

Writers



KASHMIR



Columnists



SELECTED WRITINGS OF PROF. P. N. PUSHP

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1.0 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Prof. P. N. Pushp (born in Srinagar, 1917) was a member of the J&K Education Services for three decades, and retired as Director, Deptt. of Libraries, Research, Museum and Archives (J&K) (1965-72). Prof. Pushp has written on various aspects of language, literature and culture of Kashmir. He was Member, Official Languages Commission (1955-56), General Secretary, All India Oriental Conference (1961-69), Member, Linguistic Society of India, and Secretary, Text Book Advisory Committee (J&K).



P. N. Pushp

2.0 HENZAE: A FOLK GENRE VIEWED AFRESH

Henzae seems to be the oldest extant folk genre of Kashmiri verse. Alongside the proverb and the riddle it certainly is one of the earliest items of folklore in the Kashmiri language. It signifies a conventional type of the ceremony chant called vanavun, sessions of which cover, in toto or in part, series of socio-cultural concomitants of ritual associated with various stages or steps in the ceremony concerned, particularly zarakaasay (tonsure), maekhal (sacred thread-investiture) and khaandar (wedding).

The term henzae has wrongly been regarded as a derivative of the word Hindu, interpreting it, accordingly, as a call to the Hindu women to join a session of the traditional wedding chant. The word, in fact, preserves a Kashmiri variant of the Prakrit vocative hanje meaning 'O lady or ladies'. It, obviously, connotes a significant reference to the mode of starting a session of ceremony chant, by addressing a worthy equal or a band of worthy equals. In course of time, however, the word came to signify a specific type of ceremony chant rendered by a select group of Kashmiri women of the Pandit community, joined by other women sitting around. The elderly lady who leads the group is held in high esteem as vanavan-gar (a competent lady specialising in ceremony chant.)

The conventional rendering of the chant known as henzae is surprisingly reminiscent of the Sama Vedic legacy which seems to have lingered on in the Valley of Kashmir as an interplay of the traditional tones: the uddata (accented), anuddata (unaccented) and svarita (circumflex). i.e. the high pitch, the low pitch and the even pitch peculiar to Sama recitation. Obviously the old Sama chant underwent a series of transformation during its transmission at the folk level, and reached us as an echo of the ancient convention trans-shaped by various pressures of innovation in tune with the changing times. The echo thus preserved in the henzae has become a vital link of the flexible present with the stratified past. In form, the henzae snatch is just a vanavun piece, a snatch of a ceremony song framed within a couplet the second line of which is invariably shorter than the first, at least by two syllables, roughly corresponding to the following beat pattern:

na na na na na na na na na naa na
na na na na na na naa na na

The couplet may or may not rhyme the end of the first line with the penultimate of the second line, but it is generally crisscrossed by internal rhyme rich in alliterative rhythm as is borne out by the apt placement of vena and vena; vaaj and laaj;. hiyi- tharae, ranga-tsarae, and shaama svandaras; vuchhmay and prutshmay; kraanis and laanis; koo ree and komaaree; dakha chhuy and nakha chhuy; phaerae and shaerae; raaza and vaaza in the following chants offering revealing peeps into the creative stamina of everfresh articulation:

1. Yena tar vena tay vana vaaj maadal
asi laaj kalashes poozaayae.

(Mentha-herbs we brought from across the water- course and maadal flowers from the woods; and both we used in worship of the kalasha.)

2. Path hiyi-tharae brontha ranga-tsarae
shaama-svandare kor monen gachh.

(Jasmine-shrubs in the background, colourful sparrows in the forefront; thus did Shyama- Sundari decorate walls with gypsum dye.)

3. Vuchhmay na zaatakas, prutshmay na kraanis
kooree laanis namaskaar.

(I didn't get your horoscope examined, nor did I enquire about your family ties; daughter dear, let us bow to destiny.)

4. Kooree komaaree maamajuv dakha chhuy
nakha chhuy tsoturbvaz naaraayan.

(Daughter innocent, your uncle (maternal) is supporting you up; the four-armed Narayana is by your side.)

5. Broentha broentha Shivrath sabaayi phaerae
raazan kyut vaaza-bata shaerae.

(Ahead moves Shivanatha inspecting rows of seated guests, ensuring that dishes specially cooked for them by cooks are duly served.)

The traditional vanavun formally starts with the exclamation henzae followed by the proto-verse thus:

h e n z a e...

Sh o k lam ka rith hy o tmay va na voe nuy
r u t ph a l dyutay maa ji Bh a vaa nae.

Shoklam karith hyotay vanavoenuy
rut phal dyutay maa ji Bh a vaa nae

(With a recitation of the shuklam have we started chanting the vanavun; Mother Bhavani has bestowed upon us a boon benign.)

The shuklam here refers to the popular mangala- sloka, the hymn of auspicious inauguration without reciting which no ritualistic performance would normally be undertaken by a devout Pandit. The sloka referred to, starts with the line

Shuklambaradharam devam shashivarnam
caturbhujam

which, of course, is conjured up by the key word shuklam pronounced as shoklam in the Kashmiri accent. Every session of vanavun, accordingly, that begins with the word shuklam is expected to be rendered in the vilambita (leisurely tone) rather than the druta (the quick tempo).

Vanavun, of course, is the bed-rock on which henzae has stood for centuries, and it continues to be the generic name of the ceremony chant. Even poets of eminence have composed vanavun whenever it suited their context. Prakash Ram (c. 1840), for instance, sounds quite close to the henzae tradition when he writes (in the context of Sita's wedding):

OEM shabda sootin shoklam karith
vanavun hyotuy maaji Bhavaanae.

(Uttering the syllable OM along with shuklam Mother Bhavani has started the vanavun chant for you.)

Among other poets influenced by the henzae tradition, Krishna Razdan deserves special mention for a number of popular chants in his Shiv-lagan particularly those in the contexts of the arrival of Shiva as the bridegroom and the subsequent floral worship (called Poeshi-poozaa) of the bride and the bridegroom. Some of these chants woven into vatsun lyrics are a must at the Shivaratri celebration, including the ones with the refrains:

Maharaaza raazakomaarae aav
(The bridegroom came to wed the princess-bride)

and

Shiva Shankarasay chhe poeshi-poozaa
(It is, indeed, the floral worship of Shiva.)

The vanavun has thus found its way not only into the leelaa (devotional lyric) hymns but also into the naat (verse tribute to the Prophet); and instances are available of poets who have sought to specialise in the vanavun though with doubtful success.

The inaugural chant of the vanavun, nevertheless, has all along carried with it rich possibilities of improvisation as and when the occasion demanded; and this improvisation has been mainly twofold: paradigmatic as well as substitutional. The paradigmatic covers syntactical modifications while the substitutional leaves the syntax untouched; it simply replaces a variable within the syntactical matrix. Here, for instance, are a few cases of such improvisation detected without much difficulty:
A. Substitutional (suiting intracultural demands):

1. The second line of the inaugural chant improvises the impression Bhavaaralae variously as Shivaayae, Shaarikaayae, Raagnyaayae, Zaalaaye, Baalaayae, Vomaayae, etc. putting in any of the Kashmiri names of the Goddess, corresponding to the classical Siva, Sa:rika, Ra:jni:, Jvaala:, Ba:la: and Uma:

2. The first line of the next chant refers to Vasudeva, the king, as the head of the family celebrating the event: Vasudeev raazanyev hyotay vanayoenuy; and it similarly, presses into service a number of relevant variations for the phrase Vasudeev raazanyev. Some of these are:

A.2.1 Dasharatha raazanyev (in the context of the bridegroom's paternal family);

A.2.2 Zanak raazanyev (in the context of the bride's paternal family.)

A.2.3 Raaghav Kaakanyev (in the context of the family of some parent of the bride or the bridegroom, name Raaghav varying from family to family. No lady, however, is on record as the head of the family, though the spouse of the head is invariably referred to as yezmanbaay i.e. the female counterpart of the yajama:na, the ritual performer.

In the early strata of the vanavun we find this type of improvisation mostly intracultural as it is intended to perpetuate a few cultural memories of the community as long as possible. But an encounter with quite a different tradition (particularly religion- oriented) led to a fundamental departure in basic perceptions. In due course of historical development, naturally, perceptions other than those reflected within the henzae parametres also

emerged. A new type of improvisation, essentially intercultural in nature, came into vogue by virtue of which the core form Shoklam was understandably improvised with the parallel register expression Bismillah, the key- note of the Kalima.

With the spread of Islam in Kashmir, the growing urge for sectional identity also encouraged departure from the traditional mannerism of the chant associated with the Sama legacy, the folk variation of the vanavun was taken over as the only style in which Muslim women could inaugurate their session of ceremonial chant despite their conversional inhibition. They would accordingly start their session of vanavun with the following snatch as suitably modified within the time-honoured traditional folk matrix:

**Bismillah karith hemav vanavoenuy
Saahiban anjaam oenuyae.**

(Uttering bismillah shall we start the vanavun chant; the Lord has brought it about for us.)

Obviously the neo-converts took over the matrix of the vanavun from the old convention with appropriate improvisation reflecting thereby the archetypal change in the perception of faith. It was so because Shoklam echoed a different archetypal context that had by the time become associated with idol worship. As such it was not deemed fit to serve the immediate purpose of the neoconverts. An appropriate substitute for the term was, nevertheless, discerned in Bismillah that could insure the traditional vanavun against the risk of being dubbed as un-Islamic, without upsetting or undermining the socio-cultural continuity of collective participation. It is because of such a salutary development that both types of vanavun share a lot of common concern and cognate articulation.

The contours of these types are peculiar to the religious creed or cult inherited by a sizeable group within the Kashmiri society, as an ingredient of sub- cultural heritage; while the affinities shared by both the segments are significant components of common inheritance not only cherished but also promoted as interpersonal commemoration.

