemen, Kalyan, Khamaj, Jhinjoli, Pahari, Bilaval, Husaini, Todi, etc. In addition, the Rast Kashmiri is attributed to Habba Khatun".
- xi. Dance. Sultan Hassan Shah, Yusuf Chak patronised dancing and so did Zain-ul-Abidin. The Hafiz dance was popular among the people from the Mughal period down to the beginning of the present century.
- xii. Shawls. The shawl industry in Kashmir existed long back in the hazy past but it was, however, through the efforts of Shah Haidar that the shawls were manufactured in Kashmir in the latter part of 14th century. Sultan Qutub-ud-Din who was then the ruler patronised it and two centuries later shawl industry flourished through the efforts of Naghz Beg, who was in the service of Mirza Haidar Dughlat. Shawls subsequently got tremendous impetus under the Mughals.
- xiii. Handicrafts of Kashmir. Most of the arts and crafts have been introduced in Kashmir by Zain-ul-Abidin, the great king of Kashmir who had known them in Samarkand where he stayed for seven years. These arts and crafts of Kashmir, introduced and developed during the Muslim rule in Kashmir, include carpets and namadas, wood-carving and wickerwork, papier mache, articles of silver, gabas and silk cloth, etc.

No doubt, there is scarcely a cleverer artist than the Kashmiri who, with primitive tools, turns out highly artistic and beautiful articles.

xiv. Medicine and Drugs. The drugs and herbs, used during the Muslim times, are still found efficacious for curing very serious maladies.

39

Jewellery and Dress of Kashmiris

"The jewellery of Kashmir is unique in design and very minutely worked. The various types of jewellery such as earrings, necklaces, bracelets, anklets, amulets (ta'wiz), rings, rosary (tasbah), tin or silver charm-cases and head-bands are all delicately worked, even though the base is sometimes solid. The Kashmiri jewellers seem to have had Nature as their model in most ornaments".

---Sufi

We have to take into cognizance the history and geographical position of a place when considering its jewellery. The influence of Central Asia, no doubt, on Kashmir has been great and the influence on the jewellery of the Valley has also been tremendous. The influence of Mughals, too, can also be easily traced. In fact, Queen Noor Jehan introduced delicate varieties of jewellery in Kashmir. However, Surgeon-Major John Ince says in 1876, "The Kashmiri are very ingenious and though their work has not that brightness so charming as that of Delhi, it has a peculiar style of its own".

Moreover, Zain-ul-Abidin, the Sultan of Kashmir invited and encouraged the artists of Samarkand and Persia to come to Kashmir. There is no doubt that Kashmir has been connected in the past with Afghan and Persia as well so that art of ornament-making, like other arts of Kashmir, has come to bear a stamp of these countries. The names of many Kashmiri jewellery is derived from Persian, Sanskrit and other languages, e.g., of ornaments like Halqu-band, Baz-band, Tulsi, Kanthi and Tikka, etc.

The jewellery of Kashmiri women do not look grotesque nor do the women wear them in profusion as to cause bodily pain or inconvenience. Hence they have discarded many ornaments in the nose and anklets and the number of large ear-rings have been reduced and even in each arm Kashmiri women wear a couple of bangles only.

The technique of making jewellery is still old and traditional but it has a unique and beautiful style of its own which is hard to imitate. Ornaments in Kashmir are generally made of gold and silver but, says Sufi, "sometimes beautiful colours of flowers and leaves and fruits are reproduced by studding jewellery with precious and semi-precious stones, shades such as jade, agate, turquoise, rubies and the gold-stone. There are necklaces made in yellow base metal, set with imitation emeralds and sapphires".

The notable thing about Kashmiri jewellery is that their designs are unlike those of other places, that is, kaleidoscopic arrangement of geometric figures. On the other hand, they carry the forms of products like almond, grapes, cherries and birds like myna, sparrows and bulbul. On these ornaments are not engraved horrifying figures of snakes, dragons and wild animals.

The Kashmiri jeweller carries out the whole operation of making the ornaments himself and their different portions are not assigned to different craftsmen. The work is done in metal moulds. The goldsmith loves his job and works far into the night and makes the piece a thing of beauty. He can well be proud of the fine workmanship which has come down to him from the distant past. One notable thing about most of the ornaments is that those ornaments worn by the Hindu and Muslims are, to a great extent, alike. Some of the principal ornaments worn by Kashmiri women are as follows:

- i. Ornaments of the Head. Jiggni and Tikka, worn on the forehead, are generally triangular, semi-circular and circular in shape. These are made of gold and silver and are fringed with hanging pearls and gold leaves.
- ii. Ornaments of the Ear. These are Bala, Dor-hor, Alcahor, Kanadoor, Jumaka, Deji-hor, Kana-vaji. Bala is studded with turquoise with a fringe of hanging gold leaves and balls. Kana-vaji is an ornament studded with a fringe of small pearls and Jumaka is a bell-shaped earring. Deji-hor and Talraj are indispensable ornaments for Kashmiri Hindu married women. They wear them day and night as it is for them a symbol of wedlock. Alka-hor lays over the ear on either side of the head and is connected by a chain running over the head. Kana-door is especially liked by young girls. These are made of gold and silver and are studded with red and green stones and pearls. In Kashmiri poetry a beloved is often called kana-door, as in the following couplet:

Goora goora kar yo kana ke dooro, kan ke doro; Nal cai khalemal hati hanzooro, hati hanzooro. meaning,

I will rock thee, my kana-dooro, O my kana dooro, Thou wearest khali mal and hanzoor round thy neck.

- iii. Ornaments for the Neck. Halqa-band, kanthi, sagalar, necklace, tulsi, raz. Halqa-band is sometimes studded with mirror pieces. Necklace in Kashmir is generally triangular pendants of silver and gold suspended on a black cord which matches the long raven black hair of Kashmiri women.
- iv. Ornaments for Wrists. These are bangar, gunus and dula. They are made of solid gold and silver. Bangar is often studded with coloured stones while gunus and dula generally are not. These ornaments find a special place in Kashmiri poetry, as in the following verse:

Shroni dar bangra nare lola gandi navi Shoka chani dilbaro pan parum.

meaning,

Gold necklaces studded with stone I got made For love of thee, my beloved, I decorated my person.

The goldsmiths of Kashmir have now begun to imitate other designs in order to cater to the needs of many visitors who visit Kashmir. Visitors often like necklaces manufactured in Kashmir which consist of strings of almond-shaped gold interspersed with lump of lapis-luzuli, agates and turquoise. Filigree-setting in silver and gold too are alluring and quite in demand among the tourists.

40

Customs and Ceremonies among Kashmiris

Kashmiris, though following different religions, more or less belong to the same stock. Therefore, many of their traditions, customs and ceremonies and even dresses bear many resemblances. Now many of their rituals and ceremonies have undergone a lot of changes due to modern education and outside influences. All the same many customs and ceremonies continue to be followed.

Kashmiri Pandits consider the birth of a male child as a blessing and that of a girl as curse. For eleven days after a child is born, the family and the near relatives cannot perform any religious ceremonies. On the eleventh day a purification ceremony or *kanether* is performed. The mother and the child leave the room and a *havan* is performed and the child is given a name. The bath is known as *shran sundar*.

The hair-cutting ceremony is called zara kasai. A havan is performed and the relatives and friends are invited to a feast.

The yajnopavit or sacred thread ceremony is a most important one. It is performed by Kashmiri Pandits before a boy attains the age of twelve years, though now this age limit is not adhered to. Few days before the ceremony the garnavol (levan, house cleaning), manzrat (dyeing the boy's hands with henna) and divagon (bath and anointment ceremonies) are performed. On the thread ceremony day a big havan is performed and a sacred thread is put round the head of the boy by the Guru. He then becomes a true Brahmin. From his relations and friends who are present, he begs alms and the collected money is offered to the Guru. The women sing songs after garnavol (house cleaning). On the following day the main ceremony called kushalhome is performed and the guests return to their homes.

The marriage ceremonies also begin with garnavol or house cleaning.

Then there is mehndirat and divagon. On the wedding day, the bridegroom is dressed in achkan and a pyjama and puts on a rose-coloured turban but now some persons prefer to wear a western suit. A procession is formed in the courtyard of his house, where he stands on, what is called, vyug (figure of mystic signs drawn in coloured clays). The oldest woman in the house comes out and waves lighted lamps in a circle round his head. The bridegroom and the party then go to the house of the bride. There too the same vyug ceremony is performed.

The lagan or nuptial ceremonies are performed after the marriage party is given a feast by the father of the bride. In the lagan ceremony the bridegroom and the bride, with their hands joined together, walk round the lighted fire seven times. Then after this lagan havan and the ceremony the bridegroom and the bride go to the former's house.

Marriage between boys and girls is generally performed after their twentieth year. Middleman gets the horoscope of the boy and if it tallies with that of the girl then the assent is given by the parents of the bride and the bridegroom who are the final authority in setting the marriage. Of course, the health, education and economic position of both the families is first ascertained by each side before the marriage takes place.

Most of the ceremonies connected with the death of a Kashmiri Pandit are similar to those performed by the Brahmins of India. The dead body is washed and wrapped in white clothes specially made for the day and the shroud. A brief shrada ceremony is performed before the body is taken for cremation.

At the cremation ground the ceremony takes many hours. Before the dead body is placed on pyre, a nirvana ceremony with invocations to the Brahmins is performed. The funeral pyre is lit by the son of the dead person or by his nearest relative. After the dead body is consumed by the fire, the mourners assemble and go round a fire lighted at the ghat when everyone has had a bath. On the tenth day a shrada ceremony is performed at the ghat by the son or any other relative who shaves his head. On the 11th and 12th day again shradas are performed and then every month for the first year. After this yearly shradas are performed. The priests get cash and kind in charity on all these days.

On all the religious festivals Kashmiri Pandits perform ceremonies. The most important of these festivals is *Shivratri*. It commences from the first day of the dark fortnight. Though now the days have been curtailed. On the 13th day the head of the family keeps a fast and worships Lord Shiva. The walnuts, consecrated at the main worship of Lord Shiva, are distributed among the relatives and friends.

Then there are other festivals like Sont or the Spring Festival performed on 15th of March every year. Nowreh or the New Year's day falls on the first day of the bright fortnight of Chet (March-April). Baisakhi is celebrated by Kashmiri Pandits as in other parts of India. A fair is held at Ishabar where people bathe. On this day people enjoy themselves and go to the gardens on picnics. Jeth Ashtami or the 8th day of the bright fortnight of Jeth (May-June) is the birthday of the goddess Ragini. A fair is held at Kheer Bhawani, situated at the village of Tula Mula. Har Navami_or the 9th day of the bright fortnight of Har (June-July) is the birthday of the goddess Sharika whose shrine is situated on the Hari Parbat hill in Srinagar. Pan is a ceremony performed in honour of goddess Lakshmi. On an auspicious day during the bright fortnight of Bhadun this day is celebrated. Dussehra is also celebrated as in other parts of India.

Muslims in Kashmir also perform many ceremonies. A month or two before the time for confinement the woman goes to her parent's house where she delivers her child. Immediately the *Mulla* is called and taking the infant by the right ear, he whispers the *Azan* and then the *Takhir* in the left ear and adds a warning that death is the end of everything in this world. On the 7th day, known as Sundar day, the mother bathes and the child is given a name. On this day the child's head is shaved and the relatives and neighbours are served a feast. Two or three months later the mother returns to her father-in-law's house carrying presents for him.

The child is circumcised at the age of four or five. The child's feet are dyed with henna on the *manziraat* night. The relatives and friends are invited to a feast. For seven days before the ceremony singing and feasting are arranged. Then the child is placed on a basket under which a cock is placed. Then the barber performs the circumcision. The relatives give the child some money after which they go to a shrine with him and return to the home. There they have a good feast.

The Muslims, if possible, marry their daughters to some near relative but now the high class Muslims marry their children outside the circle of relatives. They take the services of a go-between for this purpose.

After finding the suitable boy or girl as the case may be, a betrothal ceremony is performed. The father of the boy, accompanied by a few persons, goes to the girl's house and gives some presents. After the feast, the priest in the presence of all other persons announces the betrothal and sometimes the contract is written down. When the date of marriage is fixed, the boy's father sends some cash called a *lagan cheer* to the girl's father. The day before the marriage the boy's father sends some *mehndi*

henna to the bride who applies it to her hands and feet. The friends and relatives are also invited. On the day of marriage the boy takes a bath and dons rich clothes. His relatives give him some money. He, with a party of to the bride's house. The women come out and welcome the bridegroom and the party with songs. But before the party goes to the bride's house they must visit some shrine in the neighbourhood and also take some presents and a palanquin in which the bride is to be brought to the groom's house. In the bride's house the bridegroom's party as well as the groom, who is made to sit on a decorated seat, are served a sumptuous feast rounded with tea. Then the fathers of both the groom and the bride fix the amount of mehr or dowry. Then the marriage ceremony is performed with the recitation of the Holy Quran and the marriage contract is drawn, if not done earlier, by the Qazi. In the father-in-law's house the bride is received with great joy. She is taken to a room meant for reception. There her mother-in-law comes and embraces the bride who presents her some gifts brought from her father. The bride remains for seven days in her father-in-law's house after which she returns to her father's house. Then after some time the son-in-law is invited by his father-in-law, who gives him cash and presents. On this occasion a feast is held. The bride goes along with him to her father-in-law's house and they are at liberty to come and go whenever they desire:

Among Muslims at the premonition of death the *kalma* and some verses from the Quran are spoken into the ear of the dying man. The corpse is then bathed and a shroud wrapped round it. Then it is carried to the graveyard in a wooden coffin (tabut), which is got from a nearby mosque. The mourners recite the verses from the Holy Quran and the body is buried in the earth. The chief mourner visits the grave along with the Mulla till the coming Friday and offers prayers. At the next Friday all the relatives and friends gather at the grave of the departed and offer fatihah or prayers. Then they come back to the house of the chief mourner and are served some tea and refreshments. On the grave are planted irises, narcissuses and some spring flowers.

The holy festivals are celebrated with great joy by the Muslims of the Valley. The holy days of Id are very special occasions when people wear new clothes and attend mass prayers at the Idgahs. Friends and relatives greet each other and feasts are enjoyed by them.

Annual fairs are held at the holy shrines like Tsar Charif, Mukdam Sahib, Resh Mol, etc. Other festivals are held in spring and autumn when farmers pray for good harvest and prosperity.

HISTORY

I will not sing today
My intoxicating, enchanting,
Dulcet and drowsy songs.
No more such songs for me!
Hills and mountains covered
Themselves up out of fear;
And dark clouds have hugged the hill tops;
I will not sing today.
As, with loins girt, the cunning warmonger
Lies in wait for my Kasheer.

NADIM

Kalhana: The Great Poet-Historian of

Ancient Kashmir

and graceful Sanskrit language.

The very name of Kalhana brings to our minds the vision of wonder and splendour that was Kashmir. Francis Young Husband remarks: "Kashmir, a country of such a striking natural beauty, sure at some periods of history must have produced a refined and noble people. Amid these glorious mountains, breathing this free and bracing air and brightened by constant sunshine, there must have sprung a strong, virile and yet aesthetic race". And it is to this race from the pre-historic time to 1150 A.D. that Kalhana holds his colourful mirror. Packed into the pages of his *Rajtarangini* is a massive amount of information and wisdom presented in a deeply

KALHANA AS A MAN

fascinating and illuminating Sanskrit poetry. Written about eight hundred years ago, during 1149-50, *Rajtarangini* is a glorious history and a beauteous poem, replete with the charm of Kalhana's noble, melodious

Poetry—narrative poetry especially—acquired interest, importance and intensity of appeal in proportion to the personality of the poet that it reflects. We must know the indefinable essence of the poet's mind, the je ne sais quoi that distinguishes him from others and that endows him with a peculiar fascination. Not much is known about the life of Kalhana. It is only in the colophons of his work and from his successor Jona Raja that we know some facts about his origin and person. Kalhana was the son of Campka, who was a "dwarpati", a commandant of the king Harsha who ruled from A.D. 1089-1101. When Jayasimha ascended the throne of Kashmir after the death of Sussala in A.D. 1127, Kalhana became his court poet. Undoubtedly, this must have given the poet-historian an opportunity to have a close-up of the contemporary political scene of the

state. He had received an excellent education, which amply equipped him for the colossal task that he intended to undertake. We can, from his voluminous book, easily trace the outlines of his life as a student. He was acquainted with the older standard Kavyas such as Raghuvansha, and Meghadutta. He also had meticulously studied Bilhana's historical poem Vikramankadevacharita of Kanauj. Kalhana had an intimate knowledge of the great epic Mahabharata, for we find numerous references to this book in Rajtarangini. We have sufficient indication of his literary training as there are frequent allusions and references to particular poets and scholars. Besides he had made a deep study of Jotishsasha. He had also received training in rhetoric, grammar and poetics.

Kalhana appears to have been a sober-minded historian of an unfeigned character. No doubt, he had aversion for material rise and rewards, and he seems to have possessed coruscating wit and wisdom. In an endearing naivete in Kalhana were compounded goodness, charity, learning, piety, and a belief in the good of everyone. Even though he was a staunch Hindu Brahmin yet he had deep sympathy and affection for Buddhism and what it professed.

KALHANA AND HISTORY

There are two aspects of Rajtarangini like the two sides of a coin, one is historical and the other is poetic. Arnold Toynbee opines that "in any age of any society the study of history like other social activities, is governed by the dominant tendencies of the time and place". In the days Kalhana lived, all the social, cultural and political activities revolved round the person of the king; he was the pivot. And the "Divine Right of Democracy" as against the "Divine Right of the Kings" was unknown in those days. In the bonds of the feudal system of the benign kind, the people saw a symbol of the true brotherhood of Man. Therefore, in those days, as to Carlyle in the present days, "history was the essence of innumerable biographies. It is the record of great personalities". Thus Kalhana also gives us the "river of kings" and does not expatiate upon the socio-economic and other problems of the common people. He thought, as was the belief in those days, that a spiritual logic governs the lives of the great men-kings, queens, ministers, etc., which the Greeks called Nemesis and we may call law. Therefore, his job, in the words of R.G. Collingwood, was "to tell man what man is by telling him what man has done".

Secondly, in those days, history was a special branch of literature and Prof. G.M. Trevelyan also holds that "while the historical facts should be

scientific in method, the exposition of them for the reader should partake of the nature of art, the art of written word, commonly called literature". As regards Kalhana's philosophy of history, it was based on the Hindu theory of Karma, actions of the present existence as also of the past one. These form the causes for the effects. Kalhana was a staunch Brahmin. He owes to Brahminism a taste for intellectuality, the habit and need for it and, to a great extent, a pride in it. Combined with a natural gift of a well-balanced temperament and a keen intelligence, that influence endowed him with a spiritual faculty and a profound belief in the high ideal of renunciation. At many places he tried to show that this world was but a vanity fair and depicted that vanity of human wishes. He showered encomiums on kings who, in the later stage of life, renounced the world and went to the woods to seek God.

No man worked more consciously at his subject than he, no writer has tried to test the facts as scrupulously as was then possible, or preserving more judicial detachment. The first three books of Rajtarangini, no doubt, are a coat of many colours, yet for all its composite character it is not a thing of patch-work quality, but a harmonious assortment of myths, tales and true history. Kalhana desired to set down the truth as far as he could know. For the earlier part of his chronicle he assiduously collected and studied the works of previous writers and borrowed from the oral tradition and mythology but in the contemporary records (from the fourth book onwards) he wrote of things he had seen or heard in many instances, because of his early high position, he had been in personal contact with the warriors, statesmen and ministers. He could even handle the state documents and hence the value of his records. About the history of contemporary times as well, he writes frankly and fearlessly so that he could have almost been involved in a libel action had he lived in these times. He has studied the chronicles with gems of enchanting anecdotes but these too open to us a window into the past, for inspite of a certain wildness and riotous imagination, there is a considerable amount of general and local topography to be gleaned from these fantastic tales. But, even for a modern critic he has one rare quality, that is, the power of vitalizing the past for us, which compensates for so many defects, like lack of reasonableness.

A few names, those of Parvarsena II, Lalitaditya, Jayapida, Avantivarman, Queen Didda, Sussala and Jayasimha, etc. stand out among a host of petty kings, most of whom, as Kalhana says, resemble the bubbles produced in the water by a downpour of rain. They did little to merit the remembrance by posterity.

Parvarsena II. Matrigupta, the Brahmin ruler of Kashmir, turned a recluse at the death of his patron Vikramaditya and left for Banaras to spend his last days in worship and meditation. Parvarsena, who was then in Kangra, marched on to Kashmir to recover the throne of his forefathers. Thus in 580 A.D. he ascended the throne and made his name immortal by founding the city of Parvarsenagar, the present city of Srinagar. In Rajtarangini, we find the reflection of shimmering Srinagar of his time which was an Elysium for its happy denizens.

Lalitaditya. He was a great conqueror and his extensive conquests made the kingdom of Kashmir the most powerful empire in India. In this he was helped by the commander of his army, Mulchander, a scion of the ruling family of Nagarkot, Kangra. Lalitaditya is also considered as founder of Hindu art and the Sun-Temple of Martand stands a living testimony to his greatness.

Jayapida. He too made many conquests and was a great patron of art and letters. His benefactions to Brahmins are laudable. But, in the later part of his life, he became Mephistophelian in character and conduct. At the end he fell a victim to divine vengeance when a Brahmin of Tula Mula cursed the king for his arrogance.

Avantivarman. He ruled from 853 A.D. and his period was one of consolidation, peace and prosperity. In his time there was a great engineer Suya, who rescued Kashmir from a devastating flood. The river Jhelum, which is a gullet of Kashmir, had got clogged with waste matter, stones and earth. By a clever stratagem, Suya got the blockade of the river cleared by a rabble. His artefact canals helped to bring the bounteous harvests and thereby the country became affluent. Avantivarman found the town of Avantipura and built a great temple of Surya there. Its ruins rank among the most magnificent monuments of ancient Kashmir.

Queen Didda. Abhimanu, who was on the throne from 958 A.D. to 972 A.D., was a child when he ascended the throne and so his mother became the regent and exercised all royal powers herself. She ruled with an iron hand with the help of her minister, Phalguna, who belonged to Poonch. This minister, who was earlier dismissed by her and then recalled, became her favourite and also her paramour. She led a life of dissipation which was her undoing. During her rule a large part of Srinagar was burnt.

Sussala. He became the king in 1112 A.D. and after wreaking vengeance upon his brother's assassins, ruled peacefully but in 1128 he was murdered. During his rule administration was not corrupt and there

was absence of low moral and political standard as in the time of his predecessors.

Jayasimha. He ruled from A.D. 1128-55. He was a model for Machiavelli's prince, for he gained his ends by sheer diplomacy. He conquered his enemies by this method and brought peace to the Valley. He had an able and astute commander of the army, Mulchander, a scion of the ruling family of Nagarkot, Kangra.

The special merit of Kalhana is his impartiality and independence and even of Harsha, under whom his father served, he speaks with asperity. In the later parts of the chronicle he shows a profound sense of historical truthfulness. In the topographical details he is marvellously exact. Dr. Sunil Chander Ray says: "But he does not act as a mere reporter. Kalhana, the narrator of events and Kalhana, the thinker who explains the facts by causes and effects and exposes the principles which underline them are one and invisible self, who does not marshal the facts to illustrate his thesis, much does he manipulate them to fit a doctrine of his own; his philosophy waits upon the facts and does not govern them".

Kalhana—the Immortal Bard of Kashmir

According to Suresh Chander Bannerji, the ancient poetical works of Kashmir can be divided into the following classes:

- (i) Poems with historical themes
- (ii) Didactic and satirical poetry
- (iii) Court-epics
- (iv) Devotional poems
- (v) Anthologies
- (vi) Miscellaneous poems

Kalhana looked upon himself in the light of a poet and with the following words he introduces his book:

"Worthy of praise is that power of true poets, whatever it may be, which surpasses even the stream of nectar, in as much as by their own bodies of glory as well as those of others obtain immortality. Who else but poets resembling Prajapatis and able to bring forth lovely productions can place the past before the eyes of man?" These words suffice to show that his Rajtarangini belongs to the first genre. The form and style suited for this type of a poem does not allow the lavish and luxuriant use of the subtle arts of Alamkarshastras, and though he had received thorough training in rhetorics, the Alamkarshastra and had a good mastery of Sanskrit kavya

and the principles underlying them, he still falls victim to "amplification" and rhetorical frills and ornamentation at frequent places.