Viewed in such a historical perspective we find the Henzae covering a broad spectrum of socio- cultural preoccupation with festivity. Starting with a prayerful declaration of the resolve to celebrate, the conventionally stylized folk genre covers as already pointed out, a series of socio-cultural concomitants of ritual signifying various stages or steps in the ceremony concerned, particularly zarakaasay, (tonsure), maekhal (Sacred thread- investiture) and khaandar (wedding). Some of the outstanding links in the chain are:

a. garanaaay: house-cleaning.

b. dapun: formally moving out with a personal invitation to a ceremony at the insistence of a relative or an intimately connected person.

c. krool: decorating the walls flanking the main doorway of the residential house, with ritualistic designs of flowers, shrubs and creepers splashing a rich variety of colours.

d. maanziraath: the henna-night when the hands of the bride or the bridegroom are beautified with the henna dye, and relatives (particularly women, young and old) also get a touch or two of the auspicious dye. Concurrently goes on a nightlong session of brisk and zestful singing and dancing.

e. **divagoen**: a pre-nuptial ritual held in front of the sacrificial fire invoking the blessings of gods for a flawless celebration of the bride's or the bridegroom's respective performance.

f. **maekhal**: sacred thread-investiture, comprising a number of subsidiaries like

1. **vaaridaan**: ritualistic cooking by the Auntie (father's sister) of the lad who has to wear the sacred thread ensuring the privileged Auntie a rich reward for her tender affection.

2. **Yoeni**: actual investiture of the lad with traavun the sacred thread.

3. **abeed**: ritualistic begging of the lad for collection of money as daksina to be paid to his guru at the symbolic culmination of his learning at the guru's feet.

4. **mandul**: the mandala ritual in which the lad has to take his stand on a colourfully designed and decorated circle called mandala (also called vyoog in Kashmiri.) The ritual is performed on the eve of the lad's trip to a spring or a stream, late at night, after performing the thanksgiving ritual called the koshal-hum (kushala-homa).

g. **khaandar**: the wedding, comprising a number of subcomponents (besides the common components as detailed above under a to e), starting with the kanishraan and concluding with the poeshipooza. We have:

1. **kani-shraan**: ritualistic ablution of the bride getting ready for the wedding.

2. **daarapoozaa**: ceremonial purification of the doorway through which the bridegroom is expected to enter the bride's house for the wedding ceremony.

3. **lagan**: the pivotal ceremony in front of the sacrificial fire extends from the initial athavaas (handlock of the prospective couple) to the dayabata (the wedded couple's first meal together under divine supervision symbolized by the sacrificial fire). In between, we find the most crucial sacrament.

3.1 satapady: the saptapadi, i.e. the ritual featuring the seven symbolic steps taken together by the prospective couple round the vigilant fire, in a clockwise direction, soon after they have beheld each other's face in a mirror held under cover in front of which they sit with hands interlocked. It is during this circumambulation that the father of the bridegroom points out the Dhruva (Polar Star) to the bride who is called upon to set her foot firmly

on a granite pestle, signifying the need to be steadfast in wedlock.

3.2 poeshipoozaa: the loveliest spectacle offered by the lagan ceremony, which is characterized by a meaningful collaboration between the ear and the eye. The ear is treated to a soulstirring felicity of nuptial benedictions reminiscent of happily married couples famous in legend and prehistory, while the eye is refreshingly fed on intermittent showers of colourful flower petals.

3.3 vaaryuv: the touching moment of bride's naerun departure from her parental house to that of her lifemate.

h. koshal-hum: the final thanksgiving ceremony expressing the family's gratefulness to the tutelary deities for happy culmination of the ceremonial undertaking.

Viewed from the angle of cultural stratification, however, we find two linguistic layers in the snatches of the *vanavun*. One of these reflects the indigenous pre-Islamic tradition occasionally preserving a verbal fossil or two fixed up in a later setting. The other level reveals a preponderance of socio-linguistic synthesis bringing about a harmonious blend of the indigenous and the domiciled, despite the initial irritants caused by religious conversion. The blending, therefore, appears to be mostly a natural one speaking forth, on occasions, through a single word belonging to a Persi-Arabic hoard and, yet, appearing quite at ease with earlier matrices and modes of expression.

Let us, then, view a few telling instances even though culled rather casually within the parameters of random sampling. Among the first category we may take up the following that appear to have come down the centuries almost unchanged:

**1. Parmaeshvaras ta maaji Parvatiyae
laagoes poozi lava-hatiyae poesh**

(Parameshvara and Mother Parvati shall we worship offering flowers fresh with dew.)

**2. Svana sundi tvangarae ta rvopa sundi baeloe
lamay vaaloo shaelay mets.**

(O you golden hoe and you silver shovel, fetch us virgin earth from the mountain-slope.)

**3. Shishramnaagy vatshkhay Ombraavatiyae
Sree Sarasvatiyae Kaanie liv.**

(O Amaravati, you flow down to the Sheshnag lake; come and wash the upper apartment of Shri Sarasvati.)

**4. Asy ta maali zaanahav na tuhunza vatay
koeri hundy laany kor ataygath.**

(We didn't know at all your whereabouts, darling daughter's destiny has linked us up.)

5. Samskaar karayae Maheshvaree
kooree Laleeshvareeyae.

(I'll perform your marriage ceremony, Maheshvari, Laleeshvari, my daughter dear.)

6. Arag kar manas tay po:sh kar praanas
Kreshna-bhagavaanas saavedaan laag.

(Treat your mind as rice-grain offering and turn your life-breath and worship Lord Krishna, heart and soul.)

7. Kehe chhakh heri kani koesam tsaaraan
bona kani Naaraan praaraan chhuy.

(How come you are still upstairs just culling flowers; while down below is Narayana awaiting you.)

Coming to the second category we notice a number of snatches in which just a word or two from the Persi-Arabic hoard reflects an appropriate recognition of the forward-looking expansion in vocabulary so as to cover the authentic nuances of socio-cultural interaction. To this very category, in fact, belong the snatches in which the changing folk diction of the Kashmiri language registers a wider area of susceptibility to change in environment as well as articulation. Here are a few samples (**with the new word underlined**):

1. Pushinee khatsakhay Divasara-baalas
tala vuchh naalas poesh maa pholy.

(O flower-selling maid, you've gone up the Divasar-mountain; look up the stream-banks below for any flowers abloom.)

2. Gata tsaj gaash aav saarysuy ihaanas
chhemay Bhagavaanas poeshi-poozaa.

(Darkness has vanished, the whole world is aglow with light; floral worship of my Lord is on.)

3. Gangaasaagar heth chhes Gangaa.
vuda zaalaan chhes Tsandrabhaagaa.

(Ganga has appeared before her with a sacred kettle; the Chandrabhaga waits upon her with incense.)

4. Rukmani saal kor Kreshna Bhagavaanas
yeti masnad kor laalas kyut.

(Rukmini held a feast in honour of Krishna; here we spread a sheet for our darling.)

5. Gangabala toermay ganga-vony naavan
haavasa kaanee livaa sae.

(From Gangabal I've brought for your boatfuls of holy water; wash her up-apartment longingly.)

6. Nermal neshkal ganga-zal chhaavath
baalaadari peth behnavath.

(I shall treat you to lucid crystal waters of Ganga; I'll seat you in the balcony.)

7. Metsi tay paanis khot khambeeray
gambeera khoermay agnay-koand.

(Clay and water showed ferment; I fashioned a grand fire-pit for you.)

8. Kehae chhakh gamgeen Rama-Rama mothuyae
karmayloen choen pothuyae draav.

(Why are you worried? Have you forgotten the name of Rama? Your destiny has proved quite eventful.)

9. Kooree loen choen azy hay gav sahee
saakhyaat Maheeshvar hay aav.

(Your destiny, my daughter, has turned out right today; Maheshvar in person has come to us.)

10. Koshalyaayi thovuyae poeshi-baag livith
Dashrath raaza khot sraan karith.

(Kaushalya swept and washed for you the flower-garden clean; King Dashratha is back after having a river-dip.)

11. Kaalaasa kohuky yim hay soora-matiy
volaas gandy gandy aangan tsaay.

(These ash-besmeared denizens of the Kailasa have entered our courtyard wearing ullasa.)

12. Lagun chhiy karaan daevaankhaanas
karee Bhagavaanas namaskaar

(Your lagna is on in the audience-hall; do a namaskar to the Lord.)

13. Tren bavanan hundy lukh gayi jamaah
koeri hund tamaah baryze na zaanh.

(People of the three worlds have turned up here; never, never, never yearn for a girl.)

14. Sayibaana banoevmut chhus aasmaanas
chemay Bhagavaanas poeshi-poozaa.

(We've set up a canopy of the sky for him; the floral worship of my Bhagavan is afoot.)

15. Arshae vathimati Anan Deevoe
farshes peth kar kalashes jaay.

(O Arjuna Deva, who have descended from the heavens, place the kalasha firmly on the floor.)

(Kashmiri words of Persi-Arabic origin that claim our attention here are: bala, nala, jahan, ud (vuda), masnad, havas, baladari, khamir, ghamghin, sahi, koh, bagh, divankhana and jamah.)

The two extremes between which the vocabulary of the henzae seems to have flourished may, perhaps, be identified in terms of the following snatches:

1. Arrnaayae dharmayae raazaputraayae
mandan-rnaali dachhiny dyoo boez baayae.

(Armaaya dharmaya raajaputraaya; listen, brother, pay the daksana dues for the nandana- garland.) which preserves an old substratum of Sanskritic morphology; while

2. Shaktipaata-dreshti vari kari prasaadaa
saada shehzaadaa aangan tsaav.

(With the shakti-inducing eye he'll favour us and shower grace on us; a saintly simple prince has entered our courtyard.)

displays a queer juxtaposition of the archaic Shiva metaphor or divine grace with the high-sounding Persian grandeur of the feudal court, rhyming the Sanskrit prasada with the Persi-Arabic sada shehzada.

It is, nevertheless, difficult to pinpoint the detailed chronology of stratification in view of the fact that quite a number of fragments of early legacy have been updated in linguistic expression from time to time. It can, however, be safely inferred that the current version of the henzae text is mostly later than the Vaak-Shruk (XIV century) configuration. Such a state of affairs is amply borne out by telling pointers like reference to institutions, events, places and persons as in the following contexts:

a. Sataraath anymay Goejevaarae
dejahurgormay Vejibraarae.