Stein says that Kalhana avoids, to a great extent, the use of endless similes, the hackneyed description of seasons, scenery, etc. Rajtarangini, comparatively free from these burdensome embellishments, shows, to a great extent, directness and simplicity of diction. Poetry (Kavya), the ancient poets defined as "speech, the soul of which was Rasa".

According to R.S. Pandit, there were eight Rasas or sentiments:

- I. Sringara (Love)
- II. Hasya (Mirth)
- III. Karuna (Pity)
- IV. Vira (Heroism)
- V. Raudra (Anger or fury)
- VI. Bhayanaka (Terror)
- VII. Bibhatsa (Disgust)
- VIII. Santa (Tranquility or contentment

These being the essence of poetry, one finds them in the verses of Rajtarangini. According to Stein, it is the Santarasa, or the sentiment of resignation which is exhibited in the various component parts of the poem. Unfortunately, the deep desire of emphasizing this Rasa is found supreme in many long stories of renunciation and tragic ends of the kings. In describing the individual characters of such kings this sentiment plays a dominant part. But all other Rasas are found in various parts of the narratives. In fact, at different places, particularly at the beginning and at the end of each cantos, the metres are changed to suit the particular Rasa. Rajtarangini essentially contains narrative poetry and such a poetry deals with incidents and actions rather than with thought and emotion. But this is a vague division. The prominent feature is the narrative poetry which usually contains a story and makes liberal use of description. Rajtarangini too contains the story element, the narrative element and description blended harmoniously.

The Story element. The book is bedecked with a number of significant and inspiring incidents in the very life-stories of the kings. It is not without purpose that he brings stories of high romance in the books. Some of these stories are masterpieces of charm and restrained horror and show Kalhana's interest in occult and witchcraft. These stories are part and parcel of the main history. Take, for example, one of King Sandhiman,

who was a minister of Jayendra. He was a man of remarkable intelligence. Some sycophants of the king poisoned the ears of the king against Sandhiman and he was put in a prison and after ten years, when the king was on the death-bed, he ordered that he should be killed. His Guru Isana heard of it and went to the cremation ground to perform the last rites. He found Sandhiman's body eaten by wolves. Isana pulled down the skeleton and found on its forehead inscribed these words:

"Poverty so long as there is life, ten years imprisonment, death on the top of the stake and then there will be sovereignty".

Isana, the Guru remained there to see the fulfilment of the prophecy. And once at midnight he saw, Yognis, the celestial beings, were repairing the dead body. Then they brought life to it. Thus Sandhiman became alive and in the company of his Guru entered the city of Srinagar and the people crowned him as their king.

Similarly, there are other romantic stories, for example, the love-story of King Durlabhaka and the wife of a bania from Rohtak, from whose union was born the great King Lalitaditya; the love of Chakarvarman for a dancing girl Hamsi, whom he made his chief queen. Then there is the odyssey of Jayapida and the sacrifice of his servant for him. The book abounds in innumerable beautiful stories which are like pearls strung on the thread of history. Kalhana saw history as a pageant sweeping by with tableau, characters and moments of high drama. But behind the changing scenes was a movement, a pattern which he discovered and tried to interpret. He saw the stories of the kings and the great struggles as expression of moral destiny and felt, in the lives of the kings, queens and other men, the "still sad music of humanity". He has made the dry bones of his characters live for us and they move with easy conviction.

NARRATION

Kalhana actually knows how to tell his tales and historical events, how to weave his stories into patterns of pleasing poetry, how to narrate in felicitious words. He has this gift in a facile and abounding measure. Kalhana's narration contains beautiful passages which are full of force and vigour and many flourishes. The phrases and the language used are sweet and clear. One may note with what charm Kalhana narrates the meeting of King Jayapida with the dancing girl Kamla:

Kamla, the dancing girl too saw with wonder the wondrous king with an uncommon mien. The maid by mellifluous conversation conducted him to Kamla's abode. The king was struck with her courtesy her tenderness, her grace, her loveliness. When the moon had risen she took him to her chamber of repose. There lying on a golden couch, elated by the inebriating wine practised the arts of amour on the Emperor. But when he did not untie the nether garments Kamla felt humble and humiliated. The king clasped her to his big bosom and softly and sadly said: "It's not, oh, beauteous one, with eyes like the lotus petal, that you have not touched my heart, but my misfortunes of the moment make me the offender"

How sweet and amorous are some portions of his narrations—they are the very ambrosia for the sensuous.

DRAMATIC POWER

His lengthy subject matter did not allow him the use of dramatic narration but still he displays the use of dramatic force in the treatment of certain incidents, which are full of pathos and pain. The end of the ill-fated Harsha, staggering to his doom, his helplessness, betrayal and desertion by all are clearly narrated with dramatic art. The following lines may, in this connection, be noted:

History of Harsha is wondrous and woeful as of reincarnate Rama or marvellous Mahabharata Like the lightning in the clouds fortune is fidgety and forsakes; sudden rise has a sudden fall; men proud of pep and power with love and lure for gold are never satiated with riches.

The king and concubines in his harem But none wept, none felt sorrow at his tragic time.

Many a servant who danced to his tune forsook him and left him forlorn How sad! men leave not mundane matters and take to woods on seeing the heartlessness of people; whose minds are engrossed in pleasures. We know not where from we come nor where we go hereafter. Between the two eternities we toss on the rock of life, like actors we act our sad part and then depart.

DESCRIPTION

The descriptions given by Kalhana are fresh and vivid. The language corresponds to the sentiment and the kind of effect he wants to produce in the mind of the reader. We shudder to read of the shocking sight of Harsha's end:

On the bank of the river Stood the king, sadly saw the Damaras dark and ugly, on the opposite bank

The queens, fair as fairies Fresh and fragrant with rosy ornaments were on sudden dismayed.

The king entered his magnificent mansion with hundred doors, perspiring, his armour slipping from shoulders; his hair dishevelled: with no ornaments in ears: his lips pale and parched which he licked with his tongue. Pathetically he gazed at his queens, who with sad steps and languished looks climbed up and set the palace on fire. The dark Damaras rushed in and made away with cloth, the glittering pearls and plates and darling damsels. The lovely queens perishing in the leaping flames. The bursting sounds of burning houses were roarings of summer clouds on the sea.

The king's kingdom gone, his glory gone; All, all gone, he yearned to die not knowing where to lay his head.

Thus Kalhana, when fired by the dramatic dealings of his subject into descriptive writing of the highest kind, can be eloquent and impressive without being in any way flamboyant or verbose. He beautifully and succinctly describes Kashmir as:

"Learning, high dwelling houses, saffron, iced water, grapes and the like—what is common place there is difficult to secure in Paradise".

One can enjoy the descriptive splendour in the story of king Durlabhaka's love for the wife of a merchant from Rohtak, Nona:

The king was entertained by Nona in his magnificent mansion lighted by bright stones his wife was exalted in charm and loveliness Full breasts she had, charm of exquisite hip Ah! the very spirit of felicity in love. She kindled great passion in the king, without gaining contact he felt she was ambrosia of bliss who had touched him in the marrow. The lady-love looked with a slight turn of face and herself was struck with the dart of love.

Equally eloquent and impressive is Jayapida's end. Kalhana's description of his death has the "solemn inevitability of Greek drama and is a masterpiece of restrained horror". He gives a good picture of the courts of various kings and queens chivvying and slobbering over their favourites.

CHARACTERIZATION

His verses open for us the magic casements through which we have a glimpse of the world of his time. We see the swaggering soldiers, the noble or quixotic kings, high-born maidens, sparkling dancing girls, odious hypocrites, cantakerous queens, supernatural beings and even common men drawn with rare skill. There is a prodigious number of such characters in the book whom he had boldly and brilliantly observed or heard of and his lively and prolific pen has drawn them with realism and historical truth. Kalhana has concentrated on the nuances of character and all his characters are individualised and throb with life and with infinite

credibility. In fact, they are all described with the authenticity which springs from direct knowledge. Of course, he does not probe into the inner workings of their minds; this he could not do for he was essentially a historian and could see them from the outside.

In most of his tragic characters, there is some fraility, which brings about them their tragedy:

"Chakarvarman loves flattery and those who flattered him; Hayendra's ears could be poisoned easily. Thus his courtiers poisoned his ears against his ablest minister Sandhimati. Harsha suffered from his lackadaisical nature and out rageously neglected the state affairs. In the end he takes refuge in a beggar's hovel where he is hunted down and mercilessly killed. Sussala had the terrible spirit of vengeance. And then the great Lalitaditya, the "meteor of his conquest lured (him) too far".

He uses great poetic power in the description of his characters, for example, he describes Jaluka thus: The English rendering has been done by J.C. Dutt.

About Jayasimha he writes:

"Then became king, that son of Jaluka, leader of men and gods, who with the nectar of his glory rendered gleaming white the cosmic world".

"His talk which, though indistinct owing to his youth, is full of dignity, resembles the sound, soft with nectar, which issued when the ocean was churned".

USES OF FIGURES

According to Alamkarasastras, the essential elements of kavya are metaphors, similes, puns and the endless varieties of poetic figures. Kalhana makes frequent use of these rhetorical ornaments in some particular portions, more or less episodic. The length of the history he has to narrate, Kalhana himself explains, puts fetters on his own pen and it was difficult for him to make a liberal use of such embellishments. If we have to find out his dexterity and skill in writing in florid style we must read such incidents as Chakravarman's and Sussala's triumphant entries into the capital or Bhikscan's last fight. Note some of these similes found in his book:

1. "As the approach of the monsoon is known by the frisking bucking of the heifers, by the ascent to the tree tops of the serpents, by the transport of their eggs by the families of ants, so now the king considering through evil portents that disaster was close at hand set about preparing for adequate measures".

- 2. "Now in the beginning of the year ninety six the Damara horde was ready to swoop down like a glacier at the touch of heat".
- 3. "...... for the former, seated on an elephant, with a drawn sword was always roaming about absorbing from the land all that was valuable just as the sun sucks of moisture".

Rajtarangini is full of wise maxims and proverbs, for example:

- 1. "The sun does not come to his spouse in the evening without conquering the whole world".
- 2. "Mean persons who have failed in the competition for fame and who have lost their sleep on account of poverty of merit injure through jealousy the lives of those who are blessed with intelligence".
- 3. "There is not a son of harlot who is immoral, no one is free from treason who has been a suspect, no one who talks little speaks uselessly, no one who is not a government servant has an ungrateful mind; no one is a miser but one born in the house of him who refuses to give in charity; no one is continually miserable save the envious; none is universally ridiculed but he who is of mature age; none is hostile to the father if not begotten by another; there is none lustful who is not devoid of shame; no one is greater miscreant than he who has a little learning".
- 4. "He who has been the support for his rise to a high place the king cuts him down, like a woodcutter the branch of the tree by which he has gone up, when he is coming down".

KALHANA'S PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

In the Middle Ages, in Kashmir, cosmic force, the animating principles of Indian Pantheism, was worshipped under the name of Shiva. Shiva represents the sublime aspect of God. A profound philosophy, known as Kashmir Shaivism, had developed since the ninth century, which inspired the artist, the sculptor as well as the poet. Kalhana too had perfect devotion to Lord Shiva and his cognition, conation and affection, the three functions of his mind, seem to have come to have Shiva alone as their end. Thus Kalhana believes that man's mind should flow constantly towards Shiva and make it get absorbed there. The faith of Kalhana in Lord Shiva is known by the fact that each book of *Rajtarangini* starts with his prayer to the Lord.

Besides, he believed in the power of Fate and the influence of spiritual merits from the previous births. Kalhana, musing over the incomprehensive power of Destiny argues:

"Occupied in different affairs, with the limitation of dependence, everyone strives to frustrate Fate's Persistent operations with energy. It is amazing that its wondrous power, even in these conditions, comes to light, through whose might the success of various events is achieved free from hindrance".

But the main philosophy which he emphasises in rhetorical language is renunciation which governs the didactic feature in his book. The transitory nature of all mundane glory, the uncertainty of royal possessions and the retribution which inevitably follow offences against the moral laws, these are lessons which Kalhana never tires of impressing upon his readers. Thus Kalhana insists on moral endurance, moral duty and moral individuality, obedience to the eternal laws of right, resistance to the oppression of outward and inward evil.

CONCLUSION

But his subject-matter and insistent awareness of moral mission made him too self-conscious, deprived his poetry of high imagination, rather made it in many portions banal and broke the wings of his songbirds, to some extent, in such places. Moreover, to a modern man with scientific outlook, some parts would appear just a balderdash and the belief that Destiny always holds a Damocles' sword on one's neck too is hardly tenable now. Dr. Sunit Chander Ray, however, believed that "in spite of historical materials in the early portions of his work, Kalhana's splendour of imagination, depth and range of thought and above all the power of centralizing many talents to a single purpose had given his Rajtarangini a literary immortality".

Lalitaditya:

The Just, Mighty and Magnificent King of Kashmir (724-760A.D.)

Lalitaditya—also known as Muktapida—whose reign in Kashmir lasted from 724 to 760 A.D., was really a great king. During his reign Kashmir rose to such heights as she had never before, nor since has, known. When he came to the throne, the country was in a shocking condition as a result of the misrule of his brother but he brought peace, prosperity and national glory to the country.

The illustrious king was the son of Raja Pratapaditya, the king of Kashmir and born of the "mistress of a fabulously wealthy and magnificent merchant whose wondrous beauty had attracted the attention of the king".

Lalitaditya is known as a great warrior and conqueror. Like Alexander the Great, Lalitaditya had the ambition of conquering the whole world and his reign of thirty seven years is noted for his many expeditions and conquests. Lalitaditya gave wide extension to his dominions. He forced the king of Kanauj and all other chiefs in the hills of the Punjab to submit; he was victorious over the Turks and the peoples of the Central Asia, returning after twelve years to drive the Tibetans from Baltistan. The chronicler is of the opinion that his army was chiefly recruited from the north and most of his generals including his commander-in-chief, Chankunya, also came from the same region. Bamzai, the historian, says. "That it appears that due to the decline of the T'ang rule, the Kashmir ruler attracted many an adventurer and Lalitaditya was not slow in taking advantage of their experience and martial abilities. For example, it is clear that Chankunya must have acquired fame as a military commander even before he joined the services of Lalitaditya since he bore the Chinese title of Can-Kiin-General".

Lalitaditya's first expedition was towards the kingdom of Kanauj which was ruled by Yasoverman. The latter could not oppose the brave armies of Lalitaditya and submitted peacefully but during the drafting of the final treaty he created hitches that resulted in resumption of the hostilities and dethronement of Yasoverman. Finally, the whole of his territory was brought under the direct rule of the Kashmir king.

After this victory Lalitaditya subdued the entire of Gaudas (Bengal) and the southern territories of India including the seven Konkans. In the west also he subdued the entire territory of Dwarika.

A call for help reached Lalitaditya from Deccan in Cir. A.D. 735-36. Indira I Rashtrakuta had abducted the Chalukya princess, Bhavagana from Khaira (Gujarat) and forced her to marry him. After his death in 735 A.D. the Ratta queen was soon in difficulties. With the secret connivance Lalitaditya crossed the passes into the Deccan without resistance, found Chalukyas friendly allies and overran the Rashtrakuta territories. Karka II (Kakka Kayya) of Lata (Southern Gujarat), Kathiawar, Malwa and Marwar, shaking the tottering power of the Maitrakas of Valabhi and of the Mauryas of Chittorgarh.

Lalitaditya turned his attention towards the north of Kashmir. He led the victorious army through Dardistan to the Tukhara country (Turkhistan). He gained easy victory, for the Chinese Empire under which they had come was falling to pieces due to the end of the T'ang rule and the internal civil wars and dissensions.

Lalitaditya then undertook the subjugation of the Tibetans. Bamzai says, "Rajtarangini mentions a few expeditions, but apart from the definite conclusion that Ladakh and some western provinces were brought under the sway of the Kashmir king, the complete overthrow of the Tibetans is rather doubtful".

Lalitaditya and his soldiers longed for more conquests and left for Central Asia. His people besought him to come back but he died in Turkistan after a reign of nearly forty years. Kalhana mentions two legends about his death. According to one version, he committed suicide in order to escape being captured when separated from his army and was blocked on a mountainous route. According to the second version, Lalitaditya perished through excessive snowfall in Aryanaka (modern Iran).

No doubt, the conquests of Lalitaditya are preponderant but even then he would rank among the great kings because of his great architectural works, his intense love of learning and patronage of scholars and his humane and secular outlook.

Lalitaditya and his queens founded numerous towns. He built the towns of Suniscatapur, Darpitapur, Phalapura and Parontsa. The first two towns no longer exist but Phalapura may now be traced to a village near Shadipura. Parontsa town is now called Poonch. A big Vihara and a Buddhist temple was built by him at Hushkapura (modern Ushkur). Lalitaditya is said to have founded a town at Lokpunya (modern Lokabhavan) on the Anantnag-Verina road.

But the most remarkable constructions of Lalitaditya which have made his name immortal and brought acknowledgement to the architectural talents of Kashmir, are the temple of Martand and the city of Parihaspura.

Among the great architectural wonders of the world Martand temple occupies an eminent place. It not only depicts the sublime architectural ability of Kashmir but is "built on the most sublime site occupied by any building in the world—finer far that of the site of the Parthenon, or the Taj or of St. Peters, or the Escurial—we may take it as the representative or rather the culmination of all the rest and by it we must judge the Kashmiri people at their best".

The greatness of Lalitaditya as a builder is established by his founding the city of Parihaspura, near modern Shadipura. Kalhana describes at length the series of great temples built by the king at this town. "The extensive though much inspired ruins with which I was able to identify these structures at the site of Paraspura, show sufficiently that Kalhana's account of their magnificence was not exaggerated", says Stein.

The valley had been till then subjected to floods as deposits of silts and rocks would block the flow of water of the river at Baramulla. Lalitaditya got the river cleared of the slit and the water flowed quickly and in this way the level of water in other parts of the valley became low. The vast areas of swamps were reclaimed for irrigation. He raised bunds round the low-lying lands and also built numerous irrigation canals. The result was that the production of crops increased which in turn increased the prosperity of the people.

Lalitaditya's greatness is also depicted by his secular outlook. Although he was a follower of Hinduism, he showed equal respect for Buddhism and other cults. He founded many *viharas* and monasteries for Buddhists. His commander-in-chief was a Buddhist and so were many of his other officials.

He was a patron of learning and scholarship and many learned persons from many lands adorned his court. He brought from Kanauj the two famous poets Bhavabhuti and Vakpatiraja and gave them honour and installed them in his capital in Kashmir.

Though he was a great conqueror and philanthropist but much has been imagined and has been passed down as fact. It is said that he had built a gigantic cauldron from which one hundred thousand men could be fed each day, which seems to be preposterous.

But he had another side of his character. When intoxicated he would issue the cruelest orders. In a fit of drunken madness he ordered that the beautiful city that Pravarsena had built should be set on fire and he stood and rocked with crazy laughter as he watched the city of Srinagar go up in flames. But luckily his wise ministers had burnt heaps of straw and grass instead of the houses and thereby had saved the city.

Before his departure from Kashmir on his last expedition, from which he never returned, he left for his subjects certain instructions which are preserved in *The Rajatar*. He warned them against civil wars and cautioned them about the upkeep in both repairs and provisions of their forts. He laid down laws for those of his subjects who lived in the mountains, that discipline must be strict, that the cultivators should never be left with more grain than they could consume in one year and that they should not have more cattle or more ploughs than was absolutely necessary, since this would result in their covering and taking that ground which belonged to their neighbours. The king must never tolerate nepotism among his officers".

The editor of the Keys to Kashmir says: "The glorious reign of Lalitaditya served as a beacon light to the Kashmiris of later generations, particularly during the many depressing days of political subjugation."

43

Jyapida (751-782 A.D.): A Great Hero

Kalhana, who has written the ancient history of Kashmir, called Rajtarangini, writes that Lalitaditya was a great, noble and famous king of Kashmir who made large number of conquests and ruled over Kashmir from 724 A.D. to 760 A.D. His son was Vajraditya and his youngest son was Jyapida alias Vinayaditta. He defeated his elder brother Samranpida and ascended the throne. Jyapida's reign can be divided into two parts. In the first part he ruled with kindness and justice and established peace and order in the country. The people achieved prosperity in every field. But in the last years of his life he became a tyrant and indulged in loot and plunder.

As soon as Jyapida sat on the throne, he made his aim to follow on the footsteps of Lalitaditya. He resolved that he could like him make conquests and make Kashmir affluent and prosperous. Kalhana says that Jyapida was very noble and loved justice. The first notable thing that he did was that he established peace and order and also made good arrangement for the governance of the country. He collected a large army and set out on expeditions.

Many soldiers who were not so loyal and were restless to go to their homes, left him day by day but this brave king determined that he would show his personal bravery. Kalhana, who has narrated at length his fights and conquests, has written that like Lalitaditya he was full of valour and strength and possessed great courage. Many coins of his time have been unearthed on which his second name Vinayaditya is inscribed but there is hardly any evidence of his conquests about which Kalhana makes mention.

Kalhana writes that Jyapida in his early expedition conquered many places upto Allahabad. At Prayag or Allahabad he gave in charity 10,000

horses and wealth as alms to the priests. On the bank of the Ganges he got built a memorial which still existed in the life time of Kalhana. After this he put his army under the command of his minister Devasarman and himself entered incogni to all alone in the city of Panudarvardhana which was in the possession of Jayanta. In this city there was much peace and prosperity and people were affluent. He was highly pleased to see the condition of the people. In this city a ferocious lion would come every night and eat men and animals. Jyapida killed this lion without the aid of arms. The king of the city came to know that this lion had been killed by Jyapida. The king had no son but only a daughter, named Kalyani Devi. He married her to Jyapida. After that both the king and Jyapida subjugated all the neighbouring kings.

On his return to Kashmir, Jyapida defeated the king of Kanauj, Vajrayudha. When Jyapida arrived in Kashmir, he found that during his three years' absence his first wife's brother had usurped his throne. He fought and defeated him at Subseletra. Kalhana mentions that all the people from far and near came and joined his army. During the fight a Candala soldier of Jyapida, named Shri Deva, killed Jojja, who was drinking water from a gold pot astride a horse. As soon as Shri Deva saw the latter he threw a stone at him with such a force that he died on the spot.

It is well worthy to mention about the construction activities of Jyapida. He founded a city named Jaipura near the Wular lake. This city is today known as Andarkot. He also constructed a fort there. It was surrounded by a marshy land and it was difficult to conquer it. In the later history of the valley many important battles were fought there. Two more towns were founded by Jyapida. One was named as Dvarvati which was near Jaipura. The second one was called Malhanpura which at present is called Malur. It is situated at a distance of six miles from Srinagar on the left bank of the river Jhelum. The two queens of the king, named Kalyani Devi and Kamla Devi, also founded two towns. One was known as Kalyanpur and the other Kamalapur. One of his ministers called Jayadita constructed a matha in Jaipura.

The king was a patron of art and literature. He invited scholars and learned men from other countries. He reestablished the education of the classical language. He himself studied grammar under the guidance of a learned man, named Kshera. His special Pandit was one great scholar Bhatta Udbhatta, whom he paid one lakh dinars daily. He appointed as his special minister one poet Damodhar Gupta who has written *Kuttanimatta*. There were poets and authors like Manoratha, Sankha Danta, Katika and Samdhima who occupied places of honour in his court. Among the

ministers of Jyapida was Vaman, one of the two authors of the famous book *Kashikavrtti*. This book is a commentary on Panini's grammar. He also raised the status of Thakkiya, a writer from low position and helped and patronised him for his knowledge and learning. We know some of these people from their books and references.

The rule of the later years of Jyapida which, according to the calculation of Kalhana, lasted from 751 A.D. to 782 A.D., was not worthwhile. In Rajtarangani it is mentioned that under the leadership of Jyapida his army attacked Bhim Sen, the king of the northern region. But he imprisoned Jyapida who, however, escaped from the prison by a subtle plan, pretending that he was suffering from a terrible infectious disease. It is said that he then attacked Nepal's ruler Aramudi but he was carried away by the sudden spate in a river and his enemies arrested him. He was imprisoned in a strong fort but he fled away due to the loyalty and self sacrifice of Devasarman, a minister. Devasarman killed himself so that Jyapida could take the help of his dead body after jumping from the fort and be able to cross the river, where the army was waiting for him. But neither Bhimsen nor Aramudi was traced. However, considering the confusing and chaotic condition prevailing in northern India, it does not seem impossible that he fought in those areas.

The result of all these expeditions was that his slender resources were nearly exhausted and the money in the treasury also dwindled, particularly when he could not get anything by loot or plunder or by levying tax which he expected. The story that a Naga deity of the Wular Lake directed him to a copper mine nearby shows how much in need of money he was so that he could carry on the administration and pay the salaries of his soldiers. There is nothing surprising in the fact that in the last years of his life he became very cruel and squeezed out every penny from his poeple. In this respect he was helped by his Revenue minister, Shiv Das. Continuously for three years he took control of the produce from the land which included the portion of the peasants as well. Murder and loot became quite rampant. The people felt miserable. The one who ought to have been their defender, turned out to be their plunderer and murderer. Brahmins became special victims of his cruelty. Many migrated and the rest, who remained in Kashmir, perished. Many resorted to voluntary starvation. Afterwards the king became the victim of God's wrath.

Kalhana writes the scene of his death in a dramatic style. He says that the Brahmins of Tula Mula came with grievance to the king but they were insulted in his presence. At this the Brahmins got angry and one Brahmin, whose name was Iti, cursed him, "O' king, let the pillar of throne fall on you and you get killed". Kalhana says that the gold post of the throne fell on the king and he became seriously wounded and the wounds grew into fatal ulcers and consequently he died after five days of agony.

44

Avantivarman (855-883 A.D.): A Broad-minded King

The accession of Avantivarman (855-83 A.D.) on the throne of Kashmir ushered in a period of peace and prosperity. His was an Age of Consolidation and Enlightenment. He did not have the ambition of going on expeditions and conquering many lands. He was wise enough to realise that these vain, glorious expeditions outside the valley sapped the resources of the Kingdom. He did not try to regain control over the neighbouring states. Thus there was peace and Kashmir reached the apex in philosophy and literature.

He was quite broad-minded and even though he had his own son yet he appointed his step-brother as his heir-apparent. No doubt he was fortunate in having a devoted Prime Minister, who was, as Bamzai, the renowned historian writes, guided by a Sanskrit verse, which means the following:

"This is the time to do good, while fortune, fickle by nature, is present. How can there be again time for doing good since misfortune is always imminent".

This minister always anticipated the wishes of his king and met them quickly. Once Avantivarman went to worship Bhutesha and saw a vegetable Utpala-shakha placed as an offering by the priests. The king enquired the reason for such a poor offering. To which they replied that a Damara, named Dhanava, who was a friend of Sura, had taken control of the villages belonging to the god. This upset the king but out of regard for the minister he did not speak anything but left the worship pretending bad health. The minister understood the true reasons and called Dhanava in his presence and beheaded him. The king's anger subsided and he resumed his worship.

Kashmir was very affluent and so numerous temples were built there. Sura built a temple of Shiva and Parvati at Sureshvariksetra, which was called Auramatta after his name. He founded the town of Surapura (Harapor near Shopian) locality and therein the watch station also which was formerly high up on the Pir Panjal pass. His wife and sons also built temples.

At a distance of 18 miles from Srinagar on the Srinagar-Jammu highway are seen two magnificent temples at a distance of half a mile from each other and remind us of the glorious period of Avantivarman's rule (855-883) during which he founded the city of Avantipur and got these temples built.

The first and the larger is the temple of Siva Avantisvara which remains mutilated and in ruins. The temple made of stone is situated in a courtyard almost 200 ft. by 160 ft. and 170 ft. internally enclosed by a massive stone wall, the western face of which is adorned by a row of fluted columns. In the middle of this wall is the gateway which is divided into two chambers by a cross-wall. The base on which the shrine in the centre of the courtyard stands is 57'4" and 10 ft. high. It has 16 ft. square platform on its four corners. It has a stair on each of its four sides. The sanctum has been destroyed.

The only part of the building that exists is the temple base, which is decorated with a series of projecting facets. In the rear are found two ruined subsidiary shrines in the courtyard.

Scattered about in the courtyard are large number of fragments of the temple. The most interesting of these are (i) spandrel of the arch in front of the southern stair, (ii) the flower-and-vase capital, (iii) the spandrel of another arch by its side and (iv) the base of a pilaster decorated with two seated rams and a dancing girl who plays upon a small hand-drum.

Avantiswami Temple. Half a mile further up is the small but decorated and better preserved temple of Avantiswami-Vishnu. It was laid buried under silt and debris and has been brought out.

The temple, dedicated to Vishnu, stands in the centre of the paved courtyard, 17 ft. by 148 ft. which is enclosed by a wall in the form of a colonnaded peristyle of cells. The entrance is in the middle of the west wall. It is divided by a wall into two chambers and is approached by a flight of steps bounded on either side by a plain rail and a side-wall. The front pilasters of the side-walls bear figures of Vishnu and his consort carved in relief.

R.C. Kak in his "Ancient Monuments of Kashmir" says that the wall surface of the entrance is both externally and internally ornamented purposely with sculptured reliefs. The larger female figures on the right and left hand walls of the outer chamber represent the goddesses, Ganga and Yamuna, easily recognized by their respective vehicles, the crocodile and the tortoise. The scenes in the rectangular panel on the right-hand pilaster of the wall represent probably a king and his two queens seated in "sportive fashion" on a sinhasana (lion throne), here symbolised by two lions facing on each side of a panel. The scene in front the lions has been replaced by two standing females. In the coutern panel the king has his right hand in the abhayarundie (attitude of granting immunity from fear), and the lady on the right is admiring her own charm, reflected in a round pocket mirror which she holds in her right hand. In the other two panels the figures are seated on separate cushions, here all the three occupy a single long cushion... The central shrine is built on a double base having torus moulding and a cyme rects cornice. The base is intact, but the sanctum which measures 33 sq. ft. externally, has almost disappeared".

There is a beautiful cellular colonnade in the temple. It comprises sixty-nine cells, each of which measures on the average 3'8" by 4'10".

During the excavation of this temple a large number of antiques had been found. A large number of them have been found in the Srinagar Museum. Among the number of large jars is one which bears an inscription mentioning the name of Avantivarman. This is important; it is a proof of the correct identification of the site. Manohar Kaul in his book "Kashmir, Buddhist Hindu and Muslim Architecture" quotes Ferguson in connection with the two temples:

"The characteristic that seems most clearly to distinguish the style of the temples at Martand from those of Avantivarman is the greater richness of detail which the latter exhibit; just such a tendency, in fact, towards the more elaborate carvings of the Hindu style as one might expect from their differences". Comparing the carving of a fragment of a pillar he (Ferguson) says that it "is elegant in itself, and almost as interesting historically, as the Doric, in as much as if it is compared with the pillars of the tomb of Mycene. It seems difficult to escape the conclusion that the two forms were derived from the same source. At all events, there is nothing common between the Peloponnesus and Kashmir, so far as we know, that so nearly resemble it".

At the court of Avantivarman, scholars and poets enjoyed honour and patronage. Among these are Bhatta Kallata, the pupil of Vasagupta,

the founder of Spandasastra branch of Kashmir Saiva Philosophy, Kavi Ratnakara and Anandavardhana. Their extant works occupy high position in old Sanskrit literature of Kashmir.

Once the country was in the cruel clutches of a great monster-famine. Everybody was grieved. The king was helpless and no plan could be devised to mitigate the suffering.

But then God sent an angel in the form of a man Suyya. His birth was unknown. When a baby he had been left in an earthern pot covered with a lid which a Candala woman picked up while sweeping. Her name was Suyva. She gave it to a Sudra for rearing up. The baby grew up into an intelligent boy and acquired some education. He became a teacher. He was generally surrounded by a crowd of sensible men. When the people complained of Famine, he told them that he could get rid of this monster provided he had the means. The king summoned him but he didn't reveal his scheme. The people thought him mad but the king kept the treasury at his disposal. Suyya took many pots, full of money, in a boat and went towards Madavarajya, the southern district of the valley. He threw some of money at a village called Nandaka (Nandi on the Veshan river), meaning 'the place of money', which was submerged with flood water and then quickly came back. Then he went to Yakshadara (Dyara-gul, meaning 'the place of money', near Khadanyar below Baramulla) and threw lot of money into the river. Everyone except the king thought that he had gone crazy. But the famished people who had watched Suyya throwing money in the water, immediately jumped into the river to find the coins and thereby clear the bed of rocks which had rolled down from the hill side and blocked the river. Consequently the water flowed down.

Previously the Jhelum and the Sindh met near Trigam turning large areas into a swamp. But Suyya regulated the course of the river so that the water flowed right into the Wular lake. The tributaries also were directed usefully. Suyya had many villages reclaimed by having circular embankments raised all round them to keep out the water so that they looked like round bowls (kunda). As a result of these projects hundreds of villages were reclaimed and crop grew unprecedentedly. One kharwar of paddy which used to sell for 200 dinars in prosperous times now was sold for 36 dinars.

Suyya built the present town of Sopur on the bank of the river Jhelum in his name. He prohibited killing of fish and water-fowl in the Wular lake. He granted the village Suyya a Kundala to the Brahmins in honour of his mother Suyya and constructed the bund Suyya-setir after her name.

The minister of Famine visited the valley off and on. Due to the floods king Lalitaditya had got drained out some water with great effort but later the drainage works had been neglected with the result that floods were ruining the country very often. The price of grain had gone up, one *kharwar* (192 lbs.) of paddy selling at 1050 dinars in famine stricken areas. Thus Suyya was the angel of prosperity for Kashmiris and thus Avantivarman's rule was notable for internal peace and prosperity.

Listening in the end the recital of the *Bhagwat Gita*, the amiable prince passed away near the shrine of Jyeshteswara at Tripher, on the 3rd day of the bright hall of *Asada* in the year 3595 (June 883 A.D.)

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45

Sultan Zain-Ul-Abiden (1420-70): The Apostle of Communal Harmony

"Time is endless and great is the expanse of the world so that some future kings in some distant country may believe it possible for them to perform such worthy and enterprising acts and accomplish deeds which may almost rival his".

So wrote the chronicler Srivara about Sultan Zain-ul-Abiden of Kashmir (1420-1470 A.D.), who had achieved the summit of glory and was affectionately respected by all the Hindus and the Muslims of Kashmir and is still remembered as Badshah, the great king. Love of secularism and respect for all religions were the strongest passions of his soul. He made Kashmir the centre of a great culture and acquired a halo in popular imagination which still remembers his name in spite of the lapse of more than 500 years.

Undoubtedly, many Muslim kings of Kashmir have been just, beneficent men of learning and cherishers of their subjects with many great attributes of kings, but the reign of Sultan Sikander (1389-1413 A.D.), the father of Zain-ul-Abiden, was the darkest one for the Hindus in the annals of Kashmir. History does not often record tragedies as poignant as that of Kashmiri Hindus during that period.

Kashmir, the Garden of Paradise, was chilled by the cold blasts of communal ferocity; most of the Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam, many of them killed and many also ran away with grim soldiers following vengefully at their heels to the plains of India. Only a handful of Brahmins were left to live with assassins lurking in every corner. The arch villain of the whole tragedy was the chief minister and commander-in-chief, named Suha Bhatt, a recent convert to Islam. He was assisted and goaded by Sayyids, a group of Persian immigrants. The heady wine of

communalism served by the Saiyyids to him so intoxicated him that he was driven into frenzy of religious persecution of the Hindus.

"Suha Bhatt's zeal in the persecution of his former co-religionists is perhaps unparalleled in the history of religious turn-coats", says Dr. R.K. Parimu. Sultan Sikandar was surrounded by ruthless, irresponsible and bigoted counsellors who influenced him. He thus conveniently shelved his conscience.

Among the stream of people running away helter skelter from Srinagar under the cover of the night's darkness bracing the chilly winds was Shri Bhatt, the Great Physician. Far away in a village perched on a high hilly a kind Muslim gave him shelter and security. Nothing could have pampered the sadistic instinct of Suha Bhatt than to have him slain.

The wheel of time turned. Sikander was dead. Suha Bhatt, the scourge of God, also died by inches with consumption, for there was no efficient physician available to treat him. Suha Bhatt is a fit study not only for the historian but for the psychologist too who suffered from a unique religious aberration.

Then a curious thing happened that has the strangeness of fiction. One day as dusk fell, Shri Bhatt felt agony; there was no call of the conches and the peal of the temple bells hailing the Hindus for the evening prayers. Only he heard:

"Alla-hu-Akbar! Ya Allah, save the life of our Sultan". The loud voices of the prayer coming from the village mosque sounded as a funeral wail.

There at the royal palace in Srinagar Zain-ul-Abiden was tossing on his sick bed. He had ascended the throne of Kashmir in 1423 A.D. He was broken in health and the shadow of death seemed close by. He was groaning with intense pain caused by the development of a malignant boil on his forearm. No physician could prove efficient enough to cure him. "Only Sri Bhatt Hakim", said a hook-nosed chief, "could cure him." Grey heads nodded their heads in assent. But everyone was ignorant of his whereabouts. However, after searching the length and breadth of the country, he was located and persuaded to treat the Sultan. His treatment proved successful.

"Great Brahman, ask for any reward; it shall immediately be granted to you," spoke the king in gratitude.

"May the king be adorned with perfect wisdom. I want nothing. If you must favour me, then ameliorate the condition of the Hindu inhabitants,

who are being harassed. Oh Shanshai blund akhtar! grant them religious freedom" said the Pandit firmly in a soft and smooth voice.

It touched the sympathetic chord in the Sultan's heart and he thrilled when he heard the voice of his conscience—"brother of man". His face lit up with a smile as Shri Bhatt waited with eager expectation.

"Your wish is granted. Forthwith you are appointed officer-incharge for the revival of the Brahmanical religion and rehabilitation of the Hindus," the Sultan spoke in awed admiration of the Brahman physician.

Although Shri Bhatt, the physician, brought a cataclysmic change in the mind of the Sultan but his love for all the religions could be traced back to the following factors. First, the teaching of religious toleration by his pious mother in the early impressionable days; second, the inspiration and lessons received from the Sufi saints like Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Rishi of Kashmir and thirdly, as a boy he was under the tutorship of Maulana Kabir, a believer in communal harmony and secularism.

Thus the gentle and favourable breeze blew and turned the dark pages of Kashmir's history and started a new chapter of peace and harmony in all aspects.

Sultan Zain-ul-Abiden promulgated complete freedom in Kashmir and invited Kashmiri Hindus who were living elsewhere and promised them security of life and property, besides freedom of religion. The result was that they immediately returned to their land of birth.

His loving justice removed the discrimination in services on the basis of religion. He shocked the privileged class by throwing open the highest posts in the realm to merit regardless of creed. So it came that Hindus came to fill peak posts in the civil administration and military high command. Shri Bhatt, Tilakacharya, Shiva Bhatta, Kapur Bhatt, Rupya Bhatt, Bodhi Bhatt and Srivara were some of the Hindus who rose to power under him. "The administration", says Bamzai, "was completely run by the Kashmiri Pandits who at his bidding studied Persian, the new court language".

But the greatest of his secular acts was to allow those who had recently become Muslims under compulsions to return to their old religion without "any social, religious or political disability". Then he got repaired Hindu temples and himself built some new ones. He forbade cow-slaughter and killing of birds and fish in several springs sacred to Hindus. In *Rajtarangini* is mentioned that the king encouraged the Hindu pilgrimages and festivals. In fact, he himself took part in the annual

Nagayatra festival, when he would put on the robes of a Hindu mendicant and perform the pilgrimage in the company of Brahmans and on the way distributed food and clothes to thousands of the Brahmans. He built numerous homes for the widows of the Brahmans killed during his father's reign.

Mankind in its onward march since Zain-ul-Abiden's reign has picked many progressive ideas and thoughts of religious toleration which may not now appear to us as revolutionary precepts. But Zain-ul-Abiden should be seen against the setting of his own century. Then alone will his greatness be illuminated. He dared to say, "I belong to Hindus just as much as to the Muslims, no humbug about that". The idea of Zain-ul-Abiden has transferred itself from a gaseous into solid, palapable form—brotherhood of man was the cry of the day. Akbar later on also took up this philosophy of Zain-ul-Abiden—the universal love and brotherhood.

Srivara informs us that he performed havans, studied Nilamata purana, Vasishta, and Gita Govinda and practised yoga.

Sultan Zain-ul-Abiden realised that Islam was being distorted and misused as a convenient weapon of economic exploitation. That was the meaning of Jazia, the cremation tax, and the other taxes levied on Hindus, a penalty for adherence to their faith. He at once removed tax impositions. That was the reason why the temples were plundered and images broken. He, therefore, turned his attention to the economic advancement of the people and thereby the religious barriers fell down automatically. Kashmiris, cushioned by affluent economy, based on agriculture and small industries, would not use religion as a force to tear themselves apart.

The Sultan engaged them in the manufacture of arts and crafts. He got master artists from Samarqand, Bukhara and Persia to whom he paid high salaries. They taught the Kashmiris the various arts and crafts like stone-polishing, stone-cutting, papier mache and silk, shawl and carpet weaving, whose beauty and excellence made Kashmir world famous. Dr. G.M.D. Sufi writes: "In most of his enterprises, the Sultan was guided by his experience gained in Samarqand during his eight years stay there".

Lest the labourers should remain unemployed and get restless and start communal riots he made them work on various irrigation canals, whereby the food production, too, increased and the country became prosperous. He kept the carpenters, masons and other artisans engaged in the construction of buildings, palaces and towns. Thus these people forgot their petty jealousies and communal feuds and called each other brother.

In order to promote the Hindu-Muslim concord and national prosperity he established residential, non-sectarian educational institutions where students were provided food, clothes, books, etc. free of charge. He introduced the mother-tongue, Kashmiri, as the medium of instruction. The young men were nourished on the ideas of communal harmony. Knowing nothing of prejudice these young boys got a continuous infusion of new secular blood.

He tried to bridge the cultural gap between the Hindus and the Muslims and for this he got the great works of one religion translated into another. He established a translation department where selected books from Sanskrit were translated into Persian and even Kashmiri. He himself was a linguist and knew Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit and helped in these ventures.

Although he had liberal ideas about religion and respected all religions, he at the same time, was a pious Muslim who led a saintly life in the company of derveshes and sufis. He strictly performed *nimaz* five times a day and fasted during the period of Ramzan and would not take any meat. He did not, like other Eastern kings, have a large *seraglio*. He gave lot of money in charity. He consulted the Muslim religious Qazis in matters of the State. Like the Calif Harun-ul-Rashid he used to roam about the streets incognito to find out for himself the condition of the people as also to see nobody chastised or harmed a Hindu or a weaker person.

During the last days of his life he asked Srivara to recite the Samhita which gave him consolation. The Sultan died in 1470 and thus lamented the poet:

"Sultan Zain-ul-Abiden khima dar khulde barim Be noor shud taj o nagin be nur shud arzo sama Az bahru Trakhash ayan be sar shuda under jahan Adlo karam, 'ilam o'alam jah o hasham, sulh o safa".

(Sultan Zain-ul-Abiden passed away to heaven. The throne and the seal lost the glitter, heaven and earth lost its gaiety. From that date the world lost its head, justice and generosity, learning and power, glory and splendour, peace and tolerance.)

46

The Legacy of Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla

Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla, whom his people called Sher-i-Kashmir (the Lion of Kashmir) strode the political arena of Jammu and Kashmir state like a colossus. Though not infallible, he possessed many gifts that thrust a man from the bottom to the peak and lays on his brow the mantle of leadership. Sheikh Abdulla gave courage and dignity to the people whose extreme pacifism had earned them the perjurative appellation of 'coward'. Challenging the then Maharaja Hari Singh's might, he demanded and secured, what he called "Awami Hakumat" (People's Government).

The Sheikh had a towering personality. He was remarkable for his physical strength as for his courage. He was six feet and four inches in height. He was long-limbed, broad-shouldered and had dark piercing eyes. He had a deep voice and his spirit was firm and his soul daring. Sheikh Abdulla was the posthumous son of Sheikh Moh'd Ibrahim, a dealer in shawls and already the father of five sons. Sheikh Abdulla was born in 1905 at Soura, an outskirt of Srinagar. He matriculated in Srinagar and took his B.Sc. degree in 1928 from the Islamia College, Lahore and his M.Sc. degree in chemistry at the Aligarh Muslim University in 1930. On his return he became a science teacher in the State High School, Srinagar. Soon he abandoned the job in 1931 and plunged in politics. He was "ordained to liberate his native land from the Dogra slavery that the Treaty of Amritsar brought on it", proclaimed the Sheikh. As a fighter of freedom from the autocratic rule he was illustrious.

The Sheikh by his speeches educated his people on the appreciation of the high values. By his loud voice, often compared to the roaring of a lion, he created and moulded and inspired the people of Kashmir to follow great ideals and work for their achievement. He had fired their imagination. His courage and personality held the people of Kashmir belonging to

different religions together. In his speeches he would speak in a melodious voice:

"Sir faroshi ki tamana hamare dil mein hai

Dekhna hai zor kitna bazoo-i katil mein hai".

(To get sacrificed is now our heart's desire

We'll see how strong is the thrust of the killer).

Thirty years of his life were spent in fighting Maharaja Hari Singh and later the Government of India (1953-75) for the rights of the Kashmiris. Small wonder then the people regarded him with messiahnic love and reverence. His leonine courage and his boundless concern for them carved for him a permanent place in their hearts, in spite of the fact that a large number of young Muslims have been misled by Pakistani agents and have turned the Paradise on Earth into a Hell on Earth.

With such a man one cannot essay a full evaluation or appreciation or assess what he has bequeathed to his people. The best one can do is to pursue his ideals and qualities.

- 1. He was passionately in love with Kashmir and 'Kashmiriat', the unique Kashmiri culture nurtured by Sheikh Nur-u-Din Vali and Lal Ded and other sufis and saints of Kashmir. It is revealed by P.S. Jha that Sheikh Abdulla persistently advised Nehru about the ethnic and religious dissimilarity of the people of Kashmir Valley from the Muslims of Poonch, Mirpur, Muzaffarabad and Gilgit. The unique culture, which Kashmiris even today called 'Kashmiriat', belonged to the Valley alone. Once the raiders were driven out from the Valley, the town of Poonch comprising largely of Hindus and Sikhs was liberated and the road to Buddhist Ladakh cleared at Kargil, there was no need to pursue the war, thought Nehru.
- 2. Sheikh Abdulla's secularism was perfect. All along there were cries in the streets:

Sher-i-Kashmir ka kiya irshad

Hindu, Muslim, Sikh itihad.

(What is the command of Sher-i-Kashmir

The Unity of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs).

No doubt, he started his career by forming a communal organisation, All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1932. Later he had a shocking experience when in Rajouri he saw a collection of Hindus being beaten mercilessly by the soldiers. He was conscience-stricken and felt that he must fight for the rights of all the communities. Thus he changed the Muslim Conference into All Jammu & Kashmir National Conference. His conception now was the need of a body which would be national and not sectional, which would be democratic and secular without religious ties and which would demonstrate that members of all communities could work together in unity. Consequently, Sheikh Abdulla found himself much more sympathetic to the Congress than to the Muslim League.

3. Opposition to the Two Nation Theory. He rejected Mr. Jinnah's Two Nation Theory. He was the only Kashmiri Muslim and one of the prominent Muslims along with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr. Zakir Hussain to have debunked Moh'd Ali Jinnah's Two Nation Theory. Just before Partition Jinnah and the Sheikh had a discussion on the division of India. After many years Sheikh Abdulla in a press interview on 20th and 29th February, 1971 recalled his talk with Mr. Jinnah at Lahore thus: "I told him that I was not opposed to his idea of Pakistan but it would not help in the situation. Muslims were flung all over India and they would face more difficulties if certain portions were taken away from the country and declared independent. If they (Muslims) were not safe in the entirety of India, how would they be safe in a smaller portion".