(The household-ware for you I got from the market at Gojivoer; your dejihor I got manufactured at Vejibroer.)

b. Saraafkadaluky saraaf aayi saaree
sana truvchi rvapayi diyiv tsaary tsaaree.

(All the silversmiths of Saraaf Kadal came beseeching; give us the silver coins called rupees minted in the year thirteen, referring, obviously to Kupuny, i.e., Queen Victoria's rupee.)

c. Anathnaagas laj ho savaaree
doejen gayi ho ambaarreeyae.

(Vehicles sped away to Anantnag; wooden tablets called takhtees were piled up.)

d. Poosteen nary ho alraavaan aakhoe
petaree godayoe khirki-dastaar.

(Dangling sleeves of your furjacket you came; Your uncle (paternal) tied a khirki turban on your head.)

e. Tshvata pethaci lisa ranyi dharma-sabhaayae
Chambaanaathanyi aagyaayae.

(The Dharma Sabha insisted on cooking lisa (succulent leaves) that grows on wild dumps; Yogi Campanath had thus ordained.)

Similar, of course, is the evidence of allusions like those to Vakile Sarkar Har Gopal, Tarakh Zityush, Naran Juv, kaaranda, tabardar, tehsildar, Shalamar Bagh, Padshah Bagh, Tulamuly Nag, jagir, jamadari, rozgar, bazar, khana-moel, durdana, shaahe zaafraan, saahebzada, bumakamaan, buma-khanjar, masval and guli akhtaab.

More clinching appears to be the evidence silently offered by the very nomenclature of a crucial segment of the henzae-lore, i.e. the vanavun of the maanziraath which is an inalienable part of the current vanavun text. A sociological and literary study of the henzae in detail, no doubt, calls for a separate write up, yet a rich cross-section of the content with peculiarities of folk-articulations has substantially been covered by the chants quoted above in various contexts.

Finally, a word as to the need for a technological study of the henzae rendering, based on the authentic grounds of musicology. A competent analysis of at least half a dozen tapes in different voices covering

different parts of the Valley as well as from Poonch, Bhadravah and Kashtawar is likely to reveal a broad spectrum of renderings; and those could be further taken up for contrastive studies with respect to the resembling chants in some sister languages of the state; Dogri, Panjabi, and Gojri, for instance, present some interesting parallels in their folk-chants, particularly in p'aakh and mahiya which register some remote degree of affinity with the henzae rendering. Do these styles of singing share some variation or the other of the old Sama chant? Let some competent musicologist explore and reveal.

3.0 KASHMIRI AND THE LINGUISTIC PREDICAMENT OF THE STATE

Kashmiri is the language recognised by the Constitution of India (in the VIII Schedule) as the language of the Jammu and Kashmir State. Nevertheless, it has yet to be reflected in the school curriculum even at the primary level of pedagogy.

During the early fifties Kashmiri was, no doubt, introduced in the schools of the Valley, from the I to the V Primary, not only as a subject of study but also as a medium of instruction. But the experiment was discarded, soon after, as unfeasible on the lame excuse of a clumsy script.

Even after a fairly suitable script was officially accepted for the language, and a new set of textbooks produced for re-introduction of teaching of the Kashmiri/Dogri/Punjabi language as an elective subject, the experiment did not take off. Systematic implementation of the project was progressively postponed on some plea or the other. It was argued that Kashmiri could not be introduced as long as the demarcation of areas for teaching Dogri and Punjabi in the Jammu Province was not finalized; and the finalization was intriguingly delayed and delayed. The scheme was, meantime, nipped in the bud.

What, apparently, was viewed as an administrative concern, however, turned out to be a tacit dread of pressurizing by political chauvinism. Chauvinists were in fact, haunted by misconceived notions of identity-building in isolation. The dread was that the Urdu language would be considerably dislodged from the socio-cultural bases occupied by it during the Dogra period when it replaced Persian as the language of administration. What was forgotten, conveniently, was: once the pupils would be able to read their mother tongues they would be in a better position to learn the other tongue also) without phonetic mix-up. They are, otherwise, likely to superimpose some linguistic features of their mother tongues on the Urdu language they would per force learn as the first language which it, actually, was not.

The mother tongue, obviously, has not to be taught; what has to be taught is the script in which the mother tongue is written. It would afterwards, be easier to learn the sounds peculiar to Urdu without allowing the mother tongue interfere with the phonetic exercise involved. Confusion arises mostly because more than one script is over- ambitiously taught to the helpless child during a single term. A number of scripts can, nevertheless, be playfully learnt one after the other allowing enough time to practise the use of one script before another is taken up.

Before we consider the pedagogical strategy in detail, however, a glance at the linguistic criss-cross of the State may throw up some relevant perspectives. At the first glance the criss-cross appears to be quite dauntingly complex: we find a diversity of languages and dialects spoken by people inhabiting various areas exposed to diverse processes of contact, encounter and interaction from time to time. Alongside the broad operation of what is historically recognized as the prominent language of an area we find some other languages and dialects also spoken in a particular circle, strip or pocket of the area concerned. Occasionally some of the dormant sectors of speakers suddenly wake up to a refreshing stroke of socio-cultural aspiration or political ambition. That is what has been often happening and has recently happened in the case of Gojri and Pahari. The **New Kashmir** blueprint had (as early as 1946) rightly guaranteed rehabilitation of all the neglected tongues of the State.

Let us now take the State area wise. In Ladakh we find Bodhi (Ladakhi) in Leh and Balti (akin to the Balti of Baltistan) in Kargil with pockets of Kashmiri and Hindustani (Hindi/Urdu). The Valley has Kashmiri, by and large, with strips or tracts of Gojri, Shina, Pahari and Panjabi, mostly linked together by a smattering of Urdu. Linguistic contiguity and exchange, occasionally, gives rise to a mixup like what is popularly labelled as the **Sikh-Kashmiri** and the **Gujar-Kashmiri**. Similarly, Jammu has Dogri, Panjabi and Poonchi (Pahari) with strips of Gojri and pockets of Pogli-Kashtawari (Kashmiri), Bhadrawahi with its dialect (Bhalesi) and sub-pockets like Siraji and Rambani (in the Doda district).

Kashmiri is spoken by over thirty one lakhs of people in an area of over 10,000 sq. miles, within the J&K State (Census 1981). Though concentrated mostly within the Kashmir Valley it has a few sizable pockets across the Pir Panjal range also, particularly in the Doda district. Smaller pockets, however, are found not only in the Poonch-Rajauri area but also at other places such as Gool-Gulabgarh, Riasi and Basohli.

Despite regional variation of accent and usage, however, the **Marazi** and **Kamrazi bolis** (dialects) of Kashmiri are identical in structural matrix and morphological configuration. The **Kishtawari** dialect (with its twin, the **Pogli**) nevertheless, has chanced to preserve quite a few layers of early growth that yield telling clues to the morphological development of the language in consonance with the regional Prakrit-Apabhramsa rather than the hypothetical Dardic/Pisaci stock, as Grierson would like us to believe. The doyen of the Linguistic Survey of India has, no doubt, rendered monumental service to the cause of studies in Indian languages; yet, he seems to have gone astray at least on two counts. First, the classification of the Kashmiri language as Dardic; and, secondly, insistence on labelling two free variations of the Kashmiri utterance as Hindu Dialect and Muslim Dialect.

This genius of a linguistic scholar somehow felt fascinated by the probability of such a hypothesis which unfortunately for him remained pampered within the confines of probability and did not get ratified as an objective fact of linguistic development. Consider, for instance, a few of his observations that he published in a series of articles in the *Indian Antiquary* (1931-33);

1. "It is **probable** that in Dardic language distinction between dental and cerebral mutes is not as sharp as in India proper".

2. "In Kashmiri and **probably** in all Dardic languages the following pairs of vowels are commonly confused, i.e.

ī, ē; u, o; ū, ẽ."

3. "All the Dardic languages **probably** possess e-matra, but **only** in Kashmiri do we find positive information about it."

No categorical statement of his based on clinching evidence appeared even after 1933 that could release his hypothesis from the confines of mere probability. The words underlined in the excerpts quoted above reflect, in fact, a fair degree of uncertainty when studied further in the light of the linguistic data furnished by the eminent scholar in support of his hypothesis. The data adduced by him in this regard is just confined to tentative resemblances: just some casual sounds, and vagrant vocables regardless of the evidence offered by the structural framework that the Kashmiri language shares with sister languages including Sindhi, Panjabi, Marathi, Gujrati and Bengali. By the way, it is not an old vocable (adopted or adapted) occurring in an utterance that indicates its lineage; on the other hand, the structural matrix in which the vocable is framed is a sure index to the lineage as well as the level of linguistic development of the utterance.

Nor does Grierson's data throw any sure light on the most striking peculiarity of the Kashmiri language, i.e. the morphology of the verb that carries with it the pronominal morphs as well as the synthetical case-morphs of the agentive and the accusative dative. Let us take Vonmas, for instance, meaning: I told him. The form is partially like the Sanskrit **avadam**; but more closely, like the Perisan **goftamash** (which carries the agentive as well as the accusative markets). Was this trait of the old Avestan-Vedic verb-morphology, somehow, alive in the literary memory of Kashmir at the time Kashmiri was evolving out of the regional Prakrit-Apabhramsa round about the tenth century?

The linguistic features vaguely claimed to be shared by the Dardic languages are by no means peculiar to the Shina- Dardic Group, but are already there in the Indo-Iranian heritage. Even if Dardic impact be

detected and conceded here and there, it is too meagre and superficial to warrant formulation of the Dardic origin of Kashmiri. Origin lies not on the surface but has to be identified at the deep structure of the syntax.