Sheikh Abdulla cannot be accused even by his bitterest enemies of harbouring communal feelings. In October 1947, when Pakistani raiders entered Kashmir, Sheikh Abdulla at once rushed to Delhi. He passed on a message recommending the acceptance of Kashmir state's accession to India. Subsequently, the Instrument of Accession was signed by Maharaja Hari Singh as the Ruler of the State. Always sharing Congress party's basic tenets of secularism, socialism and democracy his National Conference endorsed the state's accession to India. A request of military aid and protection to the state was also made.

4. End of the Dynastic Rule of Maharaja Hari Singh. Sheikh Abdulla had an overweening self-esteem and would often quote Iqbal's lines:

"Khudi ko ker buland itna Ki khuda bande se khud pooche Bata teri raza kya hai". (Raise your self-respect so high That God may Himself ask the man Say, what your desire is?)

"...... that if Kashmir had no anti-Hindu riots (the Muslims outnumbering Hindus 9 to 1) and if the state is today a part of India, it was almost entirely due to Sheikh Abdulla and his National Conference. The

Sheikh had a very difficult role to play in making an overwhelmingly Muslim population smarting under stories of holocaust against their coreligionists, throw in their lot with secular but predominantly Hindu India". All the same, Sheikh Abdulla was wrong in launching in May 1946 anti-Maharaja movement, called Quit Kashmir Movement. The Sheikh and his followers were arrested and put on a trial. To plead their cause Nehru at once rushed from Delhi. Jawaharlal's entry into the state was banned and he was detained in the Rest House of Ghari. At the persuasion of Gandhi and Maulana Azad he left Kashmir and went to Simla where a crucial meeting was going on between the Viceroy Lord Wavell and Indian leaders.

Although Maharaja Hari Singh made many reforms there were inherent defects in a feudal system and autocratic rule as compared to the democratic and popular one. Therefore, the hostility between the Sheikh and the Maharaja was but natural.

But this is not all the story. The basic reason for the hostility has to be traced to the psychological factors. Sheikh Abdulla made haste to end the dynastic rule of the Maharaja because of a psychological conflict of the two stalwarts—Sheikh Abdulla and Maharaja Hari Singh. The former, in spite of many good qualities, was headstrong and had a towering ego. Being a silver-tongued orator and gifted with convincing talk he had tremendous confidence in his powers that gave him a touch of haughtiness. The Maharaja was masterful with a warrior's pride and had a sense of tremendous self-respect, but lacked diplomacy and cleverness, particularly a high-speed one.

Of course, Maharaja Hari Singh was stiff and did not have, as rulers generally do not have, a soft face to feast one's eyes on. Mr. R.C. Kak, his Prime Minister, too was known for his icy look. And Sheikh Abdulla too had a tendency to draw his heavy eyebrows together in a formidable frown. He had by determination and courage raised himself step by step and he levitated because of tremendous ovation and applause of the public.

Even though Abdulla was great in his own way, he committed many indiscretions. Sardar Patel tactfully by a process of soft persuasion absorbed more than 600 odd states in the Indian Union. Maharaja Hari Singh received a short shrift from Sheikh Abdulla in 1949, who was then bubbling over with emotional exuberance due to the overwhelming help of Pandit Nehru. The Maharaja was, as can logically be concluded, more sinned against than sinning. Sheikh knew that the fate of the Indian rulers

was hanging in balance. After all the Maharaja like other Maharajas and Nawabs had to fade out. He ought to have waited some more and all would have been well with him.

Thus he would have gained the good opinion and goodwill of the Dogras to whom the Maharaja was a symbol of their valour, nobility and glory. Again, probably Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla, being egged by his 'friends', particulary by Afzal Beg who had vested interests and made him make emotional outbursts on some provocation and in his long spells of dark moods, became impulsive and hasty and made a long tirade against India and the Dogras which infuriated them and as a result they could not give him their co-operation but rallied round their stalwart leader Pandit Prem Nath Dogra and his party and launched a movement which snowballed and culminated in Sheikh's undoing.

It was unfortunate that due to disharmony between Maharaja Hari Singh and Sheikh Abdulla the Union Government was compelled to advise Maharaja to quit the state and nominate his son, Yuvraj Karan Singh to be his regent there. The Maharaja left the state in June 1949. Finally, Sheikh Abdulla persuaded the Jammu & Kashmir Constituent Assembly in taking a formal decision to abolish the Dogra rule in the state. This was done and Yuvraj Karan Singh became the first head of the state on 14th November, 1952. With this date the hereditary rule of the Dogras which had begun in 1846 came to an end. The Sheikh next pressed the Union Government to accord special status to Kashmir. This was agreed to and a new Clause 306-A (which finally became Article 370 of the Indian Constitution) was added to the Union Constitution—Part XXI.

Land Reforms. Sheikh Abdulla and the National Conference had earlier drawn a social and agrarian reforms in the "New Kashmir" Plan. The Sheikh forthwith started to implement these reforms. The government enacted laws for the protection of the tenant. They could no longer be ejected from the land.

In April 1949, the Government appointed a Land Reforms Committee to prepare a plan for the abolition of big landed estates and transfer of the land to the tiller. But before the Committee submitted its report Sheikh Abdulla announced the abolition of the jagirs without compensation and the land was transferred to the tiller. The announcement had later to be regularised by the enactment of a law.

According to Bamzai, the historian, "a moratorium was declared on debts incurred by the peasants and workers and with the institution of Debt Conciliation Courts old debts which were pressing heavily on the

peasantry were scaled down by about 80 per cent from 11.1 million to 2.4 million rupees. The peasants could also have reinstated their rights in mortgaged property".

Then Sheikh Abdulla's government established the Jammu & Kashmir University on November 1, 1948. The Central Government, of course, helped in setting up the University.

Sheikh Abdulla was liable to get easily excited and make grave mistakes. After some time the Union Government felt that the Sheikh was conspiring with the foreign powers with the purpose of severing Kashmir's connection with India and declaring it an independent state. By his meetings with Adblai Stevenson and Loy Henderson he was trying to bring Kashmir into the new cockpit of Asia. This impression was heightened by a speech which the Sheikh made at R.S. Pura in which he pointed out undesirable existence of communal spirit in India and declared that Indian Constitution could not apply in full. At the beginning of August 1953 he even threw doubt on the validity of Kashmir's accession to India. Then differences arose among the members of his cabinet and consequently he was dismissed by the Sadr-i-Riyasat, Yuvraj Karan Singh on August 9, 1953 and kept in detention. Later on, all the misunderstandings were cleared and he was released. He came to terms with the Government of India at Delhi in 1975 and agreed to run the Government of the state.

The name of Sheikh Abdulla is going to be inseparable from the history of Kashmir. The people of Kashmir today, torn and in great agony due to militancy, cast wistful eyes upon the image of their leader and their past fulfilment and these splash them with wonder and lend them consolation and hope. Sheikh Abdulla's death undoubtedly has left a void in the consciousness of the age.

LITERATURE

Tu shab aaferidi chirag aferidam Safal aaferidi ayag aaferdam Bayaban va gulzar va bag aaferidi Man aanam ki az zehar navshena sazam Man aanam ki az sang ayiana sazam.

IQBAL

Thou created the night, I produced the lamp;
Thou made the earth, I made a cup,
Thou created meadows, mountains and barren lands;
I turned them into green gardens and flower beds.
I am one who from poison healing drugs made;
I am one who made mirrors from stones.

Kashmiri Poetry: Its Past and Present

History of Kashmir is a poignant tale of poverty, hardship and humiliation. But in the vast desert of its political subjugation servitude, and economic suffering, here and there, one finds in its history rich oasis of benevolent rule, social and economic prosperity where rich culture, art and springs of communal amity, religious tolerance quench the thirst and soothe the hearts of Kashmiris.

Kashmiri, though spoken by more than forty lakhs of people has never been a medium of communication among the common people, while Sanskrit, Persian and English have, in turn, been the official languages or the languages of the educated sections. Till the end of the 18th century whatever poetry was produced, was the work of the illiterate men and country bards or women like Lalleshwari and Habba Khatoon.

Ignoring the folklore, we can historically locate the first poets of Kashmir in the 14th century. Among them Lalleshwari or Lal Ded is the most significant poetess. After the benign and peaceful rule of Avantivarman in Kashmir, there followed the long period of political unrest and uncertainty which was responsible for the degeneration of religion and morals of the people. They followed the complicated rites and dogmas and naturally the simple religion of Islam had a great impact on the people of Kashmir. They did not keep themselves aloof and remain entrenched in stronghold of religious separateness. They mixed with the Muslims. This close contact between them and their influence on each other brought about the evolution of mystics and, to some extent, a sort of synthesis of the two religions in certain sects. Lalleshwari belongs to this genre of mystics who sang many truths that are common to many Hindus and Muslims. No doubt, her religious philosophy is fundamentally based on Yoga and Shaivism which she expressed in precise, apt and sweet Kashmiri dialect. According to her, devotion to God requires purity

of heart and concentration of mind which she expressed in beautiful verse. She says:

"The mind's steed runs over the skies

Within a wink it travels lakhs of leagues.

A truly intelligent man can bridle the cavorting steed.

And guide his chariot aright on the wheels of Prana".

(tr. from Kashmiri)

She considers idolatory as useless and urges us to take to yogic practice:

"Idol and temple of stone

So temple above and idol below are one;

Which will they worship

O stupid one

Bring about the union of mind and soul".

(tr. from Kashmiri)

Contemporary of Lal Ded was Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Wali, the great mystic, who too like her was revered by both Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir. He expressed his moral teachings in concise and sweet verses, which form valuable gems of Kashmiri literature. He, like Lal Ded, exhorted his followers to perform good actions for therein lies the salvation of man. One of his verses translated into English is:

"The dog is barking in the compound,

O Brothers! Give ear and listen to what he says;

As one sowed, so did he reap:

Then Nund, sow, sow, sow".

Religious schisms were raising their heads in his time and Nund Rishi, as he was lovingly called, warned people against these hypocritical saints in the following verse (translated from Kashmiri):

"The rosary is like a snake;

Thou bendest it on seeing the disciples;

Thou hast eaten six platefuls, one like another

If thou art a priest, then who are robbers?"

After the death of the two mystics, Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, the Muse in Kashmir fell into a deep sleep for about two hundred years and with the birth of Habba Khatoon it woke up again fluttering and singing, not the mystical experience but the lilting tunes of true romance. Poets imagine romance and write about it but Habba Khatoon lives romance and sings

about it. Upto her time poets were expected to sing the love of God but she sang of human love. She sang lyrics which can be regarded as great gems in Kashmiri literature and therein her genius exults. The Kashmiri poetry had been surcharged with mysticism and divinity but she brought fresh air into it when she sang of mundane earthly love. She does not treat love, as a "transcendental passion or as a mystic mingling of sense and spirit nor is she engrossed in universal, abstract and ideal love". She sings of her personal substantive love. She also lends herself to the emotions of the joylessness of life. Her own failure in marriage and then her own lovestory proved a significant factor in her emotional experience and in her poetry only 'plaintive numbers flow' and these echo her own grief. In one of her famous poems she says:

"Stole thou my heart and forsook me at last Pray come, my lovely Love, O come! Come friend let us to collecting cress, Mystery of fate none can unravel. Sly, senseless people slander and defame me Pray, come, my lovely Love, O come! Hurt he hath me with his love's hatchet Then sent none to ask and enquire after. Pray, come, my lovely Love, O come".

(tr. from Kashmiri)

No poems, barring those of Habba Khatoon or Arnimal, which sing of a woman's passion or love from the feminine standpoint, are found in Kashmiri literature. Kashmiri ladies, therefore, find in her poems an eloquent exposition of the woman's point of view. Her desperate wails make them share her despair. Therefore, miserable women, downtrodden by callous men and persecuted by the mother-in-law, feel consoled and their sorrowful feelings get purged by singing her verses in their lonely moments. Her individual and personal desire is the desire of every woman. Thus Habba Khatoon laments:

"Pining and melting I am like snow in summer Though blooming blossom of jasmine I am; Thine the garden and thou enjoy it Oh, why dost thou despise me!"

A century later another lady, named Arnimal, moved the hearts of the Kashmiri people. She was forsaken by her husband. His desertion aroused the muse in her. Her songs are sweet and full of rich imagery and pathos. Thus she wails:

"My face was like a jasmine in July Now it is like yellow withered rose. Ah! when will he come to me And I gaze at his lovely face".

Kashmiri poetry of the modern period starts with the beginning of 19th century. In the early stages Kashmiri was dominated by Persian influences, as it was the court language and the medium of polite literature. Kashmiri poets meticulously followed the models set by Persian poets. From 1819 to 1890 was the period when Kashmir produced poetry both rich and prolific. The devotional type of poetry had laid firm foundations in Kashmir. Pandit Parmanand is the great exponent of lila (devotional songs). He expressed his devotion for Lord Krishna in sweet and direct diction. His poems, though simple, are of deep metaphysical import. Shams Fakir, born in 1943, was a mystic and a highly religious man. He spent all his life of 63 years in the worship of God and expressed his Sufi-type of teaching in simple, sweet and direct poems. He followed Nund Rishi and believed in the purity of heart and the denial of the joys of life. He believed in leading a simple life. Wahab Khar was also a Sufi of his type, who also quoted and expressed his simple teachings in simple Kashmiri language. One of the earliest poets who follows Persian pattern was Mohammad Gami. He wrote romances like Yusuf Zulaikha, Laila Majnu and Shirin Khusru, etc. His descriptions are trite and graphic. What distinguishes his poetry is the true quality of passion:

"Softly come, flowers shall I shower
Listen to my wails,
I search for you in the woods;
In the garden of love I seek you.
Where you fly, there I follow you.
My whimsical one, I adore you.
Your tresses are tumbled down on your shoulders
Like branches of Sumbal stooping low and low
You know my heart's desire
My heart and body are restless!"

Maqbul Shah Kralwari, at the same time, wrote a poetic romance Gulrez. Its theme is Persian but the scenes are typically Kashmiri. The miserable condition of squalor and fear in which a farmer lived has been well described by him in his famous satire Gruisnama, written in a frank, straightforward and sympathetic sarcasm. He says:

"Thrushings verily have been ordained by Heaven for the peasant; Pull out the shoe and strike him on the head".

Again, he describes peasants running forth to welcome a state official, Sazwal, with false warmth:

"If the Sazwal comes across them they run to greet him They would knock away his fatigue with closed fists Shampoo his limbs and offer him seat upon their heads".

He is famous for his lyrical poetry too wherein he gives beautiful description of Nature.

The lyric stream of Kashmiri verse runs deeper in Rasul Mir. His poems possess all the essential elements that go to make a true lyric—intense passion, exquisite verbal melody and spontaneity of utterance. They have such careless ease and abandon, such indefinable and bewitching sweetness about them that they send a strange yet delightful thrill in us. Thus sings the poet (tr. from Kashmiri):

"Love, thy serpentine curls have enchanted me

O, cast a glance of thy languid eyes, my drunken love.

How I admire thy cypress stature and thy form resplendent like the moon!

O, my loved one, thou art possessed of smile, form resplendent like the moon".

He is considered as the father of Kashmiri ghazal, running in a well-knit form and pattern.

The renaissance in modern Kashmiri literature begins in the early twenties of this century with Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor's poetry. who was given eminence by Tagore, who called him "the Wordsworth of Kashmiri poetry". He, as a village *Patwari*, came into close contact with poor down-trodden rustic people of the villages, who lived in squalor and misery. Their condition shocked and shook him to the very marrow and he voiced their inner feelings and exhorted them to rise and strive for their own emancipation. There was feudalism prevailing in Kashmir as elsewhere in the country, which was full of vices. Feudal lords have always been interested in profit-hunting and exploiting the poor classes. Mahjoor did not flee from the socio-political world into an enchanted realm of his own mind jealously closed against the intrusion of social and political affairs. His poems are full of patriotism. He says:

"Mahjoor, our own motherland is a flowery garden, Most lovely! Best we must love our dear land Our land is a lovely garden".

(tr. from Kashmiri)

"He even blows the trumpet of revolution If thou wouldst rouse this habitat of roses. Leave toying with kettle-drums. Let there be thunder-storm and tempest, aye an earthquake".

He is a votary of Hindu-Muslim unity and in the hearts of Kashmiri people are enshrined the high principles of brotherhood, tolerance and

communal amity. According to him:

"Hindus will keep the helm and Muslims ply the oars; Let them together row ashore the boat of this country".

Mahjoor was not a mystic or a recluse but a lover of Life and Nature. In his early life he was not interested in politics. In his famous poem Gulshan Vattan Chu Soney (Our Land is a Lovely Garden) he sings of the beauty of Nature:

"To gardens, mountains and hills Ravines, woods and banks Colourful flowers with colour fills Our land is a lovely garden! Flowers are in full bloom In gardens, woods and glens; Bulbul gazing gets gay soon; Our land is a lovely garden!"

He has written in simple popular language poems of immense lyrical sweetness. In his well-known poem Lokchar (Youth) he melodiously sings:

"A cedar tree is a wood in my youth On a river's bank delighting in lush verdure; Cut it not down. O cruel woodcutter! O my youth, my spring time! Like a song-bird of the garden is my youth! Singing sweetly, sitting on a flowering bough. O chief hunter, do not take aim at it;

O my youth, my spring time!"

Mahjoor was followed by Abdul Ahad Azad who too like him took to revolutionary ideas. But Mahjoor was a nationalist while Azad desired and longed for a socialist pattern of society, based on equality among men.

The end of feudal regime in Kashmir and the consequent political changes brought about a cataclysmic awakening and an urge to reject the traditional values in Kashmiris. The younger generation was no longer deferential to old moral principles and there was naturally a breakdown in the traditional values in all fields of social activities. Men like Zinda Koul, better known as "Master ji", looked inwards and to the things of the spirit. He found that knowledge and freedom which had given us material progress had removed harmony, confidence and serenity from our hearts. The modern mind was tormented by scepticism and anguish. He shunned the political enthusiasm of the time and was not swept off his feet by the socialistic ideas and dreams. The only key to happiness, according to him, is love and he does not preach any dogmatic philosophy or state any mystical certainties. Pure poetry aspires to a condition of prayer and Zinda Koul's famous poem is full of such poetry. Like Francis Thompson he feels that God always thought of his well-being and though he fears Him and avoids him God is for ever waiting for man to turn to Him. Says Zinda Koul:

How dare I face Him again?
But you'll find it unavailing—
This lame excuse to fly Him.
For even if you turn,
He will pursue for ever;
This bond is from the dawn of life
Not a passing childish fancy".

"Have strayed, tottered and fallen,

Majbooriyaa (Compulsion) and Natairee (Unpreparedness) are sublime poems which express the belief in the supermacy of the spirit over reason.

The great ferment began in 1931 when Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla launched an agitation against the autocracy and with the invasion of Kashmir by Pakistan in 1947, it came to its full flowering. A new fervour gripped the new generation of poets when the people's government was formed after the collapse of the feudalistic rule, action and poetry became a vehicle of propaganda for social and political justice. A group of poets emerged who regarded socialistic realism as an all-pervasive literary

value. They became the people's articulate voice against the aristocratic exploitation, corruption and imperialist designs on the valley of Kashmir. They experimented with new forms and new themes. The leader of this progressive group, as it came to be known, was Dina Nath Nadim. He was influenced by the English poets like Shelley and Byron, the Marxist thought and Russian and Chinese revolutions. Dina Nath Nadim who was also awarded Soviet Land Nehru Award by the U.S.S.R. in 1971 for his revolutionary poetry, was the most significant poet of the new generation. The influence of Mayakovsky Gorky can clearly be seen in his poetry. His poetry is intimately connected with the political upheavals in Kashmir. In Vathi Baagachi Kukli (Arise, O Oriole of the Garden) he sang of the dawn of freedom movement in Kashmir. In Asi Kashirav tul nov rut kadam (We Kashmiris took the right new step) he hailed the land to the tillers' step. He mostly wrote with a political bias; in his Bu Gyavana Az (I will not sing today) he sings of the new freedom movement:

"I will not sing today
Of roses and of bulbuls
Of irises and hyacinths
I will not sing
Those drunken and ravishing
Dulcet and sleepy eyed songs
No more such songs for me!"

In his poems he makes impeccable use of words and original imagery drawn from everyday life. This has made his poems very popular. Dal Hanzani Hund satsun (The song of the boatwoman) is a clear example of such poems:

"I've brought them fresh from the lake— Come buy, come buy! Small brinjal and round big gourds— Come buy! come buy! come buy! Fresh radish gleaming in the shade of the weed Marsh turnip blushing like a belle—

O my boat is like the flowering dawn! Come buy! come buy! come buy!"

Nadim also has written an opera *Imber Bumerzal* which is most famous for its music and richness of thought and has won for him laurels.

He influenced many poets. Abdul Rehman Rahi is significant among them. Rahi also is a poet of revolution and wrote some propagandist poems. He introduced into Kashmiri poetry two things, one was the monologue and another the use of symbolist technique. In Gata Gash (Darkness Light) the Jagirdhar and the peasant speak alternately. He invokes an atmosphere through significant details and images, as:

"I saw a maiden fair in grief
With bent back and tears flowing
I drew closer in that garden
Lo! it was the narcissus heavy with dew".

Another great poet of modern time in Kashmir is Mirza Arif. He does not belong to this group of socialist poets and has poetry which has its own distinct characteristics and originality. He is by education and temperament a scientist and keenly observes life with a certain detachment. He, too, has reflected on the different facts of social and political life in Kashmir and he writes about exploitation, hypocrisy and falsehood. He takes the lid off the cess-pool of social evil. He writes:

"One chance leap shows jackal in lion's skin Seemingly elephants, they lack the strength of a hair.

Create they thus the world of dissembling What appear the iron walls, are but spider's webs,

The wealthy called him scum;
The political juggler called him king;
The poor have seen the changing faces of the knaves".

or

"Fallen on the crossroads, the drunken man, To whom intoxication will bring sense (moral) Is better far than the sage with innocent face, Hidden in whose marrow lies the Satan".

Among other new poets in Kashmir may be mentioned Amin Kamil, Noor Moh'd Roshan, Ghulam Nabi Firaq and Moti Lal Saqi. All these poets are iconoclastic and would like to break the idols of old traditions. They also describe the social evils with full force. Thus sings Amin Kamil:

"Within their parlours darkness
Illuminations splendour without.
Valued much is yellow gold, love but ignored!
Tearing curtains tunes will run out,
Time has laid the trap,
For life is not a stagnant pond".

Noor Moh'd Roshan's intellectual ideas are superb and he expresses them sweetly as,

- "Stunned Satan sadly was roaming in the heavens
- "Why you left the earth" asked the Almighty of him.
- "I have come to hide myself, for shocked am I to see", he pleaded
- "Man is proficient in all my villainy and wickedness;

No work is now left for me down below"

The Cultural Academy of Jammu & Kashmir and the Radio Kashmir are encouraging and actively and directly helping the budding poets and we find since Independence in 1947, a palpable resurgence in the field of art and literature.

48

Mysticism in Kashmiri Poetry

Mysticism, it is said, "is the belief that knowledge of God and of spiritual truth is gained through personal insight or intuition instead of logic and reasoning". It also means a way of living based on such a belief. "Mysticism has got a philosophical side and a practical side. Philosophically, all mystics believe that there is a supreme all-pervading and in-dwelling power to whom all things are one and hence it should be the intense effort of the human mind to apprehend the Divine Essence or the Ultimate Reality". On the practical side a mystic believes that there can be direct communication with the "Being of Beings" and one can draw supreme anand (joy) from His blessed intercourse. This can be achieved by a kind of transfusion of identification, in which one becomes a partaker of the Divine nature".

KASHMIRI MYSTICISM

Mysticism in Kashmir is unique in being the amalgam of Hindu mysticism and Sufism of Islam. This is because the Kashmiri community, comprising chiefly of Hindus and Muslims, is very closely knit and these components intimately interact, resulting in a fusion of religious and mystical traditions and conventions, which is hard to break. In Kashmir the gems of mysticism, latent in Hinduism and Islam were developed by the political, social and intellectual conditions which prevailed, from time to time, in the blessed land. In the early history of Kashmir, the ruthless military despotism, the luxury of upper classes and the hard mechanical piety of the orthodox creeds gave a chuming to the minds of many a speculative people and thereby a host of mystic poets got skimmed off the social surface. These are Lalleshwari, Nund Rishi, Rup Bhawani, Shah Gafoor, Shah Qalanadar, Shams Faqir and Zinda Koul.

LALLESHWARI, THE MYSTIC POET

We may here dwell upon two old and two modern mystic poets. The greatest of all the mystic poets is Lalleshwari, affectionately called Lal

Ded, who was born in the socio-religious milieu which was full of turmoil and discord. No Kashmiri has such a superabundant wealth of spiritual power that she had and in this regard none has deeper significance than she. It is about 1335 A.D. that she was born in a Brahmin family at Pandrethan, four miles to the south-east of Srinagar. She got a thorough grounding in Shaivism and Yoga from her family priest, named Sed Shri Kanth or Sed Mol and from her early childhood people could see in her the glow of a poetic impressionality, of a gift for visionary and mystical effects. She was married at an early age of twelve to a Brahman boy of Pampore, a village at a distance of eight miles from Srinagar. Then she had to suffer the tyranny of her mother-in-law and the onslaughts of her husband. Soon after, in a transcendental flash, she decided to leave her house and thus renouncing the world she turned into a wandering recluse and in a semi-nude state went into jungles and stayed in mountain caves. She preached her mystical and moral idealism through her facile, dignified and delightfully harmonious verses called "vakyas". Her spiritual ardour sustained the spontaneous elevation of their language.

The foundation of her spirituality is Shaivism and Upanishidic wisdom alongwith the mysticism of Sufism. Parmanand, the great divine poet of the last century, speaks of her spiritual practice thus:

"Lalleshwari realised anhata, nada, bindu and Om. Being unique in her Yoga of Dvadshanta Mandala she grasped the supreme Ananda".

DIFFERENT STAGES OF HER ASCENT

The quality of her *vakyas* lies in the fact that she shares her soul's deeper secrets with the people and one can easily trace the ascent of her "self" from them. Firstly, she practised self-discipline and tried to purify her life and refused to be the slave of lust, pride and greed. Then at the second stage she adopted the holy indifference and detachment towards the worldly interests and desires. Later, she escaped from the trammels of daily life and daily tried to rouse her mind by the solitary musings and meditations. She found many dogmatic tenets regarding idol worship, superficial differences of caste or religion as absurd. She turned away from rituals and the religious worship in all its pomp of sacrificing animals. She practised many hard disciplines and awakened Kundalini by means of mastering her vital airs, *prana* and *apana*. She says:

"I closed the door and windows of my body's mansion and caught my life-breath as thief within:

I bound him fast in cell of my heart and with stinging whip of Om I flayed him there".

Finally, she reached the transcendental stage when her mind could go beyond matter and could know more than she saw and experienced. She found herself a part of one Soul which spoke to her and through her in a unique way. To attain this Reality she also advocated the annihilation of duality and merger with the Supreme.

These different stages, to some extent, correspond to the Sufi's different stages on the path of God. R.A. Nicholson, in her book, "The Mysticism of Islam", says: Sufism teaches that everything is an emanation from God and the goal of life is reunion with its source. "Lalleshwari too had this belief. What Rabis of Basra was to Sufism, Lalleshwari was to Hindu mysticism. Both set forth the doctrine of mystical love in their sayings and believed that every aspiration was centred in the inward life of dying to self and living in God".

SHEIKH NOOR-U-DIN VALI

Lalleshwari's younger contemporary Sheikh Noor-u-Din of Tsrar-i-Sharif, popularly called Nund Rishi, was a Sufi par excellence. He was born in 1378 A.D. and his ancestors came from Kishtwar and settled in Kashmir. The beacon light of Nund Rishi's endeavours was Lalleshwari and in his verses he acknowledges her supremacy.

His susceptibility to emotion was very strong; human suffering and pain stirred up his feelings of religious sublimity and imagination. His aim was to grasp the Divine realities and he believed in the doctrine of annihilation (fana) that is, the passing away of individual consciousness in the will of God.

From the very young age he was of a retiring disposition and showed no inclination to any trade. Ultimately, he renounced the world and practised penance for twelve years in a mountain cave and attained the spiritual bliss. Though he was utterly illiterate, yet he gave utterances to hundreds of dainty and wise sayings which are considered gems in the treasury of mysticism. These have been collected in two volumes, entitled Rishi Nama and Nur Nama. His verses called 'Shrukh' are in a delicate didactic vein of a gentle moralist. He emphasised two things: first, Zikkar (praise of God) consisting of the recitation of the name of God and second Tawakul (trust in God), that is leaving one's self entirely in God's hands. He firmly believed in quitism, the abandoning of all desires, with the passive acceptance of whatever comes. In this regard he says:

"Desire is the knotted wood of the forest. It cannot be made into planks, beams or into cradles. He who cut and felled it will burn it into ashes".

Nund Rishi takes place beside Lalleshwari among the great regenerators of the conscience in a spiritual sense and his work had and still has an influence on the deeper moral resolves and actions of Kashmiri people, Hindus and Muslims alike.

With the advent of Dogra rule in Kashmir, an era of unalloyed peace and enlightenment was ushered in. The Valley was connected with the Punjab by two metalled roads, postal and telegraphic service. The Dogra rulers, instead of thrusting Dogri or Sanskrit upon the people, introduced Urdu and later on English as well into the educational institutions and the offices. Fresh and fragrant breeze of modernism thus blew over the Valley which brought a cataclysmic change in the minds of the people. The Kashmiri language blossomed. Many poets of the period felt spiritual impulse which they expressed through the language of their land and not through an alien language like Persian.

ZINDA KOUL

The eminent mystic poet of modern period is 'Master' Zinda Koul, who was born in 1889 in a Brahmin family in Srinagar. Early in his life he fell into abject poverty and had to bear more than his share of those miseries and tribulations, which most of us are heir to, due to the bad karmas in the previous existence, for he lost his eldest son and he had to work hard to feed his grandchildren and his daughter-in-law. He was overwhelmed with grief and at the late age of 58, mystical numbers flowed from his plaintive pen in Kashmiri. Brooding woke up the poet in Zinda Koul to pursue a search for the ultimate Reality.

It is in the reserves of a latent Hindu mystical individualism as well as in an intense spiritual sense of life that Zinda Koul finds an untapped vein of rich ore to be exploited for his poetic work. The genius of Western thought and literature along with Islamic Sufism is "the favourable influence that comes to stimulate a ripening originality, to quicken its consciousness of itself and to supply with assimiable ideas, thus enabling it to emerge and develop".

He became an apostle of his land's traditional mysticism whose foundation was based on love, but it was the magnetism of Western thought (Plato, Emerson, Thomson, etc.) and Sufism "which helped to polarise in the tenacious strain" of mysticism in his nature. While figuring an apostle of stoicism in the beginning, he was later engulfed in the morass of scepticism, he only wails and moans. From the slender volume of 35 poems, entitled *Sumran*, which won him Sahitya Akademi Award, we find that the focus of his moral being is God's love and guidance to

be had in a personal relationship between God and man, through prayer and hope. Intuitively man feels God's love and when he pours his love to Him, God becomes then a saviour and protector of the pure-hearted and the righteous. He says:

"He was always by your side, He has always been there; The child listening to Surdas Singing of his love".

Like a hound of Heaven, God, full of love, pursues man and does not forsake him. He says:

"For even if you turn away He will pursue for ever".

He further believes that the soul of man yearns to mingle with the Super-Soul or God and this belief fans the fire of his poems and is blended with an acute perception of the mutability of life and the transient character of pleasure. There is a fusion of artistic luxuriance with mystic ideas and wistful melancholy which gives his poems a unique, unforgettable quality.

SHAMS FAQIR

Shams Faqir, his contemporary, is like a gentle stream beside an impetuous waterfall. Lacking the force and vigour of Zinda Koul, his mystical poems contain a crystalline charm of their own. He was a Darvesh and his poetry is an effusion of his true mystical experience. In his mysticism too we find a traditional synthesis of Hindu mysticism and Sufism and one wonders at the numerous allusions to Hinduism found in his poetry. He also revered Lalleshwari. We find Shams Faqir singing of annihilation (fana) in the Divine.

He also believes that there is no distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim. Note what he says:

"How to define life and death? How to call and classify Him? He has neither mind nor body His abode is off the boundless bar". or again:

"O listen I burn in passion of Love
And thus I remember my Love!
In the tavern I drink from the love's goblet
And thus I remember my love!"

49

Ballad in Kashmiri

A Kashmiri ballad is a narrative song in short stanzas or couplets with end-rhymes, often with refrain or the first line repeated at intervals and usually of popular origin and orally transmitted. The earlier ballads are simple in metrical structures and show little of the fineness of a deliberate art. Their authorship is unknown. The latter ballad have been composed by the known poets but in these too the simplicity, sincerity of style and sincerity of tone like the earlier ones do not at all suffer. All Kashmiri ballads vary in length.

Ballads in Kashmiri have arisen among the people of a locality or a village who have shared the same habits, customs and thoughts for generations. A gifted man among them may weave some folk-tale or a legend or an important event into a song and other persons add to it or change the lines and hand them on to the next generation. Besides, a professional minstrel called geven vol (singer) and a bard known as Ladi Shah also compose ballads. A ballad in Kashmiri was sung for the story it told and not merely as dance-accompaniments. Sometimes for the sake of entertainment, dance was also performed alongwith the singing of a narrative song. These dances are (i) bacha-nagma wherein a male in the garb of a girl dances singing the narrative song, (ii) bhanda-nagma, in which an actor of a small itinerant dramatic group sings ballads while dancing (iii) hafiz-nagama, a beautiful dancing girl and her companions may sing a narrative poem. She dances all along. Generally, a hafiza (dancing girl) dances to the accompaniment of Sufiana kalam (poem of philosophical theme).

Kashmiri had become the popular language of Kashmir even earlier than 12th century A.D. when Kalhana lived and wrote his *Rajtarangini* and Kashmiri balladry must have gone back to the early past but no ballad of that old and far off time has come down to us. A narrative poem in Kashmiri, *Banasurvadha* composed in the 15th century is the oldest narrative poem and it narrates a mythological story. It is during the early Sultan period in Kashmir that the Kashmiri language got a high status that it deserved and naturally from 15th century onwards we find the art of balladry grow vigorously.

The characteristics of a Kashmiri ballad are its straightforwardness, rapidity of narration and its simplicity. They deal with passions and motives that pulsate through all human beings. Many of the Kashmiri ballads have immense dramatic power and simple and regular metrical beauty.

The Kashmiri ballads may roughly be classified into four kinds, according to their source, content and even style and diction:

1. Many Kashmiri ballads are connected with religious or semi-mystic themes. Epic and Puranic episodes like Sudama Chirata, Radha Swayamvara, Siva-Lagan were selected by the ancient wandering minstrels of Kashmir and passed down through the ages by word of mouth. Pandit Parmanand (1791-1885), though known primarily for his devotional songs, has also composed ballads on these episodes drawn from the loves of Lord Krishna and other Hindu gods. The ballads of this class, though composed in Kashmiri, contain many Sanskrit words here and there. Some ballads are even based on episodes from Rajtarangini of Kalhana. These are mellifluous and invested in an expression of ecstasy.

Famous also are narrative poems like Ramavataracharita, Krishnavataralila, Civapariviya. All these have been composed by Prakash Bhat in pure Kashmiri but in "Hindu dialect".

2. There are ballads of purely Kashmiri origin based on Kashmiri folk-tales like *Himal Nagraye*, *Bombur* and *Lolre*, *Zora Khotan* and *Hayaband* and *Shabrang*, etc. The stories of *Kathasaritsagar* by Somadeva, who flourished about 1070 A.D. also have inspired some ballads.

A collection of tales in prose and ballad form known as Hatim's Tales were recited by one Hatim, an oilman by profession.

Ramzan Bhat's ballad of Akanandun is a marvellous narrative poem. According to the historian Sufi, "The poem is a ballad. Its style is simple, vigorous and forceful". Akbar Lone, a less known poet, also composed a fascinating ballad Z'iny Mazoor (The woodcutter) on a story of his own imagination; it is full of Persian words.

Several ballads are based on incidents centering on real persons, for example, ballads which relate the exploits of a kind-hearted and a

generous thief, Madhiv Bishta. One of the ballads concerning him begins with:

"The master and the mistress are going up and down (during the wedding)
Sona, you continue with your job".

It is very popular. In the latter quarter of the 18th century a kind of ballad called Rang consisted of a stanza of four lines and each song consisted of such seven stanzas. The adept in this kind of poetry was Qazim Ganai. In these the poet used to sing the romantic episodes of some ancient lovers.

3. There are cherished ballads based on Persian themes and history. These include Yusuf and Zulaikha and Laila Majnu which deeply moved the ancient folk-lorist. The Arabic story of Hatim Tai has also been turned into a song. These forms, though composed by village folk in their native Kashmiri, are modelled on Persian poetry. In fact, the Kashmiri ballad singers have strung Persian pearls on Kashmiri threads. They are composed in the couplet form for employing Persian Bahar-i-hazaj. The poets have borrowed words, epithets and phrases of the Persian language.

By about the end of the 18th century the literature of Kashmiri begins and Kashmiri poets like Moh'd Gami (d 1885) had written ballads with a sweet flavour of Persian romance, as Sheikh Saman, Sheikh Mansoor Pahil Nama and Yak Haqayat. Abdul Wahab Pare (1845-1914) has written poems mostly permeated with pessimism. Notable examples are Sahalbnama, narrating the colossal devastation caused by flood and Be'boojnama describing the chaotic condition of the time. Pir Azis Ullah Haqani (1954-1928) also wrote some long narrative poems which may not strictly and technically be called ballads proper.

4. Though there is a long tradition of comic and satiric ballads, going back to the times of Sanskrit poet Kshmendra of the 11th and 12th centuries, but it is in the 19th century that we find them most in vogue. These comic ballads describe the sad plight of the people under the onslaught of the natural calamities like flood, famine and cruelties of the officials. These ballads known as shahar-aashob are written in masnavi style couplets.

A unique Laddi Shah humorous ballad brings out the wit and worldly wisdom of Kashmiri people. Among the modern satirical ballads Lakshman Razdan's *Lala Lachman* is the most famous. It has a peculiar lure and a strange tone.

Laddi Shah is sung by the minstrels in one single tune accompanied by the music created by stirring the iron rings strung on an iron rod. The other kinds of ballads acquire a unique charm when sung in chorus to the accompaniment of rabab, or sarangi, tumbaknari (a kind of dholiki) and not (an earthenware vessel).

In the Kashmiri ballads accompanying dances "embody the heritage of Kashmir's dynamic past and the spirit of beauty vibrating through its bountiful nature".

Kashmir: The Abode of Wisdom

"From the beginning of time men have sought the solution to a three-faced mystery: the mystery of origin, the mystery of present being and the mystery of destiny. Usually their search has been directed outwards amongst the data of sense experience; backwards into the apparent certainty of the accomplished, forwards to the speculation into the indeterminate future".

Thus says the author of the book Man, the Measure of All Things, Shri Krishna Prem. From time to time in every country some wise men have tried to penetrate this "mysterious tremendous". They have in their own way made a quest for truth and expressed it, often in poetry and art. They are the apostles of true wisdom.

Philosophical wisdom and religion have their different fields in the Occident but not in the Orient. Here wise men have not wasted their breath in logically proving the existence of the Supreme Reality. They have tried, in the words of L.P. Jacks, "to raise the faculty of insight to the requisite pitch for penetrating the disguising of deity".

Like Jammu, Kashmir, too, has been fortunate in having been the abode of wisdom. Shaivism of Kashmir is a distinct philosophy and wisdom in its own right, which originated and flourished in Kashmir. The Celestial Valley also cradled in its arms a unique type of Hindu mysticism and Muslim Sufism.

KASHMIRI SHAIVISM

It is not possible to penetrate the thick veil of obscurity that hangs round the beginnings of Kashmiri Shaivism. Nevertheless, it traces its origin to the *Shiva-Sutra*, which is ascribed to Lord Shiva himself. The Sutras were revealed to Vasugupta, who lived between 8th and the 9th

century A.D. Among his followers were Kallata, Somananda and Abhinavgupta, who, too, have written their treaties on Shaivism.

According to the philosophy of Kashmiri Shaivism the Ultimate Reality is Shiv or Shambu. He is the Self of all beings, moving and non-moving. He is immanent, that is permanently pervading the universe, inherent in it but, at the same time, transcendental, that is surpassing the universe. Shiva is the Reality beyond which there is nothing. He is Pure Consciousness (Chaitanya), Absolute Experience (Para-samarit) and the Supreme Lord (Paramesvara), from whom the world comes into being as the reflection. Abhinavgupta in Paramarthsara has illustrated it thus: "As syrup, molasses, jaggery, sugar-balls, candy, etc. are all like juice of the sugar-cane, so the diverse conditions are all of Shambu, the Super Self". Abhinavgupta again says: "As in the orb of a mirror pictures such as those of a town or a village shine which are inseparable from it and yet are distinct from one another and from it, so from the perfectly pure vision of the Supreme-Bhairava, this universe void of distinction appears distinct from that vision".

The universe is thus but the self-manifestation of Shiva by his own free will and is ingrained in it. The immanent aspect of Shiva is called Shakti, which is, it may be noted, not an independent entity, but his creative energy. It is five-fold: (i) Chit-Shakti, the power of intelligence or self-luminosity (ii) Ananda Shakti, the power of independence which is bliss (iii) Iccha-Shakti, the volition which makes Purma Shiva feel supremely able and irresistible will so that he can do or create something (iv) Jnana-Shakti, the power of knowledge by which Shiva brings all objects in conscious relations with himself and with one another (v) Kriya-Shakti, the power of action by which he can assume all kinds of forms.

Man's bondage is due to the ignorance (ajnana) of the Reality. The individual soul though identical with the Supreme suffers in this world, because it has forgotten its real nature and considers itself to be finite; though independent, it identifies itself with the body. The way to the liberation from bondage lies in the soul's recognition of its identity with the Ultimate Reality. Though the individual soul is but the universal soul but it must recognise it. The soul which recognises its oneness with Shiva or God, enjoys pure bliss. This is possible through yogic meditation. Madhavacharya makes it clear by saying that a love-lorn lady is very eager to meet her lover. But the presence of her lover can give her no gratification unless she recognises him to be her lover and possessing the virtues she heard of. He says, "In like manner, though the personal self is

manifested as identical with the Universal Soul, its manifestation effects no complete satisfaction so long as there is no recognition of those attributes (of *Param Shiva*); but as soon as it is taught by a spiritual director to recognise in itself the perfection of Mahesvara, his omniscience, omnipotence and other attributes, it attains the whole phenomena of being".

Mokasa, therefore, consists of in returning to the purity of consciousness. Abhinavgupta says, "When thus the imagination of quality has vanished, and he (the released soul) has surmounted the Maya, he is merged in Brahman, as water in water, as milk in milk". It is through contemplation that one can realise it.

KASHMIRI MYSTICISM

Mysticism in Kashmir is unique. There are Hindu mystics whose principles and methods resemble or are identical with Muslim saints and darveshes. There are also Muslim Rishis or Sufis who have been influenced by Kashmiri Shaivism and Hindu thought. But both the sects believe that there is an "organic process which involves the perfect consummation of the love of God, the achievement here and now of the immortal heritage of man...or it is the art of establishing his conscious relation with the Absolute".

The known Hindu mystics are Lal Ded, Rupa Bhavani, Parmanand, Lakshman Joo and Krishna Razdan, etc.. Lal Ded is eminent among them all. The Muslims call her Lalla Arifa and say that she became a Muslim mystic. Undoubtedly she attacked idol worship and other practices of the Brahmans. She was born in the middle of 14th century, when Sultan Alaud-Din, who ascended the throne in 1347 A.D., ruled over Kashmir, Lalla has expressed her thoughts in verse and her mysticism is based on Kashmiri monistic Shaivism. In many of her verses she speaks of her yogic sadhana and discipline of breath. Parmanand after about five centuries, adores her thus:

"Lallaeshwari, unique in her practice of the Yoga of Dvaadashaanta Mandala,

Realising anaahaata, naada binds Om Attained the Supreme Bliss of Ananda".

The central principle of Hindu mysticism is love, so it is of Lal Ded and others. They all understand it "as the ultimate expression of the self's most vital tendencies, not as the superficial affection or emotion". It is, in

fact, "a total dedication of the will, the deep seated desire and tendency of the soul towards its Source".

Parmanand, another great Hindu mystic, also believed in this principle. He belongs to what has been termed "Lila-group" of Hindu mystics and has composed songs in praise of the Lila, that is, play of personal God, mainly Krishna and Shival. His poems and those of his followers are devotional in nature and saturated with mysticism. "The Universe exists; it is real and is good. Indeed all creation is an overflowing of God's joy, a Lila, a Shiva's Dance". They do not believe in asceticism or renunciation. They don't care for outward formality and lay stress on inward experience. They believe in enjoyment rather than renunciation in the tradition of Kashmiri Shaivism:

"Rass is when Love's expanse broadens into an ocean;

Rass is an equipoise mid sour and sweet;

Rass is where there is no trace of sin.

Our dance is devotion, yoga or jnana.

Our dance is samadhi in "wakeful activity".

Parmanand has very clearly expressed the aim and method of Hindu mysticism in the following verse:

"To seek unity with God is to venture forth And hazard all, to experience self within..."

and he goes on to say:

"And shut it (mind) in, and turn its gaze inwards, Commune with the Self within, the subtle All-composing Chit which inhabits all that is, And in which all things live and move"

KASHMIRI SUFISM

Sufism came to Kashmir from Iran and it got greatly influenced by Hindu thought. The Reality, according to the Sufis, is one and Allah is the Supreme Truth and all else is illusion and transitory. A Sufi says:

"Be not entrapped by the existence The Universe is but a fib of fancy".

Among the famous Sufis are Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, popularly known as Nund Rishi, Shah Gafoor, Shah Qalandar, Naima Sahib, Shams Faqir and Socha Kral, etc. They all believe that God is present everywhere. His light is present in every particle. A man must have the eye to observe it. Nund Rishi says:

"How can the kite hunt the hawk?
How can the barren woman feel the ardour of mother's love?
How can the faggot, like the candle, flash into a flame?
How can the fly feel the martyrdom of the moth?"

"I am He" is the main idea of Kashmiri Sufism. Man is just the manifestation of that High Reality, i.e., God. Thus man's destination is the same source of whom he is the manifestation.

There are, according to Sheikh Attar, six stages in this path: (1) Amar, i.e. renunciation (2) Ishq, love of God (3) in the third stage the seeker kills all kinds of desires and temptations. He leaves even sleep. (4) In the fourth stage the man delves deep into the truth and meditates on the virtues of God. He tries to know God perfectly. He sees Him in every sight. (5) Then in the fifth stage he acquires excellence and he is in a state of ecstasy and his eyes get fixed on a single point. (6) In the last stage he reaches his destination and gets the real purpose of being face to face with Reality. Thus Kashmiri Sufis say Annaual-Haq, (1 am the Truth) and Vajood ul makhlook ain ul Khaliq that means, all the objects of the world are all but the manifestation of one Allah. Rehman Dar, the great Sufi sings:

"Blossomed has the land of the Divine; Shines like the sun All the nature has brightened With the splendour of His Grace."

Again, Naima Saib, another Sufi says:

"Drop emerges from drop All is but a vast sea. Himself the sea, Himself the moon Himself the shining flame".

There are the ideas of a Hindu mystic as well. In Kashmir we find that both the Hindus and the Muslims go with reverence to the shrines of Lal Ded, Nund Rishi, Dastgeer Sahib and Meisha Saib, etc.

51

Laleshwari (Lal Ded): The Great Mystic Saint (1335-87)

The Valley of Kashmir, in spite of being walled by the high mountains, received waves after waves of various Asiatic cultures, which came from different directions and formed a happy amalgam in this land of beauty and plenty. First came the early Aryans from India and later Kushans, the Indo-Scythians, the Mongols and then Muslim Turks from Central Asia and China.