Similarly untenable is Grierson's insistence on formulating two main varieties of Kashmiri fondly labelled by him as **Hindu dialect** and **Muslim dialect**. The two versions of the Prodigal son (The Biblical Parable) furnished under the two labels betray methodological arbitrariness because both the versions can be taken as free variation of the Kashmiri utterance common to a Hindu as well a Muslim speaker of the language.

Calling '**Akis mahnavis aasy zu necivy**' typically Hindu, and '**Akis shakhsas aasy zu necivy**' typically Muslim, in contradistinction with each other is quite simplistic, even ludicrous. A Hindu and a Muslim could both have used either of the two vocables, **mahnavis** and **shakhsas** with equal ease and could also have used **zanis** without any inhibition. Both are sensible enough to operate appropriate registers of socio-cultural context irrespective of religious denomination. The next sentence (in the Parable) goes a step further in cooking up the myth of a Hindu dialect and a Muslim dialect in terms of the vocables **manz** and **andar** (respectively) i.e. in **timav manza dop koonsy hivy maalis** and **timav andra dop lokuty hivy maalis**.

Grierson seems to have been unconsciously inhibited by the Fort William model of the Hindu/Urdu syndrome, in terms of Mir Aman's **Urdu** and Lallu Ji Lal's **Hindi**, both meant to enlighten the new entrants into the Indian Civil Service under the Raj. Obviously, Grierson's assistants had not cared to develop a suitable mechanism for verification of the linguistic samples furnished to him in response to indoctrinative terms of reference, somewhat like: speak this as a typical **Hindu**/ as a typical **Muslim**.

Reckless enthusiasts (innocent of linguistic perspectives) have taken widely extreme postures regarding the origin of the Kashmiri language. On the one extreme end are those who are inspired by Khwaja Nazir Ahmad's *Jesus in Heaven or Earth* (1953). Taking their stand on chance resemblance of sounds **detected** in words (of remotely distant stocks) they seek to **prove** that Kashmiri owes its origin to Hebrew moorings. On the other extreme end are those who claim that the Kashmiri language is as old as the Vedic. (Every Indian language, of course is!) Neither of these cadres of crusaders has cared to consult the Kashmiri language itself as to the stratification of its structural evidence. The evidence of the structural matrix of the Kashmiri utterance conclusively establishes that the language of Kashmir is a late medieval development of the Indict (Prakrita- Apabhram's'a) stock, and is quite akin to other modern Indian languages of the Indo-Aryan family.

Historically studied and structurally scrutinized, the Kashmiri language doubtlessly appears to have emerged out of a Prakrita-Apabhram's'a substratum of the region round about the X century. Why else should Ksemendra (XI cent.) have recommended the prospective Sanskrit poets of the time to positively study the **bhasa-Kayya** (: Verse in the regional dialect of Kashmir) alongside the Prakrita-**Apabhram's'a Kavyas**? A few years later, Bilhana, another celebrity of Kashmir, admires the women of his native land for their superb command over both Sanskrit and Prakrit which they wielded with equal ease as if they were wielding their mother tongue (unequivocally termed **janma-bhasa**).

Obviously the mother tongue, in due course, developed into what Siri-Kantha (XIII cent.) has described as **sarva- gocara desa-bhasa** (: the language widely understood in the region by one and all), written of course in the Sharada script.

The nomenclature (: Kashmiri), however, is recorded for the first time by Amir Khusru in his *Nuh Sipihir* (C. 1300 A.D.). He mentions the word **Kashmiri** alongside **Lahori** and **Sindhi** as an outstanding name in India's linguistic landscape of the times.

Yet, dominated by the classical language, the vehicle of elitist culture, Kashmiri had to remain content as a medium of lowbrow (folk) culture, mostly catering to the literary needs of the non-privileged. It was generally cultivated by those that either had the inner urge to compose verse in the mother tongue or by

those that simply failed to make a mark in the classical language. It, nevertheless, flourished as a language of rich expression as is reflected by its folksong and folktale sparking with proverbial collocation.

In this context it would be worthwhile to get a peep or two into the historical legacy of the classical language that have left their deep impress on the Kashmiri language by conditioning its growth in terms of form as well as scope.

The earliest evidence of the Sanskrit-writing in Kashmir is that of the *Sarvastivada* tradition of the Mahayana preoccupying itself with dissemination of the Dhamma, as perceived and interpreted by Kashmiri savants and scholars. It was their reputation for eminence that attracted Hieun Tsiang to Kashmir (in 631 A.D.) where, as many as twenty scribes were placed at his disposal for copying manuscripts preserved at the Jayendra-vihara of the city. The Chinese pilgrim's impressions of his two years' stay at the Vihara are an eloquent testimony to the pervasive presence of Sanskrit in Kashmir.

The language may not ever have been a spoken language of the Valley; yet it continued to be not only the language of Kashmir's court and culture but also of creative as well as critical writing till the late 14th century. It contributed to religious thinking and aesthetic appreciation as also to poetic articulation, both lyrical and reflective. Among its outstanding contribution may be mentioned:

1. The philosophic writing on Kashmir Saivism, particularly on the Trika Dars'ana also called the *Pratyabhyna*.
2. Systematization of various schools of Indian Poetics propounding original points of view not only on *Rasa* but also on *Riti*, *Dhvani*, *Vakrokti* and *Aucitya*.
3. Collections of (Brihatkatha) tales. Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*, in particular, provided the models for various versions in world language, through the mediation of the Persian rendering.
4. Historical narratives like the *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana who struck a new path in verse-writing by structuring the historical flux of time into a sizable chronicle covering some currents and cross-currents of Kashmir's past down to the middle of the twelfth century.
5. The satire of Ksemendra who caricatured agents of administrative bungling and debunked promoters of moral dereliction.

Manuscripts of these Sanskrit works, have come down to us in the Sharada script which emerged out of the Brahmi (Gupta) script towards the beginning of the ninth century. Naturally, therefore, the same script served the purposes of Kashmiri language also when it came to be written in the tenth century. Curiously enough the script continued to be in use for some time even after the advent of Islam and for a few years coexisted with the Persi-Arabic script particularly on some tomb-stones.

Sanskrit, naturally, continued to be the language of court and culture for a few years even after the advent of Islam (in Kashmir) till the Persian language totally replaced it as the language of court and administration. Establishment of Islam in the Valley (by the middle of the XIV century) opened up a two-way intercourse between Kashmir and the centres of Persian culture, particularly Khurasan, Samarkand, Bukhara, Merv and Herat. Divines and Sufis from these seats of learning and culture brought with them the Persian language and literature, while princes, scholars and traders from Kashmir also felt tempted to see a bit of the outside world.

Interlinguistic exchanges threw up valuable works like Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri's *Bahr-al Asmar* (: Persian rendering of Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*), prepared at the instance of Zain-ul-abidin (1420-70 AD), and Srivar's *Kathakautuka* (Sanskrit rendering of Jami's *Yusaf-Zulaikha*) prepared in 1505 AD. During the

Mughal period (1586-1752 AD) in Kashmir, we find a galaxy of Kashmir's Persian writers rubbing shoulders with their contemporaries from Iran, particularly from Mashad and Hamadan, besides those from other parts of the subcontinent. Persian, thus, flourished and lingered on in Kashmir as language of administration down to the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925 AD) when Urdu and English (in part) took over from it.

Yet, during the five centuries of its sway in Kashmir the rich language produced over three hundred writers and more than a thousand (major and minor) works, creative as well as critical. Its popularity with all sections of Kashmirian society became so pervasive that even the Kashmiri Pandits felt tempted to read their masterpieces like the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagavata, Yogavasistha, Shivapurana and Bhagavat Gita in Persian rendering. Most of the Pandit families treasured the Manuscripts of the *Sir-e Akbar* by Dara Shikuh who during his visit to Kashmir was inspired to undertake the Persian rendering of the Upanishads. In the prologue to the work he informs us how he felt induced to attempt such a gigantic task of cross-cultural dissemination when in 1050 A.H. (corresponding to 1640 A.D.) he was thrilled to see his preceptor, Akhun Mullah Shah (at his Hari Parbat abode) holding converse with seekers belonging to diverse orders of spiritual quest. It was on his return to Banaras that very year that he sought the guidance of local scholars, and completed the work by 1067 A.H. (corresponding to 1656 A.D.).

Evidently it was the Vaak-Shruk temper of Kashmir that had enraptured Akhun Mulla Shah, highly respected preceptor of Dara Shikuh who later on, in his *Majma-ul Bahrin* (The Confluence of the Two Oceans) shared his awareness of spiritual affinities with his readers, Muslims as well as non-Muslims. No wonder that even non-Muslims of Kashmir enjoyed reading Persian classics like the Mathnavi of Moulana Rumi, the Shahnama of Firdusi and the Sikandarnama of Nizami. These in fact, used to be taught in the **maktabs** often run by Kashmiri Pandit **Akhuns** who had no inhibition in popularizing Persian handbooks even on the **Karmakanda** (ritual) including chunks of Jyotisha (astrology) and **Ayurveda** (: Indian system of medicine). Such handbooks, often, revealed in quoting excerpts from original (Sanskrit) texts in the Sharada script. Some tracts on Kashmiri music of the Sufiana Kalam variety also were compiled in the Sharada script which almost withered away by the end of the nineteenth century.

It was natural, therefore, that when Persian progressively became the language of administration as well as cultural intercourse, Kashmiri also adopted the Persi-Arabic script which since has been accepted as the official script after a number of attempts at modification. These were meant to ensure due representation of sounds specific to the articulation of Kashmiri phonemes.

Earlier, however, the Nagari script was first employed for the Kashmiri language by Pandit Ishwar Kaul for his monumental work on Kashmiri Grammar titled *Kashmira- Sabdamritam*. His system of diacritics was adopted by Grierson not only for his Dictionary of the Kashmiri Language, but also for his editions of Kashmiri classics like *Sivaparinaya*, *Krishnavatara* and *Ramavataracarita*, published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta. During mid twenties Toshkhani adopted it with slight modification for his Kashmiri Primer and *Granz Vyad* (on Calculation) and also for small anthologies like *Sundar-Vaani*. Those very days the *Bahar-e-Kashmir* of Lahore included a section on Kashmiri in the Devanagari script. In mid-thirties the *Pratap* Magazine of the S. P. College, Srinagar, started Kashmiri sections in both Persian and Devanagari scripts.