But in the fourteenth century there was a thorough stirring and cataclysmic change in the political, social and religious aspects of Kashmir. Politically Kashmir came under the rule of the Muslim upstarts. When Shah Mir deposed Kota Rani (1338-39), the widow queen of Udyamadeva (1323-1338), the Muslim rule established its firm root in Kashmir. Then came the missionaries led by Mir Sayyid Ali of Hamdan, who found the Valley fertile for spreading the message of Islam. But there had also risen a sect of Muslim saints who were the sons of the soil and who were strongly influenced by the local tradition and found the famous Muslim order of Rishis or Babas. The founder of this order was Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Vali, popularly called Nund Rishi at Tsrar-i-Shrief (1376-1838).

Earlier in this socio-political milieu appeared Laleshwari or Lal Ded (mother Lal) whom the Muslims call Lala Arifa. She was born in the middle of the 14th century when Sultan Alau-ud-Din became the third Muslim king of Kashmir. We are not sure of her date of birth. Various dates are given by the various people but according to Prof. J.L. Kaul, it was 1335. It is believed that she was born of a well-to-do Kashmiri Brahman family at Pandrethan, a small village at a distance of four miles from Srinagar. At an early age she got her religious education from her family priest Shri Sidha Mol (respected Sidh). As her verses reveal she

was well-versed in Yoga philosophy and Shaivism. It is said that she even excelled her Guru in religious knowledge:

"Gai Tsatta guras khasithay Tyuth vara ditam Diva". (The disciple excelled the Guru May I be granted the same boon!)

She was, as the custom then prevailed, married at the age of fourteen to a Kashmiri Pandit who lived at Pampore at a distance of eight miles from Srinagar. She was treated cruelly by her mother-in-law who practically starved her by placing a lumpy stone on the platter and thinly covering it with rice. There is a legend that one morning a few women accosted her and told her about the feast of grahashanti, which was to be held that day in her house. "You will have wonderful dishes to eat today. Do invite us also". They said to her and Lalla replied:

"Ho'nd maarrtyan ya kath Lalli nalavath tsali'nas zanh". (They may kill a big lamb or a small one Lalla will have the large pebble on her plate)

Her husband, too, upbraided and badly treated her. She looked around and saw herself in a quagmire of misery. It was a time when human suffering evoked no tears. She became restless and something screamed out in her. "Where is release from human misery?" She renounced the world and set out in quest of the Truth. She plunged into torturous asceticism but all in vain. She says:

"Passionate, with longing in mine eyes, Searching wide, and seeking nights and days, Lo! I'beheld the Truthful One, the wise, Here in mine own House to fill my gaze".

The three mystic saints of Kashmir, Sheikh Noor-u-Din, Pandit Parmanand and Shams Faqir have sung praises of her. All the three eulogise her spiritual attainments. Sheikh Noor-u-Din says:

"The Lalla of Padamanpur
Who had drunk nectar
She is the Avtar and Yogini
O God, bestow the same spiritual power) on me".

Pandit Parmanand considered her a perfect Shaiva Yogini. He writes:

"Unique in her yoga of dvadashanta mandala Realising anhata, nada, bindu and Om Laleshwari attained the Supreme Anand. Lalla merged her prana in the Transcendent void And while ostensibly she went to bathe at the shrine At Shurahyar ghat, with a leap and bound She jumped across this world to where There is none but God.

Lal Ded's sayings were written for the first time in 1914 by Pt. Makand Ram Shastri from the oral speech of Dharmdas Darvesh of Handwara. He passed them on to Sir George A. Grierson who published as *Vakyani* in 1920. In 1924 Sir Richard Temple published "The Word of Lall—the Prophetess", rendering these sayings into English. He also explained her philosophy. Anand Kaul Bamzai wrote "Lalla Yogeshwari: Her Life and Sayings", adding 75 more *vakhs* (sayings) to the one of Grierson. Then Prof. Jia Lal Kaul and Prof. B.N. Parimu also wrote on Laleshwari.

Like the Buddha Lal Ded found the Supreme Light in her own soul. She realised that the Supreme Self (God) and her own soul were one. One can trace out the ascent of her own self to the Supreme Self from her own verses. The following verses translated by Sir Richard Temple make it clear:

"So my lamp of knowledge blazed afar
Fanned by slow breath from the threat of me

They, my bright soul to my self revealed Winnowed I abroad my inner light

And with darkness all around me sealed

Did I garner Truth and hold Him tight.

Keep a little raiment for the cold

And a little food for stomach's sake:

Pickings for the crows thy body hold,

But thy mind a house of knowledge make.

Slay first the thieves—desire, lust and pride;

Learn thou then slave of all.

Robbers only for a while abide;

Ever liveth the devoted call.

All a man's gain here is nothing worth,

Save when his service shall be his sword;

And from the fire is the sun of birth;

Gain thou then the knowledge of the Lord

Whatever thing I do of toil,

Burdens of completion on me lie;

Yet unto another falls the spoil

And gains he the fruit thereof, not I.

Yet if I toil with no thought of self,

All my works before the self I lay;

Setting faith and duty before help,

Well for me shall be the onward way.

"Think not on the things that are without;

Fix upon thy inner self thy thought:

So shalt thou be freed from let or doubt:

Precepts those that my Preceptor taught.

Dance then, Lalla, clothed but by the air;

Sing, thou, Lalla, clad but in the sky.

Air and sky: what garment is more fair?

"Cloth", said custom. Doth that sanctify?"

There are seven pillars of her teachings like the seven colours of the rainbow. These are:

1. She taught that there was no need to go to a temple or mosque. Man's own heart is a temple where dwells the Supreme Lord. She says:

"I worked and worked at the bellows-pipe Till the light flared and I saw the true self Till the light shown within and spread without".

2. She was absolutely against idol-worship and says:

"Idol is of stone, temple is stone;

Above temple and below idol (are one)

Which of them will thou worship,

O foolish Pandit?

Cause thou the union of mind and soul".

Or again:

"Every moment
I taught Omkar to my mind
I was myself reading
And myself hearing
From So'ham (I am He)
I cut of aham (I am)
Then did I, Lalla

Reach the place of illumination".

3. She believed in the omnipresence of God. She sings:

"I saw and found I am in everything,

I saw God effulgent in everything.

After hearing and pausing, see Siva,

The House is His alone; Who am I, Lalla".

- 4. She was against greed, lust and pride.
- 5. She lay importance on purity, morality and equanimity. "Self-denial, purity of life are the keynote of her sayings. She rejected the established religious dogmas and rituals". Prof. Kaul has beautifully translated her *vakh* in this connection:

"When the oft-repeated discipline, the wide expanse of the Manifested universe is lifted to the Void; When the saguana becomes merged in the akasha with a Splash, like water falling into water; When even the ethereal Void is dissolved And nothing remains but the Weal-Then, O Bhatta, learn that this is the true doctrine for you".

- 6. She had catholicity of outlook and respected all the religions alike.
- 7. One should not mind the criticism of others or the admiration of others. One must concentrate on Him with stoic calm. She says:

"Let them jeer or cheer me;

Let anybody say what he likes;

Let good persons worship me with flowers;

What can any one of them gain, I being pure?

If the world talks ill of me,

My heart shall harbour no ill-will;

If I am a true worshipper of God,

Can ashes leave a stain on a mirror?"

Prof. J.L. Kaul says: "Thus did Lal Ded enrich the thought and literature of Kashmir and, what is significant, leave behind a forceful message of tolerance and understanding and indeed, a possible synthesis of cultures for the land of her birth. She has been not only the most famous poet-saint of Kashmir but the maker of Kashmiri poetry..."

52

Sheikh Nur-Ud-Din Wali (Nund Rishi): The Patron-Saint of Kashmir

"Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali, Alamdari-Kashmir (the Standard Bearer of Kashmir), commonly known as Nund Rishi, is considered as the living symbol of Kashmir and the guiding light of its people. As a saint, revolutionary, patriot and poet he has exerted enormous influence on the beliefs and mental thinking of the people of the Happy Valley. His thoughts have moulded the minds of generations for more than five centuries, establishing a culture of utmost religious toleration with an abiding faith in the omnipresence of God".

-G.N. Gauhar

The Valley of Kashmir was suffering from political, social and economical travails when highly exalted groups of people, called Rishis (saints), emerged and by their golden words and kind actions gave comfort to the people and mitigated their miseries. These saints lived among the common people and shared their suffering. Abul Fazal has showered encomiums on these high souls:

"The most respectable people of Kashmir are the Rishis who, although they do not suffer themselves to be fettered by traditions, are doubtless true worshippers of God. They revile not any other sect and ask nothing of anyone; they plant the roads with fruit trees to furnish the travellers with refreshments; they abstain from flesh and have no intercourse with the other sex. There are two thousand of these Rishis in Kashmir".

Foremost among them was Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, the patron-saint of Kashmir. Revered alike by the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir the Sheikh was born at Kaimuh, a village two miles to the west of the town of Bijbehara, situated at a distance of twenty-six miles from Srinagar on the Jammu and Srinagar highway. His ancestors belonged to a noble

family of Kishtwar in the Jammu province and had migrated to the Valley. His father, named Salar Saz, came into contact with a spiritual man, Yasman Rishi and became his disciple. He is said to have arranged his marriage with Sadra Maji. The child of their union was Nund Rishi.

In his very childhood Nund Rishi showed the signs of his inclination for seeking God and utter disinterestedness towards worldly matters. He was of a retiring disposition and did not take to formal education and remained unlettered throughout his life. He was apprenticed to many trades but showed little interest in them. Finally, he renounced the world and lived in a cave for twelve years, leading the life of an ascetic. When his mother visited him there he told her:

"The cave seems to me to be a celestial castle; The quilt seems to me a silken garment; I play with the rats as if they were Creatures of good omen to me: One year seems to me to be one single hour".

When he emerged out of the cave his fame of spirituality had already spread far and wide and people thronged to him and many became his disciples and followers. Among them was the great Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, the king of Kashmir who was his pall bearer when the Rishi died in 1439 A.D. and was buried at Tsar-e-Sharif. This place has become a centre of pilgrimage for Kashmiris of all religions and communities.

Nund Rishi, no doubt, was immensely influenced by the teachings of Laleshwari and composed songs in her glory describing "Lalla of Padmanpur who had drunk nectar" as an "Avtar and Yogini". He prays, "Oh God, bestow the same spiritual power on me!"

Although he could neither read nor write he spontaneously uttered verses, called 'Shruks' which are considered the gems of Kashmiri literature. They are concise and rhythmic and have stuck to the minds of the people. These have been collected in two volumes, called the *Rishi Nama* and *Nur Nama*.

His teachings are as follows:

1. He believed in good actions. He said that "as you sow, so shall you reap".

"In the courtyard is barking the dog; Listen brothers, what he says: "As one sowed, so did he reap; So Nund, sow, sow and sow". 2. He exhorted his followers to lead a disciplined life and shun lust, greed and worldly desires. He says:

"Like the knotted wood is desire

Unfit for making planks, beams or cradles;

Cut and felled it will be

Burnt into ashes".

3. He cautioned Kashmiris not to fall in the snares of vile men and false priests. He says:

"I saw a priest blowing out fire;

Beating a drum too;

Nice big turbans wear they

And go about in magnificent clothes

Wearing the priestly robes they eat muttons

And run away with cooking pots".

4. Man is influenced by his environment and so he advised that one must remain in the company of good and noble persons and shun the company of the wicked. Thus he says:

"Spend thy days with the good

The shah walga (one of the best kind of rice)

Will get pounded.

Never go about with the wicked

Do not walk close to pots covered with soot

Else thou shalt get soiled".

5. Nund Rishi disliked to carry the rites of religion. On the other hand, he emphatically said:

"If thou listeneth to truth,

Subdue the four senses.

If you only care for your body,

It will be futile.

Thou shall make union with Siva

Then shall your prayer bear fruit".

He thought that one must pray to God with full concentration. It avails not when the mind goes wool gathering while praying. One must look inside and control one's breath:

"Do not go to Sheikh and priest and Mullah;

Do not feed the cattle on arkhor (leaves)

Do not shut yourself in mosque and forests

Enter thy own body with breath controlled in communion with God".

6. We should trust in God and it is "destiny that shapes our ends". He says:

"One can run away a pole from a serpent
One can run away a league from the lion
One can keep oneself off the creditor for a year
But none can escape Fate for a twinkling of the eye".

Suffering and misery, according to him are, blessings in disguise, for they bring men nearer to God realisation.

"Shield not thyself against His arrows
Turn not thy face away from His sword
Consider adversity as sweet as sugar
Therein lies thy honour in this world and the next".

7. He was a firm believer in the brotherhood of man and in Hindu and Muslim unity:

No wonder, born of the same mother and father,

We bear no ill-will to each other.

Should our love bind us all alike, Hindu and Mussalman

Then surely God is pleased with us.

8. He regards the joys and distresses of life as passing. We should look at them with stoic calm and indifference:

"The body uncovered and exposed to the cold river winds blowing Thin porridge and half-boiled vegetable to eat—there was a day, O Nasaro!

One's wife by the side and a warm blanket for cover,

A sumptuous meal with spicy fish to eat—there was a day, O Nasaro!"

9. "A pious man will seek Him.

The oriole seeks a flower garden;

The owl seeks out a deserted spot

The she-jackal searches dreary wastes;

The donkey runs after dung and dirt".

10. About 'Love' Nund Rishi says:

"Love is death of an only son to a mother—can she have any sleep?

Love is venomous stings of a bosomful swarm of wasps—

Can the sufferer have any rest?

Thus we see that his *shruks*, according to Prof. J.L. Kaul, "are mostly didactic in content and exhortative in tone, in most of which he speaks of the transitoriness of life and its pleasures, and exhorts people to cultivate

self-discipline and piety. They have undoubtedly enriched the language with wise and pithy sayings that have become proverbial".

We will end this composition with the following verse:

"What use are walnuts to a toothless man or a bow and arrow to the blind? Can gold ornaments add lustre to a dog or a lovely maiden to the blind?"

Habba Khatoon: The Nightingale of Kashmir

After the death of Lal Ded, the great spiritual poetess of Kashmir, the Muse in Kashmir fell in deep sleep for about two hundred years and with the birth of Habba Khatoon it woke up again fluttering and singing, not the mystical experiences or moral exhortations, but the lilting tunes of true romance. In Kashmir, even now, the travellers hum Habba Khatoon's verses on the highway and her songs are sung by men roving upon rivers, by ladies at their looms and farmers in the fields.

HER LIFE

Kashmiri poetry, unfortunately, existed largely in oral traditions upto 1930. Therefore, the lives of the poets are mostly wrapped in mystery. So is the case with Habba Khatoon. Nevertheless, the account of her life is based on the firm bed-rock of tradition and legend, illustrated by a few historical flashes of men like Birbal Kachru, Hassan Kohiyami and Moh'd Din Foq. Much of it we know from old men and women living in the villages of Kashmir.

The story of her life, like her poetry, is romantic, pitiful and sad. Her life is marked by misfortunes that culminated in a tragedy. At a distance of eight miles from Srinagar, the summer capital of Kashmir, is situated the village of Pampore and two miles from it, in the south-east, is a small and narrow valley surrounded by a plateau of saffron fields and here in this valley is a small picturesque village, known as Chandhara. Far away from here are seen the magnificent mountains and the effect of the whole scenery is alluring and inspiring. In this hamlet lived a well-to-do farmer, who supplemented his income by doing some work of embroidery. His name was Abdul Rathar. Although there are many theories, contradictory enough, held by people about the place of birth and early life of Habba Khatoon, but it is generally believed and accepted that she, earlier called

Zoon (which means Moon), was born in the house of this farmer in this very village. She was sent to a Mulla's school (maktab), where she learnt the Holy Quran and a smattering of Persian. The girl grew up into a highly intelligent, sweet-throated and beautiful damsel. It is said that people from far and near came to see her. Her father, as was wont then, hurriedly married her to a peasant boy, Aziz Rathar who was dull and illiterate.

Her mother-in-law ill-treated and nagged her and her husband could not appreciate her gift of song and poetry. He got weary of her and hated her, for he did not find her helpful in the fields and attending properly to the household drudgery. She felt unhappy and sunk into ennui and found escape from the onslaughts of her mother-in-law's and husband's tempers in her songs. Out of this suffering grew up a wistful longing and a pathetic strain which are predominantly present in all her poetry. Once, when utterly dejected, she went to Khawaja Masud, a Dervesh with spiritual powers and related to him the tale of her woe and distress. He is said to have told her that her days of torture would soon end and she would become the queen of Kashmir. He changed her name, Zoon and called her Habba Khatoon by which she is known today.

Habba Khatoon used to go to collect cow dung, dandelions and edibles with other village belles. On these occasions she used to lighten her own heart and regale her companions by singing verses composed by her on the spur of the moment.

It was a romantic evening and the moon had risen on the clear blue sky, bathing with its silver light, the saffron fields. Habba Khatoon, drunk with the wine of her youth, was roaming about all alone and singing by herself a melancholic strain. She reached a bank and stooped down to dig some dandelion for her supper. When, after a while, she raised her head and stood up, she saw a young man standing motionless and quietly listening to her song. The light of the moon fell upon her soft hair and turned its brownness into gold; it flickered about her tall, straight form. On her downcast face the colour came and went in swift and soft flushes. The young man spoke no word but looked with a half-questioning glance at her. There was a strange pleading in his eyes and he restlessly shifted from one foot to the other. Then he recovered himself and spoke to her in Kashmiri verse, which may be translated as under:

"The Beauty has come out in gay attire I fear the stormy rushings of the rain

A softness came about her grey eyes and a little smile hovered over the face now uplifted to him. She, too, replied in a verse: "Take heart, O youth, banish all fear and fright For soon the sun will rend the cloak of night".

The young man, who was no other than Yusouf Shah, the heir apparent of Kashmir, felt delighted and encouraged. He continued:

"Over the hills and across the valleys I wandered In quest of the darling of my heart and home When lo! before me I find the precious pearl".

Now soft blushes coloured her cheeks and she coyly murmured:

"When God is gracious; when God is kind, What man truly desires he'll surely find".

The prince then proudly said:

"When the diver dives into the deep, Come up, he must with lustrous pearls".

In all loveliness she looked at him and softly spoke:

"Nay, hard he has to toil deep down in the main, Then and then alone some gift he may gain".

The conversation in verse continued till she knew that the young man was no other than the heir apparent of Kashmir, Yusouf Shah Chak, who was returning from hunting and had lagged behind his companions on purpose, to enjoy the heavenly beauty of the bright and broad fields. The prince was simply enchanted with Habba Khatoon's beauty and intelligence. Soon after returning to his palace, he got her divorced by Aziz Rathar and brought her to live in his heart and harem. Yusouf Shah himself had a passion for song and music and there were many musicians and singers present at his court. Habba Khatoon learnt the art of classical singing from them and herself contributed musical compositions, particularly the Sufiana Kalaam and Rast-i-Kashmiri. But this joyful life of hers soon came to an end.

Yusouf Shah had ascended the throne of Kashmir in November 1579. At that time the Moghul King Akbar's army was engaged in subjugating and subduing other smaller kings of India. The Moghuls, in fact, had cast an evil eye on Kashmir since the time of Humayun, who had attacked Kashmir but had been repulsed. Similarly, Sher Shah Suri tried to conquer it but he too failed to fulfil his desire. Then in 1560 Akbar sent an army under the command of Mirza Qura Bahadur, but at Rajouri he met a crushing defeat at the hands of Kashmiri soldiers, commanded by Ghazi Khan. Then, again, after twenty-six years he sent, via Uri, an army

under the command of Raja Bhagwan Singh to annex Kashmir. But Kashmiris successfully resisted the onslaught of the Moghuls. When Bhagwan Dass saw no hope of victory, he persuaded Yusouf Shah to meet the Emperor Akbar, who, as they told him, would be happy to see him and conclude a treaty of peace and friendship with him. Yusouf Shah, who was a peace-loving king and did not like to shed human blood, accepted the suggestion much against the advice of his beautiful wife Habba Khatoon, who did her level best to dissuade him from undertaking this hazardous journey. But he did not agree and went to meet Akbar at Attock. He was arrested and later in 1587 he was released and granted a jagir at Bassok, Patna and after a three months' illness he died in utter dejection and helplessness and was buried there.

Habba Khatoon could not bear Yusouf Shah's separation and it completely unhinged her. She immediately left the royal palace, donned the clothes of a mendicant and renounced the world. She wandered like a ghost on the banks of the river Jhelum, the desolate saffron fields and the haunts of her youth. Then she made a small hermitage at Panda Chok on the banks of the river Jhelum. She poured forth her wailings in her songs. After twenty years she died in desperation and grief and was buried at Atha Wajan at a little distance from her cottage. This grave has recently been repaired by the Kashmir Government.

HER WORK

Habba Khatoon, as a queen, has not much significance. She is known and loved for her poems. It is acknowledged that she was one of the sweetest and the most spontaneous singers of Kashmiri language. She wrote lyrics "which can be regarded as great gems in Kashmiri literature and therein her genius exults". Her poems possess all the essential elements intense and vivid passion, exquisite verbal melody and spontaneity of utterance—that go to make a true lyric. They have such carelessness about them that they send a strange yet delightful thrill in us. She is the fore-runner of realism and romanticism in Kashmir.

She appeared on the scene when poets were expected to sing of heavenly love but she sang of human love. Up to her time Kashmiri poetry was only concerned about God and spirit. Its main theme was mysticism. She brought fresh air into it when she sang of worldly love. This love was the essential element of her nature. She does not treat love as "a transcendental passion and spirit nor is she engrossed in the universal, abstract and ideal love". She sings of her personal substantive love. She plays the part of a lover and her entire attitude is that of a devotee". In

some poems she wails for long waiting and in some she expresses the anguish of separation. Mostly she accuses her lover for being indifferent to her. These songs are pathetic and deeply moving, as the following English rendering of one of her Kashmiri poems will show:

"Who, my rival, has ravished you, That you have turned away from me! Do you not loving like to be? Oh, why do you thus despise me!

At midnight I open the doors for you, Ah! would you for a moment come to me? Forsaken I am, though one we be. Oh, why do you thus despise me!

My love, in the fire of your love I burn I but desire and dream of you; I shed tears of blood from my almond-eyes. Oh, why do you thus despise me!

Pining and melting I am like the snow in summer Though blooming blossom of jasmine I am; Yours the garden and you enjoy it.
Oh, why do you thus despise me!

I bathe and bridal dress I wear, I swear to welcome and greet But you spurn and turn away from me. Oh, why do you thus despise me!

Drop by drop I shed the tears; I, the miserable, pine and crave for you; Why forget the path that leads to me? Oh, why do you thus despise me!"

She is only obsessed with one idea and one theme, that is, her devotion and love for her lover and his disinterestedness and carelessness. "She lends herself to the intense feeling of the joylessness of life. Her own early failure in marriage and then her love-story proved a strong and significant factor in her psychic experience". Hence, in her poems "she enshrined her own hate and love and the influence of those powerful emotions was so great that unmindful of anything, she gave it unreserved expression in her poems". Even as queen she was haunted by the fear that Yusouf Shah may forsake her at any time, particularly when the rose of her youth would fade and fall. She had seen in his harem many competitive

maids. Hence, "only plaintive numbers flow" from her and these echo her own grief. Her poems are full of pain and sorrow, frustration and longing, desperation and disillusionment. The note of helplessness, found in her poems, heightens her beauty and stirs the tenderest chords of the human heart, as can be discerned from this English version of her original Kashmiri poem:

"You stole my heart and forsook me at last; Pray come, my lovely Love, oh, come! Come friend, let us to collecting cress, Mystery of fate none can unravel; Sly, senseless people slander and defame me. Pray come, my lovely Love, oh, come! Let us to picking and plucking mellow myrtles; He has hurt me with his love's hatchet; Then sent none to ask and enquire after. Pray come, my lovely Love, oh, come! Come friend, let us go and dig dandelions; People pull faces, mock and call me names; May they too suffer and sorrow like me! Pray come, my lovely Love, oh, come! Come friend, to the woods we hurry; People have poisoned his mind and ears; The simpleton so believed and blames me. Pray come, my lovely Love, oh, come! Come friend, to the woods we hurry; Leave off thy scorn and hate for me; I crave and long but for you; Life is short and fleeting, you see. Pray come, my lovely Love, oh, come!

But her constant preoccupation with her sordid life and poetry full of pain does not depress us, or she does not cynically cry. In her lyrics, full of despondency, we find an undercurrent of world-weariness and feel that the problem of suffering on the part of the women is universal. Again, she keeps her intense emotions under control and her simplicity, softness and music console us.