Later, Masterji brought out an abridged text of Parmanand's works in two volumes of *Parmananda-Sukti-Sar* and published his own collection of verse, *Sumran* also in both the scripts. But the first persistent attempt to employ the Nagari script for the purposes of contemporary Kashmiri was made by the periodical, *Pamposh* of Delhi. Later the practice has been commendably continued by the *Koshur Samachar* of the Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi.

The Kashmiri language which has throughout missed court patronage except for a brief period during Sultan Zain-ul Abidin's reign (1420-70) had, however, to face the odds and carry on at the folk level

despite elitistic disinterest bordering on classical arrogance. Though denied facilities of schooling in it, the language persisted in its non-formal role as an inevitable medium of interpretation even in the State schools at the Primary level as it had done earlier in *Pathshalas* and *Makhtabs*. The language continued to perform the vital role of an interpreter even in the early forties when the State introduced *Asan Urdu* in both the (Persian and Nagari) scripts as the common medium of instruction at the Primary level.

As Urdu in both the scripts was introduced on the recommendation of a Committee with Zakir Hussain as the Chairman and Khwaja Ghulam-us-Sayedain as Secretary, the other members being Siddheshwar Varma and Raghuvira. The committee, in fact, produced a basic Glossary of *Asan Urdu Terms* (published in both the scripts). Somehow the project was not effectively followed up after Saiyedian relinquished the State job.

During the mid-seventies, however, it was again deemed advisable to equip school teachers (of the State) with a knowledge of both the scripts but mysteriously, again, the scheme was shelved, almost hushed up, despite the fact that the Kashmir University Department of Correspondence Courses, now called Distance Education, got a set of textbooks prepared in each of the two scripts.

Meantime, the Kashmir University set up a Kashmiri Department for post-graduate studies in language and literature with the laudable objective of producing competent Kashmiri scholars who could in due course be employed as Kashmiri teachers in the Higher Secondary Schools. Later, perhaps, they could think of coming down to the Primary level. Anyway, from the apex to the base, a new strategy, no doubt, but in response to what exigency? Nobody knows; even those that have cared to know do not know for certain.

What one knows for certain, however, is that by early eighties a whispering campaign was set afoot (in the Valley) against any attempt to pinpoint strands of composite culture symbolized by the **Vaak** of Lal Ded and the **Shruk** of *Nund Rishi* (Sheikh Noor ud Din Noorani). Any such attempt was derided as highly objectionable in the changing circumstances of militant insurgency. What was sought to be aggressively highlighted was any point of departure of Kashmiri language and culture from anything that carried echoes of Indian heritage of inter-community concord and harmony, perceiving unity in diversity.

Such being the latest scenario of inhibitive manoeuvres in the Valley, the linguistic predicament of the State has assumed a graver complexity. Administrative disdain has become fortified by a clannish hostility to the mother tongue dreaded as a cultural rival to the Urdu language. The reactionary zealots view it as a vital link in the chain of fundamentalist postures of insurgency. The damage done to the genuine cause of Kashmiri seems to be nobody's concern. A canard has been cunningly floated that it is the Central Government that thwarts the State Government's efforts to introduce the Kashmiri language at the Primary level. An insidious campaign to brainwash the youngsters clamouring for speedy redressal of the sidetracked cause has created the wrong impression that the State would have given the mother tongue its due if the Centre had not stood in their way. The distortionists boisterously argue that the Centre dreads the Kashmiri language as a focal point of Kashmiri identity. According to the canard the centre would not like the younger generation to appreciate how the Sahitya Academy (at the Centre) is keen to see that the Kashmiri language presents its best year by year. If the State fails to give it a proper go how can the Centre help it?

Administrative inconvenience, after all, is not incurable; it can be sagaciously managed provided there is the will to do so and egalitarian perspectives are allowed to operate undaunted by chauvinistic pressures. Let us probe the genesis of these pressures, succumbing to which even the well-meaning initiatives were foiled from time to time.

It appears that during the fifties the New Kashmir aspirations were dynamic enough to give the Kashmiri language a chance. The language was made at one stroke a subject of study as well as a medium of instruction. But soon the overcautious bureaucracy seems to have had after thoughts. They viewed the experiment as extremely inconvenient, for, despite its constitutional status Kashmiri, after all, was a mother tongue likely to inspire other mother tongues of the State also to press for their claims to be accommodated in the school curriculum. What added to their perturbation was the displacement of Urdu

the mother tongues were likely to cause. It was easy for wirepullers to take refuge under the blanket concern for 'national integration.'

The pretence, however, could easily be knocked out of bottom by pointing out that the mother tongue would peacefully co-exist with Urdu, the link language of the State. It should be the proud privilege of Urdu to perform its mighty role, coordinative as well as creative. As a coordinator it would introduce the mother tongue to one another, while as a vehicle of creativity it would enrich them by exposure to innovative articulation manifesting itself in the subcontinent and the world. It need not tread upon the heels of any other tongue of the State, much less the mother tongue which certainly deserves a proper place of its own at the initial stages of schooling. The link language (Urdu) has not only to accommodate the mother tongue by respecting its inalienable right to form the corner stone of the edifice called schooling but also to place at its disposal the consolidated funds of its maturity. But will the State allow it to perform its genuine role in the circumstances?

A child has, after all, to outgrow the smaller circles into wider circumferences of socio-cultural interaction. Hence the need to learn a language or two over and above the mother tongue for which there can be no substitute whatsoever. It is high time, therefore, that no more time is lost in rehabilitating the Kashmiri language primarily as a mother tongue.

The linguistic predicament of the State, accordingly, is a pedagogic challenge to ensure proper placement of various languages and dialects spoken in an area of linguistic criss- cross, by working out a viable order of priorities and a sustainable system of linkages. The task concerned is, no doubt, a tough one, but it certainly deserves to be undertaken on a project basis.

Subject to availability of a basic minimum of instructional material any mother tongue can be introduced as the first language at the initial stage of schooling, but as emphasized earlier, one and only one script should be introduced at a time during a single term. A second script should be taken up only after the first one is thoroughly drilled. Overambitious parents may expect their child to flaunt his/ her acquaintance with the Roman script even before he/ she has practised the script of the mother tongue; but perceptive teachers will take care not to allow such inflictions. No such project nevertheless, can be worked out in isolation. May be the NCERT also will have to lend a helping hand in this regard by reconsidering some of its rigidities and taboos in the context of simultaneous introduction of at least two scripts, Nagari and Roman, for instance. In case the script of the link language happens to be different from that of the mother language, the pupil may have to learn a third script also, as (for instance) in the case of Panjabi and Bodhi. But, to lighten the instructional burden and optimise the learning output viable strategies of teaching a script can be suitably devised and gainfully employed.

Linguistic predicament of the State, thus, calls for appropriate logistics of pedagogy involving a thorough overhaul of curricula and syllabi at the initial stage. As a suggestive illustration, for instance, a viable model could be worked out on the following lines, in the context of the Kashmiri language:

At K.G. level:

1. L.K.G: Action-oriented (playway) chit-chat in the mother tongue with reference to telling models and charts facilitating an awareness of the child's links with his/her associates and immediate surroundings. No script is to be taught at this level.

2. U.K.G: Similar programmes in the link language (Urdu) in both the scripts, Persian and Nagari, may be run facilitating interlinguistic comprehension.

GRADE ONE

I Term: The script of the mother tongue may be taught through phonegraphemic pictorial making the process of learning immensely absorbing. Special care has to be taken to enable the new learner to recognize the correspondence between the sound of the alphabet and the graphemic visualization. The

visuals have to be duly followed up with a fascinatingly thorough drill in writing the letters in significant sequence so that the learner is in a position to identify the scripted form of the utterance he/she is already familiar with.

II Term: A Zero-Reader featuring the basic utterance patterns of the Kashmiri language framed in significant contexts and situations, should certainly inspire the learner to go ahead on his/her own.

GRADE TWO

I Term: With Kashmiri as the main medium of instruction, rudiments of environmental geography, civics, general science and mathematics may be imparted.

II Term: Side by side, a well-integrated programme of conversational segments of the link language (Urdu) may be worked out, through a suitable Zero-Reader. The Reader is expected to feature basic essentials of Urdu utterance ensuring a thorough comprehension of a generative framework within which new vocables could be fixed up as and when needed.

GRADE THREE

I Term: Kashmiri would continue to be taught as a regular subject while Urdu (in either script) would take over from it as a common medium of instruction.

II Term: Roman script would be introduced after an absorbing drill of visual interface with the graphemes in terms of easily recognizable pictures indicating the sounds concerned in telling sequences.

GRADE FOUR and FIVE

Urdu will continue as the common medium of instruction, throughout and, besides, shall be there as a subject of study. Kashmiri will be taught as a subject of study ensuring a suitable cross-section of curricular needs as well as a vital interface with the language. The linguistic predicament of the State certainly clamours for a timely experiment like the one suggested above.

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4.0 PARMANAND (1791-1879)

Parmanand rose to enviable eminence not only as a saint, but also as a poet articulating spiritual insights. Born in the family of a village Patwari he was named Nanda or Nanda Ram, and his persistent endeavour transformed him into Parmanand (*Parma Ananda, i.e. Supreme Bliss*) His father, Krishna Pandit, belonged to the village Seer, about three kilometers away from Mattan where he was working as Patwari. His mother, Sarswati, was a pious lady thoroughly conversant with the spiritual heritage of the community, despite her illiteracy.

Parmanand received his formal 'schooling' in a Maktab where he was given a smattering of rudimentary Sanskrit with a working knowledge of the Persian courses deemed essential for a prospective patwari. Persian was, those days, not only the language of administration but also the language of cultural transmission of even the Sanskritic lore, including religion and philosophy, astrology and ritualistic tracts. Parmanand availed of this traditional facility too as is obvious from the copy of the (Persian) Upanikhat left by him. Yet, it was the live contact of Nand Ram with the saints and spiritual aspirants at Mattan and around that deepened his longing for self-realization notwithstanding the demands of his profession, and the resentment of his ambitious wife Maalded. She was the daughter of a successful patwari and naturally expected her husband to make hay while the sun shone.

Parmanand braved the stress and strain of the times, and persisted in his Sadhana under competent guidance of a genuine Paramahamsas. His admirers like Saleh Ganai, the Zailder of Mattan, looked after his material needs and provided him a congenial atmosphere for spiritual preoccupation, so that he could articulate his aspiration as well as realization. In his utterance we therefore, find the unfolding of a variety of spiritual layers. During the Amarnath pilgrimage days he had witnessed the multidimensional manifestation of spiritual quest at Mattan and had realized the need to "proceed from the (external) cave to the personal cave (within)' and to face the selfless Self, meditate on the Sahaja (In boro Truth)." The interplay of the individual Soul and the Cosmic Soul was for him a Leelaa (sport of the Spirit) which he presented variously in his verse, particularly in his three Leelaa poems, Shiva-Lagan (Siva's Wedding), Raadaa-Svayamvar (Radha's Choice of Her Own Man) and Sodaam- Tsareth (Sudama's Story). The allegorical nuance has all through remained unobtrusive yet significant, within the convincing depiction of personal and interpersonal contours of social behaviour such as: parental solicitude to see the daughter suitably married away, and the girl's ambition to secure the boy of her own choice. Parmanand has thus achieved remarkable success weaving the Pauranic legends into contemporary realities of pervasive import artlessly harmonized with the allegorical significance, such as in the following rendering:

*"Gokul is my heart wherein thrives the pasture of your kine;
O Lord, shining in consciousness !
Mindways are the Gopi's running reckless after you;
maddened by the call of Krishna's flute,
Losing sentience and feeling, forgetting self and non-self...."*

Parmanand's Raasleelaa (in his Raadaa Svayamvar) symbolizes the universal dance of cosmic consciousness, integrating the secular with the spiritual:

*"Wandering all around they find him at no point,
they hear from far away the flute alone.
None plays there with anyone else,
none but Krishna there; Krishna alone, cowherd lads and lasses,*

*men, women, none is there who is not He
.... Trees and plants and stones with eyes agape unravel secrets of the inner depth."*

The Shiva-Lagan, similarly signifies the union of Shiva and Shakti at both the immanent and the transcendental levels; while the Sodaam-Tsarete reflects the unshakable ties between the Oversoul and the individual soul, in the ideal friendship of Krishna and Sudama. Similar concern with the essential rather than the ephemeral reverberates in the smaller poems of Parmananda, and quite a number of them sound as spiritual rhapsodies over-flowing with spontaneous lyricism. He left the Kashmiri language positivity richer than he had found it.

5.0 SANSKRIT KAAVYA OF KASHMIR

Sanskrit Kaavya or poetical composition contributed by Kashmir is quite considerable not only in quantity but in quality also. It is so in spite of the fact that much of the stuff presented in most of the so-called mahaakaavyas is conventional, pedantic and even banal; for, these defects and blemishes are more than compensated by the departures registered by writers from Kashmir, particularly in narrative verse and realistic depiction.

It is indeed a grim irony that most of the Sanskrit writers of Kashmir referred to by Kshemendra, Kalhana and Mankha as their predecessors or contemporaries are, today, mere names for us. We, for instance, hear of a Mahaakavi Chandra flourishing in the reign of Tunjeena alias Ranaaditya (c. 319 A. D.) whose play attracted large audiences from all classes of people. Abhinavagupta also recognised him as a fine playwright. Yet no work of his has come down to us. Of the stray verses ascribed to him in anthologies the best is the one that ends with the immortal line

<verses>

['Darling, the time-gazelle, once gone, cannot return.']

Another great poet whose works must have positively enriched Sanskrit poetry is Mentha or Bhartmentha, a rare genius, as is borne out by the stray verses of his, preserved for us by theoreticians like Kshemendra and anthologists like Vallabhadeva. His mahaakaavya, Hayagreevavadha was held in high esteem even by his royal patron, Maatrgupta, a poet in his own right.

More than a dozen kings of Kashmir are said to have made a mark in the domain of Sanskrit verse also, Jayaapeeda and Harsha being the most prominent of them. Against the background of this royal participation in Kashmir's literary activity it is not difficult to grasp the significance of Bilhana's remark that in Kashmir poetry grew as luxuriantly as Kunkuma or saffron:

<verses>

The earliest work that reveals some purple patches of literary value is the Neelamata Puraana (c. 600 A. D.); yet it can hardly be regarded as a kaavya. The earliest Sanskrit kaavya in Kashmir has, therefore, to be recognised in the Arjuna-Raavaneeyam of Bhoomaka (c. 650 A. D.), which appears to be patterned on the Bhattikaavyam. Though described (in the colophon) as a mahaakaavya the work is primarily intended to illustrate the rules of grammar as formulated in the Ashtaadhyayee of Paanini. Most of the twenty seven sargas of the composition are styled according to the Ashtaadhyayee paadas such as gaankutaadipaada and bhoovaadipaada; while the content is worked out on the theme of the skirmish between Raavana and Kaartaveeryaarjuna, in about 1500 verses. Like the Kiraataarjuneeya of Bhaaravi it starts with the auspicious word shree:

<verses>

Despite the limitations imposed by the basic objective (of illustrating Paanianian sootras) Bhoomaka has presented quite a lot of readable stuff.

Yet, by and large, it appears that Sanskrit writers in Kashmir concentrated more on the critical aspect than on the creative, till the ninth century. The only notable exception is that of Udbhata who flourished in the reign of Jayaapeeda (779 - 813 A. D.). He preferred to illustrate his views on poetic ornamentation (as formulated by him in his Kaavyaalankaara-saara-samgraha) with his own poetic composition, Kumaarasambhava, imitating, of course, the Kalidasan classic. Surprisingly enough, the theoretician poet fairly succeeds in giving us a sizable number of poetic pieces which cannot be dismissed as a poor copy

of the Katidasan masterpiece. The local colour introduced by Udbhata is thematically appropriate and artistically satisfying. Of particular interest in this connection are the pieces describing the advent of autumn or depicting Shiva's amorous solicitude for the distraught Gauree, soon after Kaama was consumed to ashes by the unrelenting flame leaping out from Shiva's third eye. It is a pity that only 95 verses of the work are preserved in the Kaavyaalankaara-saara-samgraha, and the remaining portion has not so far been recovered.

Another poet of eminence who adorned the court of Jayaapeeda is Daamodaragupta whose Kuttineematam effectively leavens pornography with realistic touches of wit and satire, and appropriately depicts the milieu in which the erotic adventures are periscope. The theme centres round the prospective courtesan Maalatee, of Vaaraanasee who approached the veteran Vikaraalaa for expert advice. The seasoned procuress reveals to the lovely aspirant various tricks of trade, relating to her a number of illustrative tales. An outstanding feature of the coverage is a sort of running commentary on the stage performance of Harsha's Ratnaavalee; and particularly charming is the description of the Spring Festival of Cupid, a riot of colourful abandon. The 1058 verses of this unusual composition are of absorbing interest not only for the authentic peep it offers into the psychology of extramarital relations, but also for the artistic handling of the theme. The performance is all the more remarkable for freedom from inhibition despite the poet's express assurance at the end that a perusal of the poem will positively save the reader from falling into the snares of pimps, scoundrels and procuresses. Daamodargupta's command over the language is extraordinary without being pedantic, as is clear from the following verse where pedantry has been tastefully warded off:

<verses>

Wearing a garland she is a Sragdharaa; fair-faced, she is a Suvadanaa; delightful, she is, who is a Praharshinee; with a delicate waist she is, no doubt, a Tanumadhya; whom does she not impress as a Ruchiraa? Sweet of speech she is, indeed a Subbaashinee.

To the VIII century may also be ascribed the Sragdharaastotram of Sarvajnamitra who, in 37 verses (of the Sragdharaa metre) propitiates Taaraa in the deenaakrandana style, making a clean confession of his sins and weaknesses, and striking an intimate note like

<verses>

[Don't you see I am being severally and collectively driven along by my own weaknesses such as deceit, envy, pride, and similar mean forces, like a monastery camel, each and everybody's property?] or,

<verses>

[Does a physician, with all his ample compassion, withhold treatment from one even though on brink of death?]

The Tibetan tradition recorded by the Pagsam-jon-sang may be substantially correct that Sarvajnamitra, 'though born in Kashmir was a student of the monastery at Nalanda in Magadha where he became a great master of sciences'; for, the commentator on his work describes himself as 'Raajaguru Pandita Bhikshu Shri Jinaraksita of the Shreemad Vikramasheela Mahaavihaara'. No wonder that the stotra has become part of the Tibetan Tangyur, like a few other works by Kashmiri scholars, particularly those by the Kashmirian Pandit teacher Ravigupta. Among the Tibetan renderings of these is one by the great Kashmirian Pandit Shaakya Shree Bhadra, in 21 small chapters.

Such was the literary landscape in the VIII century Kashmir before the court epic appeared as a formal mahaaakaavya. The mahaaakaavya in Kashmir, in fact, flourished after its decline in most other parts of the country; hence the dismal fact that it suffered decadence in the prime of youth. Nevertheless, the

reign of Avantivarman (855-84 A.D.) gave a positive fillip to it. Of the poets that belonged to his court, Ratnaakara had already finalised his Haravijaya at the court of Jayaapeeda, for the colophon describes him as 'Shree-Baala-Brhaspati-anujeevin' (a protege of Jayaapeeda alias Baala-Brhaspati). A few years before Avantivarman ascended the throne, the mahaakaavya in Kashmir seems to have registered a bold departure in the Bhuvanaabhyudaya of Shankuka. The poem, according to Kalhana, was a historical composition on the fierce battle between Mamma and Utpala (c. 850 A. D.) in which

<verses>

'the flow of the Vitasta was held up with the corpses of the valient warriors failing on the battlefield.' The loss of such an unusal work is, therefore, really tragic.