It is thought that no poems, barring those of Habba Khatoon and Arnimal, another poetess of Kashmir, which talk of a woman's passion or love from the feminine standpoint, are found in Kashmiri literature. Kashmiri ladies, therefore, find in her poems, "an eloquent exposition of the woman's point of view". Her desolate wails make them share her despair. Therefore, miserable women, downtrodden by callous men and troubled and nagged by their mothers-in-law feel consoled and their sorrowful feelings get purged after singing her verses in their lonely moments. Her individual, personal longing and desire is the desire of every Kashmiri woman. Thus she universalises her personal desire and interest. On reading her verses the individual woman (here the poetess herself) fades out and the type, a universal woman, comes to the foreground. Habba Khatoon, through her poems, symbolises lonely, suppressed womanhood.

Hassan, the historian, says that Yusouf Shah Chak, in the company of his beautiful wife, Habba Khatoon, enjoyed his days and nights in the picturesque beauty spots. They used to come down at night from their lighted palaces, situated on the bank of river Jhelum, sit together in a shallop and enjoy its skimming down the river, or they would rove in a light boat over the placid waters of the Dal Lake, enjoying the beauty of the lotus flowers. In fact, the joyful life of the couple had become proverbial in Kashmir. But in her poetry we don't find any portrayal or description of sensuous themes. "Nowhere we find the expression of the gaiety of her heart and her joyful life as a queen. Even though she had gone from the log cabin to the white house, yet absolutely no joie de vivre peeps through her songs. A veil of feminine reserve and piety (for she had received religious education and Kashmir was then steeped in mysticism) interposes between her heart and words".

Habba Khatoon seems to have fled from the socio-political world into an enchanted realm of her own, jealously closed against the intrusion of social and political affairs. There was feudalism prevailing in Kashmir as elsewhere in India and feudal system has its own vices. Feudal lords have always been interested in profit-hunting and exploiting the poor classes. In none of her poems we catch a glimpse of the miserable plight of the poor people, though she must have had its full experience in the early years of her life. We can't peep through her poems and know the political, economical and other conditions of the State.

In vain we try to find anything deep or spiritual in her poems. She has no doctrine or philosophy to offer except love, which is the consummation of human existence. She lacks the knowledge of the different phases of life. The inner life, of which we catch glimpse from her poems, is that of a proud, passionate yet pure soul which is steeped in an earthly love. It is possible that after her husband's separation she must have become

meditative and more mature, for before an order of her arrest could be served on her, she had left the palaces and become a wandering minstrel. From earthly love, it is possible she must have turned to spiritual love. She must have sung songs of great depth and devotion which seems to have been lost to posterity.

The beauty of her poems is rather a matter of feeling than analysis. Her poems can easily be sung or set to music. She uses ordinary but felicitious words. She did not work on her verses. No influences can be traced in her poems and she seems to weave rhythms and rhymes just by instinct. Rhythms, at least, came to her naturally. Her dealing only with a single theme and constantly conveying to us the deep anguish of her soul would have brought into her work a monotonous note, but it does not, because of the simplicity of language and the "music that gently on the spirit lies". We feel in it "the freshness of flowers, which once breathed, will haunt the memory of the reader" and so she well deserves a place on the heights of Parnasses.

54

Mahjoor: The Wordsworth of Kashmir

Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor stands with Abdul Ahad Azad as the initiator of a new epoch in Kashmiri poetry. Their poems brought a new and fresh spirit in poetry and inaugurated, what may be called, the modern and revolutionary period in it. When Tagore visited the blissful Valley of Kashmir in 1915, he felt ecstasy on hearing Mahjoor's poems, translated by Devendar Satyarthi. It is then that Tagore called Mahjoor "the Wordsworth of Kashmir" and became his life-long admirer.

The significant feature of the new poetry of the Romantic Revival in England was a fresh and keen interest in Nature; another was a new faith in Man and of both Wordsworth was the great prophet. "With him the poetry of Nature took a new range. He not only exulted on the beauteous forms of Nature but he passed beyond sensuous presentation. Nature was to Wordsworth a revelation, an avenue of perception of the unseen and infinite". He also exalted the humble and lowly.

In order to weigh Mahjoor himself in this Wordsworthian balance, we have, to consider "the wordsworth of Kashmir" in respect of the following three different aspects:

- 1. The Poetry of Nature
- 2. The Poetry of Man in Relation to Nature.
- 3. The Poetry of Man in Relation to Man.
- i. The Poetry of Nature

Mahjoor was born in Metragam, a picturesque village in Kashmir and after the usual schooling he joined the government service as a Patwari and refused to follow his father's priestly profession. Thus, his job took him to different villages of the Valley. In his boyhood itself were laid firm and deep the foundation of that close contact and thereby love with the world

of Nature which was to distinguish this "Priest of Nature". The joy, the wonder, the awe, the delight, the reverence he was to find in the external world, of which we read in his poems, had their source in the environment of his home-village. He was rocked in the golden cradle of Nature and later on also, he was swayed in Nature's joyful swing and to Nature he showered his love and devotion in song and poetry. He loved the different aspects of Nature's beauty among mountains, gardens and lakes. The power of the beautiful objects of Nature to refresh and give joy to the soul of man was never sung so intensely by any poet in Kashmir before Mahjoor. The most outstanding apparatus of Mahjoor as a poet is his natural genius and liveliest sensibility for beauties of sight and sound and he was intensely susceptible to scenic beauties. He feels that the whole of Kashmir Valley is a lovely garden and keenly observes its beauty. Thus, he sings:

"Says the bulbul to the flowers "Our land is a lovely garden".

Encircling are mountains white Like a wall of white marble Land of green emerald sight "Our land is a lovely garden!"

Spring, stream and rivulet, Fountain, rapid and waterfall With tunes of spring filled get "Our land is a lovely garden!"

Flowers are in full bloom In gardens, woods and glens Bulbul gazing get gay soon "Our land is a lovely garden!"

Another poem of Mahjoor, entitled Lokchar (Youth) illustrates his keen observation of Nature and he draws similes and comparisons from different phenomena of Nature:

"My youth like a lusty summer Tempting the world with alluring sight The flowers bloomed, ah me, but for a day! O my youth, my spring time!

Hot fire of pine-wood was my youth Blazing furiously, sparkling wildly Alas! the fire is out, cold lay the embers. O my youth, my spring time! Like a song-bird of the garden was my youth Sitting on a flowery bow, singing sweetly O Chief Hunter, do not take aim at it O my youth, my spring time!

(Original in Kashmiri)

Mahjoor reaps a richer harvest through the senses than Wordsworth; they invest his impressions of Nature with an extraordinary freshness and splendour and at the same time a shrewd, minute precision. In his poetry scenic beauty is blended with the feelings and poems are replete with subjective qualities.

Mahjoor's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which he feels the joy offered to us in Nature and in the simple primary affections and duties and with which his poetry shows us this joy and renders it so as to make us share it.

His poetry is also one of realism wherein we find love of Nature and simplicity blended with a social faith in the dignity of the humble lives—his rustic subjects of familiar Nature get exalted by his reflective sensibility. The *Greece Koor* (The Peasant Girl) can well be compared with the "Solitary Reaper" of Wordsworth. This poem of Mahjoor is one of the most beautiful of lyrics and may be considered as a perfect product of romantic art. It is conspicuous for its simple but pathetic theme, its unmistakable note of romance, its suggestiveness and haunting melody. Minimum words produce maximum effect, each stroke tells and holds up before the reader's mind a beautiful but pathetic page of village life in Kashmir. Mahjoor says about the peasant girl:

"Bouquet from Beauty's everlasting garden, Heemal of Heaven or Caucasion fairy— O peasant girl, what grace, what beauty!"

To this genre belong such poems as

Nundbaani Dilbare Mayani (My Beautiful Beloved), etc.

Mahjoor, unlike Wordsworth, does not know that Nature can educate a man nor does he think that "One impulse from the vernal wood;/ May teach you more/Of moral evil and of good than all the sages can". But he feels the power of Nature to refresh and elevate the soul of man. Mahjoor did not find spiritual bond with Nature and there is no trace of pantheism in his Nature-poetry. He, of course, earnestly and keenly observed the beauty realistically and like Wordsworth joined in the Universal rejoicing. He says:

"It is morn and here in the garden
My heart is drunk with joy
While youth is in full bloom
I must enjoy with zest the spring in the flower garden".

He has written many poems on various seasons of the year which are full of beauty.

ii. The Poetry of Man in Relation to Nature

The beauty of Nature, according to Mahjoor, is the result of the aesthetic expression of God. His activities and workings bring about beauty in the various objects of Nature. He says:

"You have filled buds with fragrance
Slowly untied their knots and made them bloom
The smiling stream you have set on slow wandering
In twilight you came out, attired in royal robes
In the darkness of night you slowly had a round of garden".

Like Wordsworth Mahjoor felt that Nature was alive and even the ordinary natural objects appeared to him imbued with an active conscious life. To Wordsworth "every flower enjoys the air that it breathes", and "Moon doth with delight look around". Mahjoor also addresses the moon which, he feels, is alive and conscious and, says:

"Why like me are you restless?

May be you too are aflame with love

And thus bear the wound on your breast

You Kartik Moon, hearken to my treaty

You Kartik Moon, hearken to my entreaty".

Or

"Tulips light the torches of love Bright will be heaven with that light With dewy wine the daffodils fill the cups The hill tops are bathed in sunlight".

Then he calls the Creator his Beloved or Friend on whom he showers all his love and has an intense longing for Him and so is in quest of Him. He says:

"I would be a Sanyasi_ and go out in quest of my Friend;

Wander in town and village and relentlessly pursue Him.

Or again

"What avail was my running so fast
Shades of evening fell ere I reached my goal
My zest and zeal were in vain; I lost my youth
Where has gone the Darling, the Consolation of my heart, o, where."

Here too he pines for just a glimpse of God:

"The autumn wind has bereft me of my senses
The golden oriole is killed, the flowers have withered
How has the blossoming summer or the spring slipped away
Oh! where has gone the Darling of my heart, oh, where!"

These devotional ideas about God and Nature were quite common among the common folk of Kashmir and Mahjoor was not a mystic or recluse who meditated on the subtle questions of life, its transitoriness, immortality and death. He had a zest for living and his eyes simply feasted on the variegated hues and mellifluous voices of Nature. While Wordsworth's poems, dealing with love, make the reader cold in comparison with Nature poems, those of Mahjoor are full of passion. He has expressed in loving, though often in a pensive manner, his passion for his sweet and beautiful beloved. He sings of his beloved:

"The moment you entered the garden
The jessamine kissed you
The narcissus got excited
Come and fill the cups
O stone-hearted and cruel one
You are bereft of all pity
I, the beauteous one am lost
Come and make love to me".

iii. The Poetry of Man in Relation to Man

Mahjoor's poetry, later on, was closely linked to his revolutionary faith. During his tours through the villages of Kashmir, he saw the miserable plight and painful torments of the people. These experiences created in him loathing for the yoke of the sceptre, the power of big landlords and petty bourgeois philistinism. The simplicity of style in the magnificent political poems, patriotic in the best sense, suggests the profound grief of a highly sensitive soul at the misery of his disaffected countrymen. In these poems, except of course, in his war poems, the poet does not make any attempt at literary declamation or rhapsody. The ideas come straight into the heart and seem to be fashioned into poetry by the

very intensity of feeling. With such force and impressiveness does the poet employ his language that it would not fail to move even the most callous heart. The language, though simple and subdued, is vigorous enough to stir human feelings to their depths. No false note of sentiment nor lapse in expression is anywhere noticeable in these poems, while the restrained pathos is positively noble and natural. Addressing the bulbul he says:

"Your nest on the flowery bough They will bring down and burn it So you shall have to leave your garden And you dare not refuse".

Then came the flight for freedom and he became a perfect revolutionary and gave a clarion-call to his countrymen:

"Power, wealth and kingship
Know that all these are yours
If you can rouse this habitat of flowers
Make the earth shake
Create wind and thunder
And raise a storm".

But Mahjoor was an artist whose social views were developed through perception of the world in the spectrum of beauty and humanitarianism. His heart broke when he found that freedom, in effect, had sapped the moral standards of the society and that the toiling and exploited masses were subjected to the tyranny of lawlessness and disorder. Thus he became sad and satirical and from his pen flowed the tear-drops of anguish and pain:

"There is mourning in men's houses
When rulers like bridegrooms
Are luxuriating in the royalty of Freedom
Nabir Sheikh knows the purport of the fact
When they kidnapped his wife
He went to complain while
She elsewhere gave birth to a child".

4. Mahjoor's poetry, like Wordsworth's had, simplicity of diction, softness, beauty and form. He discarded the ornate Persian influence and threw away the old forms like *pad* and *ravaani nazam*. He did not make use of stale imagery and decadent epithets and idioms. But while much of Wordsworth is banal and puerile, each line of Mahjoor is a pearl cast in a thread of magnificent poetry. At first, Mahjoor unreasonably, thought to

be just an ordinary rustic rhymer, soon got recognition as a great poet noteworthy for his sweet style, wonderful mastery of language, so simple and soft, and the exquisite music of his verse. He may also be considered as a thorough representative poet of an age seething with social and political turmoil.

Rasa Javidani:

The Great Poet of the Small Green Valley

Bhaderwah, well, when it is a lovely weather, warm and bright during the day, it seems to penetrate into your body, by your eyes when you look and by your mouth when you breathe. In the evenings the breezes lash the hilly slopes with their short and fragrant waves, and the town of Bhaderwah, in the fold of the green valley which slopes down to a river, lies apparelled in a magic green colour and Nature is loaded with love. Men and women also feel the enormous palpitation of love and life.

At the apex of the hill is a box-like small house which overlooks this enoch arden. Here lived and worked and was inspired the great poet Abdul Qudoos Rasa Javidani.

HIS LIFE

Rasa Javidani was an eminent poet who wrote both in Urdu and Kashmiri. He was born in 1901 and died in 1979. Rasa belonged to a Muslim family which migrated from village Kadipore in Anantnag tehsil, Kashmir to Bhaderwah, situated at a distance of 200 km. from Jammu. His father Khawaja Munwar was a wealthy trader and scholar who greatly influenced him.

He was admitted in a local school and also two tutors were selected to teach him Persian, Arabic, Urdu and English at home. He passed his Middle examination but could not pursue his studies, for there was no High School at that time in Bhaderwah. But he privately passed the examination of Munshi Alim and Munshi Fazil. He married in 1912 at the age of eleven years. The great sorrow of his life was his separation from his son, Khairat Ibne Rasa, who went to Pakistan by about 1948 and settled down there and rose to be the Vice-Chancellor of the West Punjab University.

Rasa, early in life, followed the trade of his father, which was quite flourishing but in 1928 there was a great cloud burst and the whole town

was inundated with water and the destruction wrought by it caused great damage to his property and business. It broke his heart but brought out the poet in him and he wrote a poignant description of this catastrophe in his long poem Toofan (The Storm). Later on his five shops were gutted by fire. Then he became a forest contractor but his heart was not in this work and he suffered a great loss. He was, therefore, compelled to take up the job of a humble teacher of Urdu and Persian, which he continued to do till his retirement.

THE INFLUENCES

Two men left an indelible mark on his thought and life. In his early childhood a Darvesh, named Nawab-ul-Din, came from Gurdaspur to Bhaderwah whose lectures on spiritualism influenced him. The other was his teacher Ahmad Shah Rafiqi, who inspired him by his knowledge. He studied deeply the poetry of Dag, Zok, Ghalib, Momin and Romi, etc. In fact Ghalib's reflection is clearly found in his poetry. In Kashmiri he owes his debt to Rasul Mir who became a sort of mental commissar to him. He says:

"Ahead walked Rasul Mir with Love's motions Lo behold! crazy Rasa followed him as a shadow".

His publications: The following are his important publications:

- 1. Toofan (long Urdu poem) published in 1928.
- 2. Lalai Sehra (Urdu) published in 1945.
- 3. Tofah Kashmir (collection of Kashmiri poems) published in 1945.
- 4. Nairangi Ghazal: (collection of Kashmiri poems) published in 1961.
 - 5. Nazimi Surya (Urdu poems) with a foreword by Mohi-u-Din Zor.

Besides his poems appeared in Rattan, Jammu; Ranbir, Jammu; Muikhazan, Lahore; Son Adab (1959-1963), Hamara Adab (1965).

English translation of his one poem is found in Kasheer (History of Kashmir) by Dr. Mohi-u-Din Sufi and in Prof. J.L. Kaul's Kashmiri Lyrics (1945) and two poems in Prof. T.N.Raina's An Anthology of Modern Kashmiri Verse (1972).

The poems of Rasa Javidani and critical essay on his poetry appeared in special Rasa Javidani Number of *Sheraza* (Kashmiri and Urdu), Srinagar issued by the Academy of Art, Culture and Languages on his death. These also contain some elegies written by eminent men. A write-

up by me on Rasa Javidani has also appeared in the *History of Indian Literature*, published by the Sahitya Academy, New Delhi.

URDU POETRY

Compared to his Kashmiri poetry not much efflorescence is found in his Urdu one, though he sent his poems to Pt. Brij Mohan Datatriya Kaifi and got instructions from him. He was in correspondence with Hafeez Jhalandari and Seemab Akbarabadi, who admired and encouraged him. But in Kashmiri poetry he flowered quickly.

His Urdu songs describe the beauty of Nature, its picturesque scenes. Some of them are replete with human emotions and passions. His famous poems like Saharai Phool, Bachpan ki yad, Kya Karun Sawan, Subhai-Zindgi, Bàráf Bàri, Khizan, Toofan, Bete Dinhave an element of universality and the thoughts, emotions, sights and scenes expressed therein are dear to every human being. His Urdu ghazals show intense imagination and in them his intellectual and emotional experiences are crystallized into simple yet sweet and passionate Urdu. In them love reigns supreme, for example, one may give here the translation of few of the verses:

"She came not near me
Yet I had a glimpse of her.
Thus she kindled the fire
Of love in my heart,
Which can never be extinguished;
It continues and consumes for ever".

Оľ

"I shall walk over the dust raised by your walk. I am in quest of a remedy of love's agony Let you be ever so faithless undaunted shall I Work to win your love".

KASHMIRI POETRY

In 1938 he started writing poems in Kashmiri. At the Ziarat (shrine) of Shah Asrar at Kishtwar, a song in Kashmiri in praise of the Divine came to his lips of its own accord. Then there was no going back. Among the formative influences in his work Rasul Mir stands prominent and it was from him that he caught the first notes of his style that grew richer and maturer and became his own. Rasa wrote only ghazals and short lyric poems.

Love is the quintessence of his Kashmiri poetry as well. Just as Keats feels Beauty is Truth, Rasa believes Love is Truth and is what one needs

to realise. He recognises only the holiness of the heart's affections. In the following ghazal he shows the power and the life-force of love. It is the English rendering of the original:

"Your love in my heart stayed Like a lotus in lake it blossomed Come my Love, my shining sun; Your light dispels the shadow of my sorrow.

Love alone brings splendour to the universe

And gives life to the whole earth;

Demolishes mountains and changes course of the waters;

What mortal is satisfied in the world?

Whose all the yearnings are satisfied?

Love blesses the work day world with glory and colour;

A master it is full of benevolence.

Wisdom caused Rasa to go astray But clasped Love and lost not his way".

Thus Rasa glorifies love with all his fervour and feels that true path lies in love. Rasa is fundamentally a romantic and predominantly talks of his physical, human and earthly love but there are spots in his poetry where he sings of spiritual love. He was a passionate lover and his poetry expresses every shade of personal feeling and every fleeting insight. In most of his poems the main interest is sensuous beauty. He sings in sensuous enthusiasm:

"Unweave thy plaits and loosen thy tresses Be pillowed on my wounded breast. In the tavern of love deep I drank When thy eyes as cups of wine moved round".

Then he recognises the power of beauty and is sometimes overwhelmed by it.

But when we contemplate his ghazals we find that there is a change of mood from one couplet to another and from the passionate physical love to the love of the Absolute. The element of reflection is found at many places. The following verses express not only the emotions which the beauty of his beloved arouses but also the thoughts of the Creator, He says:

"Often heart is charmed by your form and features Altogether the mind is perplexed to see such aspect.

This the copy of the Reality!

If this the beauty how about its Creator?"

Rasa loved Nature for its external loveliness and noted many varieties of natural beauty. It is said, and Rasa himself has confirmed, that in the idyllic surroundings of Bhaderwah he was under a strange spell of some ecstasy for days. Did he have any spiritual experiences? The following lines do show his belief in man's direct and unconditional relationship with God. Just as he surrendered his self to his beloved he surrendered himself to God.

He said, "What have you to offer?"

"My youth", he replied.

"And what next?"

I said, "My life".

"What do you desire?"

"Only your grace, here and hereafter".

"I beseeched, "O, raise up your veil!"

"Can you bear it", He asked.

I said, "Surely" (like Moses on Mount Sinai), and I heard.

"A vain boast!"

The working on an inner light is evident, but the youthfulness of heart will not allow the poet to entertain their exuberant fancies.

Rasa is baffled by the tragic mystery of the world and the time-old questions like when we came and wherefore we have to go. He feels that we are helpless before destiny about which we do not know anything. He writes pathetically:

"Why he departs, having born why he dies?

All this is not in man's grasp.

From the start he could care for the end;

At dawn he could know of the dusk;

Could he but read the Destiny's command;

All this is not in man's grasp".

In his poetry is found an element of apparent scepticism in the traditional dogmas and he is critical:

"May not the Merciful a merchant be named If Almighty grants heaven for virtuous work".

Again:

"Where is thy light not seen?

May it be mosque, may it be temple?"

He rises above the distinctions of religion and the cry of his heart is:

"If the mosque causes quarrel, the temple conflict Better to the tavern where the drunken drink Together to love".

The poetry of Rasa is not manufactured by cold calculation. It is produced almost involuntarily by him in a state of emotional tension. He himself was a good singer and he has used sweet and sonorous words, and his poems abound in his homely but startling phrases and imagery.

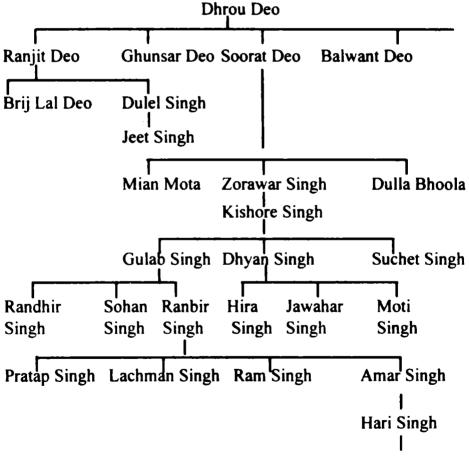
He had no interest in the socio-political upheaval of the state. He withdrew himself within and created a world of his own. Thus, like all Romantics, Rasa is a poet of escape; but the arts exist to provide an escape without which life would be less tolerable than it is.

Rasa Javidani was elegant and graceful. In manners he was gentle and suave. At the core Rasa Javidani was a man of the hills and mountains—simple, candid, patient, unselfish and devoted. Rasa was a dreamer. To him a young girl of Bhaderwah was a perfect type of a beautiful woman. Her simple beauty and the charm of angelic modesty and the imperceptible smile which constantly hovered about her lips, seemed to be the reflection of a pure and lovely soul. In his poetry he intimately adored her. She was his obsession.

Appendix I JAMMU

The real history of Jammu begins with Raja Dhrou Deo. Before him the Jammu province was divided into small principalities.

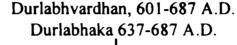
GENEALOGICAL TREE OF THE DOGRA HOUSE

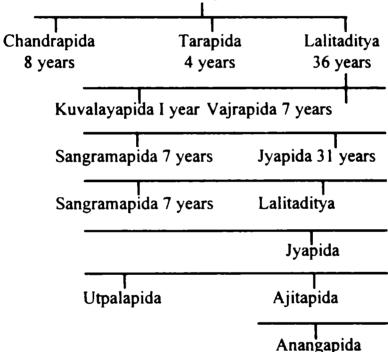


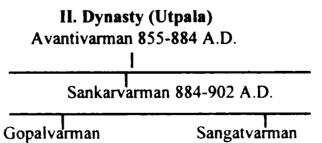
Dr. Karan Singh (Former Heir Apparent, Regent, Sadr-i-Riyasat of Jammu & Kashmir)

Appendix II CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF KASHMIRI KINGS (601-1148 A.D.)