The earliest mahaakaavya (in Kashmir) that has survived, however, is the Havavijaya (of Raajaanaka Ratnaakara) which apparently is modelled on Magha's masterpiece, the Shishupaalavadha. The plot, obviously, is Pauraanika: Shiva's victory over Andhakaasura whom he destroys in deference to the wishes of the gods oppressed by the demon. The treatment of so slender a thread of narrative in as many as fifty cantos (totalling up 4321 verses), could hardly be possible without disproportionate paddings and digressions loosely held together under the pedantic pretext of developing the mahaakaavya elements. Even the main theme the poem has had to wait till the VI canto and to get sidetracked by a preoccupation with conventional 'war debates' (cantos IX-XVI) and an obsession with erotic trivialities (cantos XVII-XX, XXII-XXVIII). What has a ring of authenticity in Bhaaravi's Kirantaarjuneeya, and manages to evoke admiration even in Maagha's Shishupaalavadha, becomes here, a vain display of laboured wordmanship. Even the large variety of metres employed by the 'mahaakavi' cannot retrieve the poem; nor can occasional flourishes of exquisite language (matching the sound to the sense) justify the poet's boast:

<verses>

Nevertheless, the work contains 3 number of fine specimens that speak highly of Ratnaakara's talent (which, unfortunately fell a victim to conventional application). Here are a few outstanding cameos of nature depiction

<verses>

('The disc of the rising sun shining red like fresh blood on the altar-like cliff of the sun-rise top looked like the 'labour-bed' on which the Glory of early dawn is delivering sharp.')

<verses>

('In the evening, when the solar disc was hanging on the sunset peak and the fullmoon was emerging on the sunrise-cliff, the Glory of the firmament appeared holding two bronze cymbals, as if keeping time with the twilight-dance of Shiva.')

It was this verse that earned the poet the title 'Taala Ratnaakara', on the analogy of 'Deepashikhaa Kaalidaasa', 'Aataptra Bhaaravi' and Ghantaa Maagha'

<verses>

(' While that nectar?emitting moon was embracing the Lady Night,
whose garment of darkness had slipped away,
her friends, the quarters smiling bright with faces
shimmering in the rays as slender as the lotus fibre ? bits silently stepped away.')

Ratnaakara's Vakrokti? parrcaashikaa also suffers from banal word mongering, though brilliant repartees like the following are not wanting either:

<verses>

Shivaswaamin, Ratnaakara's junior contemporary at Avantivarman's court, appears to have been equally prolific in turnout of verses in a large number of metres; but his Kapphinaabhyudaya is content with only 20 cantos in which he chooses to spin out a mahaakaavya based on a simple Avadaana story. According to this Buddhist legend the Master intervenes in the bloody feud between the king Prasenajit of Sraavasti and the king Kapphina of Leelaavatee (in the Vindhyas). When, on hearing the Buddha's sermon, Kapphina expresses his desire to enter the Samgha, the Master advises him, instead, to practise selfless discharge of duties as a dedicated ruler.

Shivatvaamin seems to have drawn upon Maagha as well as Ratnaakara; and the striking similarities are not confined to the structural frame?work of the poem but cover both the form and the content, and often border upon apparent plagiarism. Yet, like Ratnaakara, he too has a number of good verses to his credit, and unlike Ratnaakara, evinces command over simplicity of expression also, as in:

<verses>

Among other pieces of high literary merit Shivasvaamin gives us a very spirited description of the enraged assembly in which the chieftains are portrayed wringing their hands in fury at the aggressive designs of the foe. The episode, no doubt, reminds us of similar scenes in the Kiraataarjuneeya and the Shishupaalavadha; but Shivasvaamin is no cheap imitator. His profound originality is quite refreshing at times. In the episode just referred to, for instance, the war?council protests against the policy of procrastination and apathy, and pleads for immediate drastic action:

<verses>

The fact that Shivaswaamin has taken pains to excel both Maagha and Ratnaakara in literary gymnastics called chitrabandha (alone with pratilomaanuloma, sarvatobhadra and ekaakshara etc.) is only an index to the literary fashion of the age, despite the awe?inspiring advocacy of dhvani (poetic suggestion) by Aanandavardhana who also belonged to Avantivarman's court. Of the four works of Aanandavardhana, referred to by him in his Dhvanyaaloka, Arjunacharita and Madhumathanavijaya appear to have been in Sanskrit while the other two, Vishhamabaanaleelaa and Harivijaya were in Parkrit. Since none of these has come down to us we are not in a position to see how far the poet had himself practised what later on preached in his Dhvanyaaloka. The tesimony of his Deveeshataka, however, is rather hostile; for, in this work, his extreme preoccupation with the chitrabandha is shocking at times. Did he develop his views on dhvani after he had seen through the alankaara and the reeti schools of Indian poetics?

The Dhvani theory, naturally, sounded quite perplexing to the traditionalist poets and poetasters, some of whom did fairly well in their own old way. A near contemporary of Aanandavardhana was the celebrated Jayantabhatta whose Nyaayamanjaree, a landmark in Indian Nyaaya literature, also is enlivened by poetic expression here and there; but what is more important from literary point of view is the Aagamadambara, in which he dramatises in four acts the religeo-social predicament of his times, the reign of Shankaravarman (883-902 A. D.). Quite a number of verses in the play are of high poetic merit in the non-conventional context of satire and caricature (which was earlier attempted by Daamodaragupta and, later, carried forward by Kshemendra and, to a considerable extent, by Kalhana also). This, for instance, is how he presents the sarcastic remark of a non-believer:

<verses>

God is, here, ridiculed as 'the son of a barren woman, bathed in the mirage-waters, bearing sky-flowers

on the crest of his head, and carrying a bow made of the horn of a hare'.

Jayantabhata's son, Abhinanda versified the main story of Baana's Kadambaree, and as is obvious from the title of his work, Kadambaree-kathaa-saara, he narrated the romance without caring to go into detailed description of romantic settings. His narration, nevertheless, has advantage of ease and lucidity, a glaring contrast to the florid, highflown and involved diction of the recognised masters that has preceded him. His approach, however, is more pauraanic than poetic. The only other poet to render the Kadambari in verse was Kshemendra (whose Padyakaadambari is no more extant).

The poetic element chose a new mode of expression in the works of Kshemendra; but in the context of a mahaakaavya it emerged in Vikramaankadevacharitam of Bilhana. He had by that time become the Vidvaapati at the Chalukyan king, Vikramaaditya VI Tribhuvanamalla (1076-1127 A.D.) at Kalyana in (Karnataka), with all its shortcomings as a historical document, this poem of his registers a bold departure from the earlier mahaakaavyas: it dovetails objective facts of history into imaginative improvisations of court culture. Such an experiment had, earlier, been successfully carried out in prose by Baanabhata, but Bilhana was the first to try it in verse. Probably it was his example that was followed up by Jalhana (c. 1103 A. D.) in his (now lost) Sompaalacharita (glorifying the exploits of Somapaala, the dashful military governor of Raajapuree, breaking away from Uccala). The model was, perhaps, considerably improved upon by Kalhana in his (now lost) Jayasi rhaabhyudaya which appears to have, later on, been incorporated into the Raajataranginee itself.

Bilhan has been generally lauded for his command over the diction characterised as vaidarbheereti, which he himself describes as

<verses>

'a cloudless shower of ambrosia for ears, the native-land of Sarasvatee's elegance.' This type of felicity is, no doubt, there even in his hyperbole

<verses>

Yet, his descriptions are often charming and true to life as, for instance, that of his own village Khonamoosha (present day Khonmuh) or, the description of Aahavamalla's death, a fine piece of simple pathos. This emotional richness of Bilhana's verse reaches its climax in his Chaurapanchaashikaa, a master-piece of elegant lyricism to which we shall turn again in proper context. An outstanding feature of the Vikramaankadevacharitam, though not an intrinsic element of the 'mahaakaavya', is the poet's description of his native land as well as his trip abroad through Mathura, Vrindaavana, Kaanyakubja, Prayaaga, Vaaraanasee, Daahala (Bundelkhand), Anhilvaada (Gujarat), Somanaatha, Raameshvaram and Kalyana. He seems to have left the Chalukyan court before his patron led an expedition to and beyond the Nerbada in 1088 A. D.

Like Bilhana, Mankha also has incidentally offered us revealing glimpses into the Kashmir of his times (c. 1140 A. D.), in the third and the last (XXV) cantos of his Shreekanthacharitam which, again turns to a shiva-legend for the frame-work of his 'mahaakavya'. He seems to have led a tirade against sycophancy in court poetry, and exclaims with pride that he has not flattered anybody except Shreekantha. Equally significant is his reaction against the growing tendency of the age to overburden verse with decorative artifices, and also his strong plea for a sympathetic and unbiased study of all genuine poetry:

<verses>

Hence his emphasis on the utility of literary meets and discussions:

<verses>

He had actually submitted his own composition to the assembly of the learned at the house of his older brother (Alankaara), and delighted at the superb recitation of 'his enthralling verse', the discerning audience were 'moved to tears of joy':

<verses>

Most of the poets mentioned by Mankha in connection with this assembly have been eminent in their own way. Thus, Loshthadeva, master of six languages, is known to us by his Deenaakrandanastotra which he composed while at Varanasi; Jalhana sought to immortalise his patron, the saandhivigrahika of Raajapuree (present day Rajauri) in his Somapaalacharitham (no more extant); Shambhoo Mahaakavi wrote Anyoktimuktaalataa and Raajendrakarnapooraa, a 75-verse panegyric of his patron, Harshhadeva (1073-1101); and Kalyaana (whom Buhler has rightly identified as Kalhana), is the celebrated author of the Rajataranginee.