I. Dynasty (Karkota)







Mother Sugandha Regent

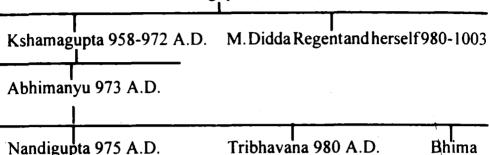
Minor kings of a collateral branch like Pangu, Chakarvarman. Partha ruled from 915-939 A.D.

III. Dynasty (Viradeva)

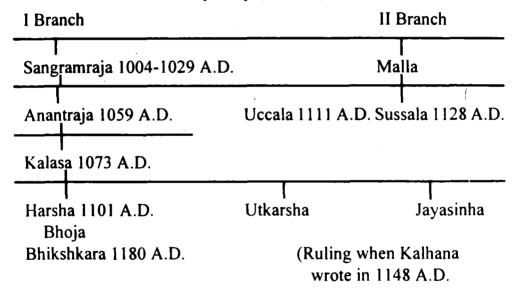
Yaskaradeva 940-948 A.D. Sangramadeva 949 A.D.

IV. Dynasty (Divira)

Parvagupta (950-957)



V. Dynasty (Lohara)



SULTANATE PERIOD

- 1. Rinchin (converted to Islam, assumed the title of Sadar-ud-din) 1320-23 A.D.).
- 2. Sultan Shams-ud-Din (1343-1347)
- 3. Sultan Jamshed (1347-1348)
- 4. Sultan Ala-ud-Din Ali Sher (1343-54)
- 5. Sultan Shihab-ud-Din (1360-1378) (1354-73)
- 6. Sultan Qutb-ud-Din (1373-89)

- 7. Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413)
- 8. Sultan Ali Shah (1413-20)
- 9. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin Badshah (1420-1470)
- 10. Sultan Haider Shah (1470-72)
- 11. Sultan Hassan Shah (1472-84)
- 12. Sultan Muhammad Shah (i) (1486-86)
- 13. Sultan Fateh Shah (i) (1486-93)
- 14. Sultan Fateh Shah (ii) (1486-93)
- 15. Sultan Muhmmad Shah (ii) (1493-1505)
- 16. Sultan Fateh Shah (iii) (1505-1514)
- 17. Sultan Muhammad Shah (iii) (1514-15)
- 18. Fateh Shah (iv) (1515-17)
- 19. Muhammad Shah (iv) 1517-28

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CHAK DYNASTY

- 1. Ghazi Shah ... 1561 A.D.
- 2. Hussan Shah...1563 A.D.
- 3. Ali Shah...1570 A.D.
- 4. Yusuf Shah...(i) 1578-79
- 5. Lohar Shah...1579 A.D.
- 6. Yusuf Shah...(ii) 1580 A.D.
- 7. Ya'qub Shah...(i) 1586
- 8. Husain Shah...1586 A.D.
- 9. Ya'qub Shah (ii)...1586-88 A.D.

MUGHAL PERIOD

- 1. Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.). He sent four Governors to Kashmir.
- 2. Jehangir (1605-1627). Seven Governors were deputed by the Mughal court during his reign.
- 3. Shah Jahan (1627-1658): He sent eight Governors.
- 4. Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D.) Fifteen Governors ruled Kashmir in his time.
- 5. Shah Alam: During his reign Kashmir saw four Governors.

- 6. Farrukh Siyar (1713-1719). Six Governors were deputed to Kashmir during his reign.
- 7. Muhammad Shah (1719-1748). Twelve Governors were deputed to Kashmir during his reign.
- 8. Ahmed Shah (1748-1754). Two Governors ruled Kashmir during his reign.

THE AFGHAN PERIOD

The Afghans came in 1753 A.D. under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Durrani. Afghans ruled over Kashmir through about twenty eight Governors.

THE SIKH PERIOD

Maharaja Ranjit Singh never visited Kashmir. The following Governors were deputed by the Sikh Government at Lahore:

- 1. Misri Dewan Chand...1819-1819 A.D.
- 2. Dewan Moti Ram...1819-1820
- 3. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa...1820-1821
- 4. Dewan Moti Ram...1821-1824
- 5. Dewan Chuni Lal...1825-1827
- 6. Dewan Kirpa Ram...1827-1831 A.D.
- 7. Bhim Singh Ardali...1831-1831 A.D.
- 8. Sher Singh...1832-1834 A.D.
- 9. Col. Mian Singh...1834-1841 A.D.
- 10. Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din...1841-1846
- 11. Sheikh Imam-ud-Din...1846-1846 A.D.

Then the rule of Kashmir passed to the Dogras.

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Index

Abdulla, Sheikh Moh'd, 281	Bhagwat Gita, 273
opposition of two nation	Bhagwat purana, 35
theory, 283	Bhairav Ghati, 70
end of dynastic rule, 283	Bhakti movement, 60
land reforms, 285	Bhanda-nagma, 305
Ad-Kanwari, 70	Bhangra, 29
Administration of Maharaja Gulab	Bibi Ka Maqbura, 231
Singh, 112	Blanket making, 30
Afghan period, 354	Block-printed sheets, 30
Age of modernisation, 119	
Age of Reformation, 119	Carvings in nineteenth century, 60
Agra Fort, 231	Cave architecture, 61
Ain-i-Akbari, 207	Cave of Shree Amarnath, 195
Aligarh Muslim University, 281	- description of, 195
Ali, S.A., 229	pilgrims, 196
Almast, Parmanand, 155-59	discovery of, 196
Amar Mahal, 65	Pahalgam, 196
Amar Mahal Museum, 52	Chandwari, 197
Ambal, 98	Sheshnag, 197
Analysis of paintings, 35	Panchtarani, 197
Anand, Mulak Raj, 41	Central Museum, Lahore, 49
Ancient Monuments of Kashmir,	Ceremonies, 241
213	hair-cutting, 241
Angel of mercy, 129	yajnapavit, 241
Anurag Bansuri, 232	marriage, 241
Archer, W.G., 50	lagan, 242
Architectural styles, 81	kalma. 244
Art's of mankind, 31	fatihah, 244
Auria, 97	Chaiga, 29
Avantiswami temple, 270	Chak dynasty, 353
Avantivarman, King, 269-73	Chakki, 150
Awami Hakumat, 281	Chand, Beer, 77
,	Chand, Raja Dayal, 80
Babor Vahan, 57	Chand, Raja Sansar, 47
Bacheras, 39	Child marriage unlawful, 121
Bacha-nagma, 305	Chashma, Shahi. 223
Baramasa, 35	Choli, 40
Basohli painter, 33	Chudidar Pyjama, 95
Begum, Mughlani, 106	Chumake, 93
-	

Consolidation of the State, 115 Contemporary Art Gallery, 90 Coomarswamy, 47 Dal Lake, 221 Dasavatara, 92 Deep, Ved Pal, 161-64 Demand for Rum illegal, 122 Devi, Maharani Tara, 125 - her husband, 126 mother to harijans, 127 social reforms, 127 service to the soldiers, 128 refugee relief work. 129 Devi, Vaishno, 68 Dev, Brij Raj. 44 Dev, Ghansar, 49 Dev, Guru Nanak, 51 Dev, Raja Ajaib, 62 Dev, Raja Mal, 61 Dharti Ka Rin, 151 Discrimination against Women, Divine Energy, 68 Dogra, 27 Dogra Art Gallery of Jammu, 28, Dogra Mandal, 62 Dogri folklore, 28 Door of temples opened for harijans, 120 Dress-making and embroidery, 29 Dutt, Raja Som, 72 Dupatta, 40 Dynasty (utpala), 351 -Viradeva, 352 Divara, 352 Lohara, 352

Famine of 1877-78, 117 Farid-up-Din, Baba, 63 Fatehpur Sikri, 231 Folk dances, 29

Gardens, 235

Gardens of Great Mughals, 224
Genealogical tree of the Dogra
house, 349
Ghagra, 29, 40, 95
Ghiwars, 97
Ghosh, Ajit, 38
Gita Govinda, 35
Gold chain, 94
Gol Ghar, 85
Govt. M.A.M. College, Jammu,
147

Hajiz-nagma, 305
Hamdani, Sayyid Ali, 215-19
Handicrafts of Kashmir, 235
Harijan upliftment, 121
Hari Tara Charitable Trust, 65
Harmonious design, 82
Head Wear, 95
Holi, 162
Husainabad Imambara, 231
Hussai, M.F., 90

Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, Delhi, 229 Infanticide among the Rajputs, 123 Islamia College, Lahore, 281 Islamic Rishis, 234

Jagir of Chenani, 77
Jama Masjid, Srinagar, 211-13
Javidani, Rasa, 343
— his life, 343
poems, 344
influences, 344
Urdu poetry, 345
Kashmiri poetry, 345
Jewellery, 30

Jyapida, 265-68 *Kalam*, 43

Kalam, 43
Kalhana, 247
—Lalitaditya, 250
Jayapida, 250
Avantivarman, 250

Madharas, 97

queen Didda, 250	Madhukar, K.S., 179
Sussala, 250	Madhumati, 232
Jayasimha, 251	Magnifiçent palace, 87
Immortal bard of Kashmir, 251	Mahahikeshwar Temple, 65
story elements, 252	Maharagya pradurbhave. 205
eight Rasas, 252	Maharaja Ranbir Singh's Palace
narration, 253	82
dramatic power, 254	Maharani Charak's building, 83
characterization, 256	Mahjoor, 335
philosophy, 259	—poetry of nature, 335
Kama Deva, 28	Greece Koor, 337
Kangra Valley, 60	man in relation, 338-39
Kanishka, 74	Malhotra, Y.R., 147
Karan Niwas, 87	personality, 148
Kashmiri Kings, 351	career, 147
Kashmiri mysticism, 299, 311	beliefs, 149
Kashmiri Poetry, 234, 288-98	work, 149
Kashmiri Shaivism, 309	ghazals, 152
Kashmiri sufism, 312	poems, 154
Kaul, Kishori. 191-94	Malika Zamani, 106
Khadi, 29	Makund bari, 98
Khamiras, 97	Mamla Shotak, 106
Khan, Zakaria. 106	Mangal sutra. 93
Khatoon, Habba, 327	Mental climate, 43
her life, 327	Miniature paintings, 88
beauty, 328	Modern folk songs, 144
her work, 330	Modhera temple, 62
socio-political, 333	Mokasa, 311
poems, 334	Mokla Kurta, 95
Khir, 98	Mughal garden, 213
Koka Shastra, 64	Mughal period, 353
Krishna legends, 48	Muslim monuments, 63
Krishna, N.S. Subha, 91	
Kudd dance, 99	Nasim Bagh. 226
Kurta, 95	Nathan, 94
	Necklace, 94
Laddu, 98	Nishat Bagh, 223
Lake of Anchor, 207	Nund Rishi, 324
Lalitaditya, King, 261-64	Nur-Ud-Din Wali, Sheikh, 321
Lalleswari, 299	
Laxami, Yasho Raj, 87	Ornaments of arm and feet, 94
Long, 94	Ornaments of head and ear, 238
Love songs, 140	neck, 239
Madharas 07	wrists, 239

Padmavati, 232 Pahari painting, 49 Palaces at Basohli, 64 Pal. Amrit, 79 Palaces of Darbar Garh, 65 Pari Mahal, 222 Patron of Architecture, 118 Patron of Education, 116 Persian literature, 233 Persian Poetry, 233 Philosophy and the themes, 34 Photographic perspective, 46 Phumnian dance, 99 Portrait Gallery, 89 Prohibition of polygamy, 122 Prostitution suppressed, 122

Qutub Minar, 231

Rajmata's Suite, 92
Rajput community, 123
Rajtarangini, 62
Ramayana, 35
Randhawa, Dr. M.S., 37
Rang Mahal, 64
Rasmanjar Ragmala, 35
Ras Leela, 29
Ravi river, 61
Raja Amar Singh's palace, 84
Red Fort, Delhi, 231
Respect for all Religions, 124

Sachdev, Padma, 173
—do pakhroo, 174
Sadhana, 51
Sakars, 98
Santosh, Ghulam Rasul, 91, 187-90
Sculptures at Basohli, 56
Sculptures at Krimchi, 56
Seasonal folk songs, 144
Secular buildings, 63
Shah, Mohammad, 44
Shah Walga, 323

Shalimar, 224 Shams Faqir, 303 Sharma, Yash, 175 — basant, 175 banjara, 176 Shastri, Prof. Ramnath, 147 Sheesh Mahal, 64 Sheikh Noor-U-Din Vali, 301 Shiva-Sutra, 309 Shrine of Hazrat Bal, 226 Shri-Palov, 97 Sikh confrontation with British. 111 Sikh period, 354 Singh, Dr. Karan, 51, 87, 131-37 Singh, Gen. Zorawar, 19 Singh, Maharaja Hari, 119 Singh, Maharaja Pratap, 83 Singh, Raghunath, 25 Singh, Raja Balwant, 44, 47 Singh, Raja Jagat, 83 Singh, Maharaja Ranbir, 49 Singh, Raja Shamsher, 79 Singh, Sobha, 51 Sinha, P.N., 34 Smoking among children, 123 Social and Economic Measures, 117 Soni Mahival, 232 Stone Carving, 28, 55 Structural buildings, 62 Sufiana Kalam, 305 Sultanate period, 352 Sunder Shingar, 64 Sun-temple, 199-203 - situation, 199 construction, 199 description of, 200

Taj Mahal, 230 Tarikh-i-Azmi of Kashmir, 103 Technique of Basohli paintings, 34

images of, 201

Supreme Deity, 35

Temple complex at Krimchi, 63 Thothrus, 97 Tikka, 93 Tomb of Itmad-Ud-Daula, 231 Tota-maina ki gali, 83 Trishul of Bhagwan Shiva, 78

Udhampuri, Jatinder, 165

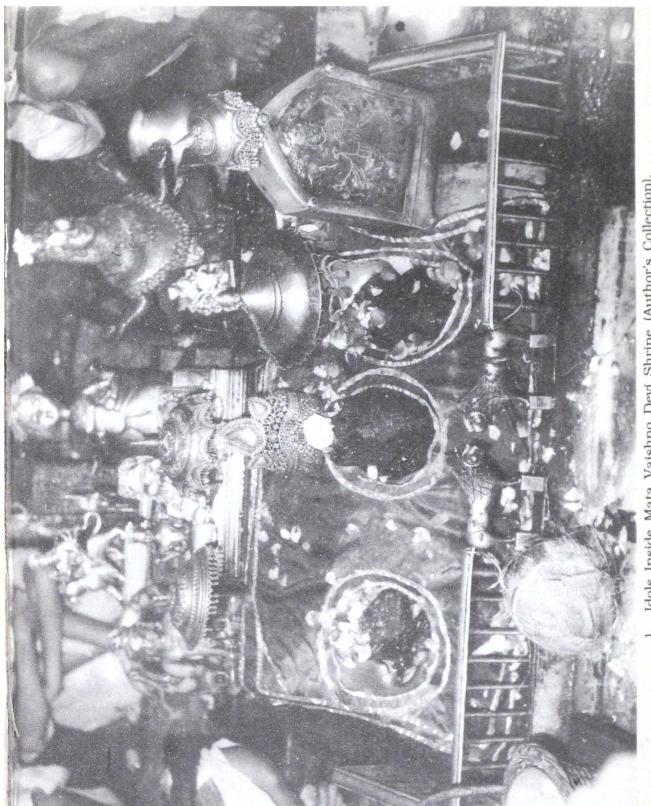
— awards and honours, 165
prime of lyricism, 166
estimation of work, 167
story, 168
divine love, 169
love of nature, 170

moonlit night, 170 autumn's arrival, 171

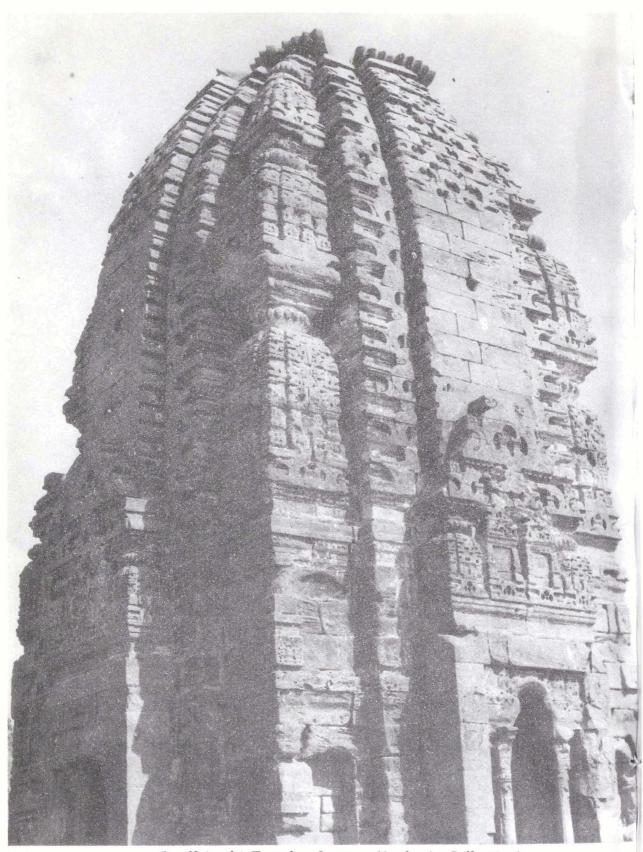
Vaishnavi movement, 37 Vallabhacharya, 35 Vara Avtara, 73

What is a folk song ? 139 Widow remarriage, 122 Wonder of the hills, 64

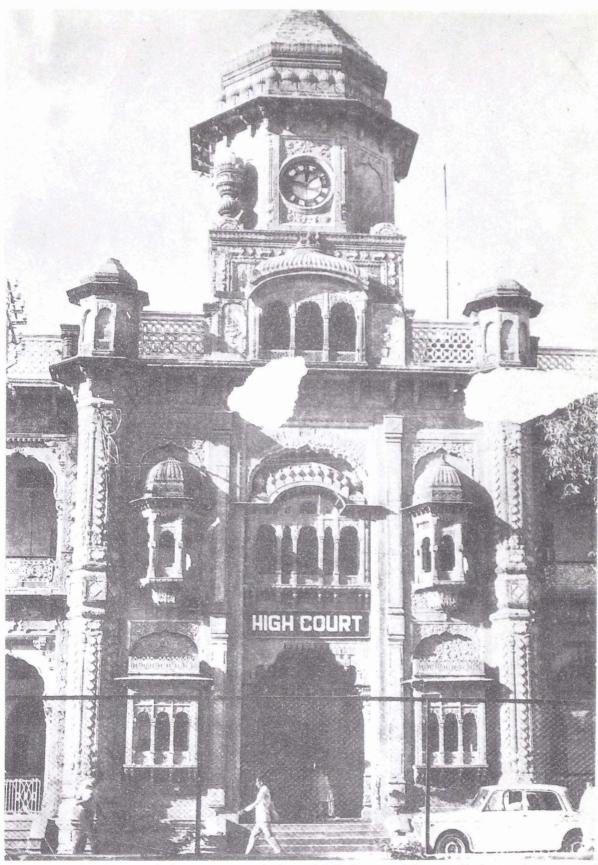
Zain-Ul-Abiden, Sultan, 275-80 Zinda Koul, 302



Idols Inside Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine (Author's Collection).



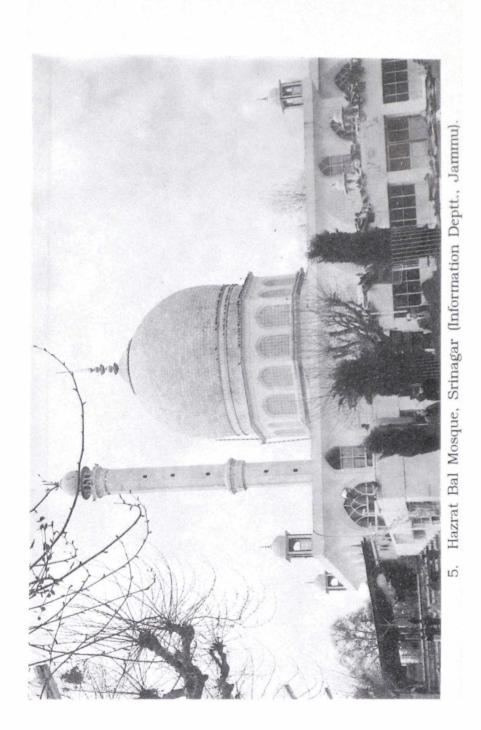
2. Krimchi Temple, Jammu (Author's Collection).

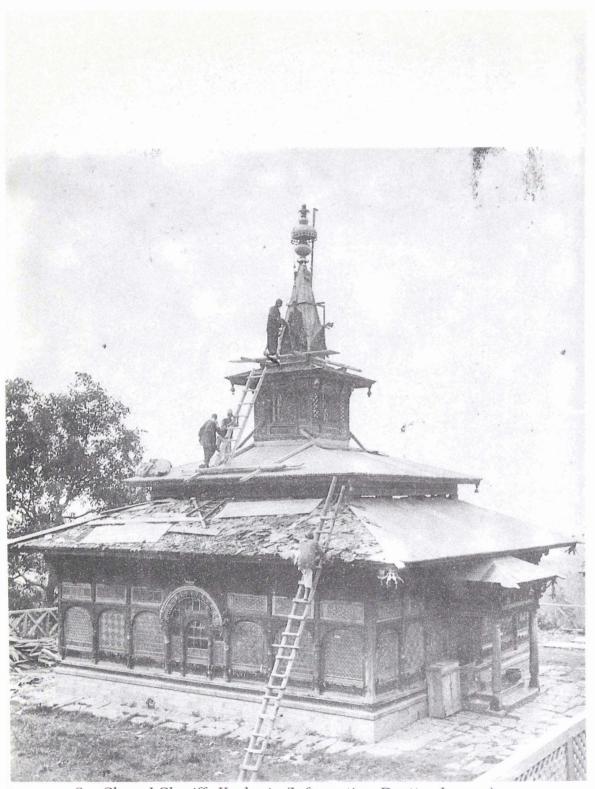


3. View of the portion of the Old Palaces of Dogra Rulers, Mubarak Mandi, Jammu (Author's Collection).

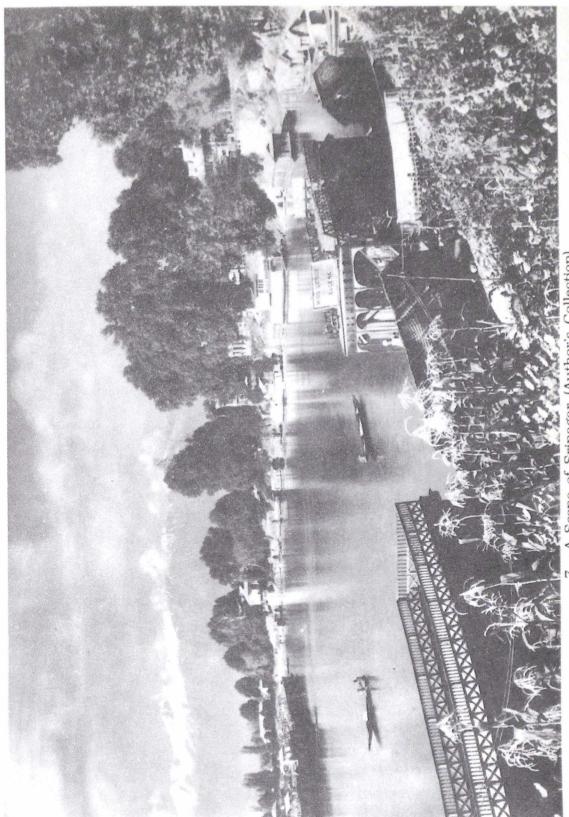


4. Entrance to the Holy Cave of Amar Nath (Author's Collection)





6. Chrar-I-Sheriff, Kashmir (Information Deptt., Jammu).



7. A Scene of Srinagar (Author's Collection).



8. Kashmiri Belle in Her Kashmiri Dress Wearing Jewellery (Mahatta Photographers).