The only notable composition of the court-epic type, attempted after the Rajataranginee is the Prthveeraajavijaya of Jayaanaka, which celebrates the elusive victory of the Chaahamaana king Prithveeraaja over Shabab-ud-Din of Ghaur in 1193 A. D. In the thirteenth century, however, Jayaratha ingeniously wove a number of Shaiva myths and legends into a 'mahaakaavya' of as many as 32 cantos, namely the Haracharithachintaamani. The work betrays symptoms of a religious psychosis manifesting itself in a narrow sectarian outlook, threatening the deviationists with dire metaphysical consequences.

This much about the conventional kaavya or mahaakaavya in Kashmir. As to the lyric which reached its full bloom in Bilhana's Chaurapanchaashikaa, quite a large number of stray verses of lyrical quality are quoted in various works on poetics, and anthologies. Kshemendra, in particular, cites a sizeable number in his handbooks on poetics and metrics. Of these, Bhallata has been highly praised for his Shataka, by Abhinava, Kshemendra and Mammata. He was preceded by Muktaakana and his brother Chakrapaala. Loshtaka has already been mentioned in connection with his Deenaakrandana. Abhinavagupta's reflective hymns, despite their mystic content, are characterised by a robust outlook on life; and remind us of Shankaraachaarya's spiritual rhapsodies. But, unlike Shankara, his emphasis is on an integrated personality in which the material and the spiritual blend in harmony; and therefore, he sings,

<verses>

'Renounce naught, cling to nothing, enjoy yourself unruffled, howsoever circumscribed you be.'

Abhinava's preceptor had already sought to synthesise philosophical subtlety with devotional fervour in his Shivastotraavalee. This very spiritual lyricism had earlier appeared in the Sragdharaastotram of Sarvajnamitra and later, in the stavachintaamanee of Bhatta Naaraayana. Centuries later it reappeared in the Stutikusumaanjalee of Jagaddhara (c. 1350 A. D.) and coursed through the minor works of Baka (XV cent.), Aananda (XVI cent.), Avataara (XVII cent.), Saahib Kaula (XVII cent.) and Gopaala Raajaanaka (XVIII cent.) Shilhana's Shaantishataka (c. 1200 A. D.) is apparently an imitation of Bhartraharee's Vairaagyashataka. A few gems of lyrical lustre are there in narrative works also as, for instance, in the works of Kshemendra, particularly his Manjarees and the Dashaavataaracharita. But the brightest gem of lyrical verse in Kashmir is, as pointed out earlier, the Chaurapanchaashikaa of Bilhana, a real masterpiece of elegant lyricism. Each of the 50 stanzas of this tender romance of a young teacher with his sweet pupil, a princess begins with 'adyaapi, an enchanting word of reminiscence, and depicts in simple melody an amorous scene of the lovers' romantic encounters, against which the pathos of a love-lorn heart becomes all the more haunting. Here, for instance, is an unforgettable glimpse, though a little blurred in transmission:

'Even today, I see her
confused and bashful
love-lorn and bewitching;
her hair standing on end;
looking behind the scenes into the mirror
while I stood still beside her.'

But let the original text also speak

<verses>

Over and above the poets and the poetry talked of so far it was in the works of Kshemendra, Somadeva and Kelhana that Kashmir made the most significant contribution to Sanskrit poetry. These poets of the XI and XII centuries contributed positively new trends and currents, while their predecessors had mostly contributed stray works and verses on traditional lines.

The most outstanding of these, no doubt, is Kshemendra (990-1065 A. D.) who was almost as versatile a genius as his preceptor, the celebrated Abhinavaguptaachaarya. His works numbering over thirty comprehend a large variety of topics and aspects of life and literature. His Kalaavilasa, Deshopadesha, Darpadalana, Samayamaatrkaa, and Varmamaalaa are unique in respect of their social content and sustained satire, while his Dashaavataaracharita, in spite of its conventional theme, is a strikingly original composition, in terms of its relevance to the times. Even the Avadaanakalpalaa and the three Manjarees (of the Raamaayana, the Mahabhaarata and the Brhatkathaa) are in reality distinct kaavyas in designs as well as execution, despite a number of structural flaws and technical shortcomings. These negative considerations should not be allowed to obscure the positive value of the literary transformation brought about by the poet in these manjarees.

Many of Kshemendra's works like the Chitrabhaarata, Kanaka-jaanakee, Shashivamsha, Laavanyavatee, Muktaavalee, Padyakaadambaree, and Vaatsyaayanasootrasaara, are lost to us; yet the verses cited from these in his Auchityavichararchaa, Kavikanthaabharana and Suvrtatilaka, are enough to convince us of their significance for the literary history of Kashmir.

Even apart from this quantitative contribution of Kshemendra, however, his name stands out as a unique phenomenon in Indian literature because of his satire, of which earlier poetry offered no better than a few scattered instances, Kshemendra was a sharp critic of matters, men and manners, and at the same time possessed not only a keen sense of humour, but also an uncanny knack of presentations. His wit sharpens the edge of sarcasm. His mastery over language and idiom further equipped him for the unique role he was destined to play in the domain of Sanskrit verse. He was fully conscious of the social significance of this role as is clear from an introductory verse of his Deshopadesaa:

<verses>

'Put to severe ridicule one does not take to evil ways;
hence my conscious endeavour to do him good.'

In spite of his occasional gusto for the niceties of erotics, he has managed to escape the snares of literary wantonness. He has no pretention to artistic detachment, either, on which conventional Sanskrit verse has waxed so eloquent, calling it 'akin to divine bliss' (brahmaananda-sahodara). Nor does he suffer from aesthetic snobbery that makes much ado about pretty nothing. He, in fact, more than once seeks to remind us of his utilitarian outlook on poetry, and his moral tone rings clear in assertions like:

<verses>

'Kshemendra has composed these lovely verses capable of defending righteousness.' (Narm. 8.4)

Satpaksha-rakshaa-kshamam is, certainly, an unequivocal statement of the objective aimed at Kshemendra, accordingly, undertook to caricature the kaayastha only to ridicule social and administrative corruption:

<verses>

Asked to depict the kaayastha 'of the past', for the sake of 'fun' he incidentally unmasked the socio-administrative bunglings of the age, the reigns of Samgraamaraaja (1004-1029 A.D.), Ananta (1029-64 A.D.) and Kalasha (1064-84 A.D.).

In the Kalaavilaasa too he strikes a similar note. While describing the thousand and one viles of rogues and scoundrels he wittily warns:

'These guiles should, no doubt, be understood, but not practiced.'

Satire according to Kshemendra is, thus, an effective social weapon which, rightly wielded, proves a pleasing deterrent; and this, invariably, is the express intention of his Deshopadesha, Narmamaalaa, Darpadalana, Kalaavilaasa, Samayamaatrkaa and Sevva-sevakopadesha which are predominantly satirical. Even his Dashoavataaracharita is enlivened by poignant ironies of life that make the pauraanik myths relevant to the age. Almost all these works are replete with vivid caricatures of a wide cross-section of the life around the poet. In these literary cartoons he exposes sham and pretention, fraud and hypocrisy, avarice and vested interest. He has a dig at quacks and busybodies, bullies and sychophants, wanton women and henpecked husbands, pimps and procuresses, opportunists and exploiters, priestly jugglers and superstitious followers, hoaders and middlemen, moneylenders and deposit-grabbers, backbiters and blackmailers, mercenaries and commission-agents, voluptuous nuns and lustful monks, and last but not the least, the Unrelenting kaayastha.

Time and again, he takes these whimsical and avaricious agents of allround exploitation to task; and, who would not agree with him when he depicts them as:

<verses>

'Deaf to the bewailings of the poor sufferers,
blind with the pride of power and pelf,
dumb for justice and black of heart-
the rulers are always busy exploiting people.'

He describes them as 'the submarine are that dries up the ocean of national wealth.' It is, in fact, they that have 'devoured the whole populace'; for they are 'entrenched in a hundred viles'. The bumper crop in its prime like the full moon was devoured in a trice by the Raahu-like viefeful divira (the clerk) and these very 'robbers in disguise' had 'denuded the earth of her rich treasures'.

One clearly hears the heart of Kshemendra beat in his spontaneous outburst like:

<verses>

'Ah populace, where will you go
when the mean, petty and ambitious backbiter
mad after wealth

has occupied the seat of power!

The whole personality of the kaayastha is anatomised by him as:

'bhoorja-record-bannered messengers of death,
devilish experts in counting and discounting,
visiting the world and smashing the masses
with vehement punishments.' (Kalaa. 5.12)

The expression, 'bhoorja-dhvaja, (the birch-bannered) is an appropriate characterization of the filemongers equipped with the unrelenting red tape. (And don't we find them alive and kicking even today?). These kaayasthas were clever experts at forgery, misappropriation and embezzlement, and in the words of Kshendra:

<verses>

'They turned the plus into a minus by just depriving it of a single stroke'. The 'Almighty Pen' of the kaayastha was highly dreaded by the common folk 'who looked upon the crooked syllables scribbled by him' in his vicious records as 'coiled serpents infesting the tops of bhoorja trees'. The drop of ink dripping from the kaayastha's pen reminds the poet of 'the collyrium-tinged tears of Moths earth plundered by the tyrant'.

But the kaayastha is not the only devil to be reckoned with He is, no doubt, the most prominent of a gang of social marauders whose palms are always poised for tips:

<verses>

'The populace has been annihilated by (the unholy combine of) the minister, the military chief, the gate officer and the priest, whose palms are always outstretched for bribes.'

Against the background of this bungling by kaayastha bureaucracy (or should we not call it Kaayasthocracy?) it is not difficult to appreciate Kshendra's depiction of the common man's sad plight. The callousness of the stiff-necked kaayastha presents a glaring contrast to the humiliated looks of a demoralised servant humbling himself to dust before his lord. 'While bowing before his master, the servant chances to see his belly, the root cause of humiliation, and in discomfiture looks at the earth as if to seek refuge.' 'What an irony of fate! Obsessed by the stubbornness of hope the servants bear their folded bands upon their brows like a standard of servility; remorse agitates their hearts, and yet flattery dances on their lips.'

The following picture of a job-hunter reminds us of his modern counterpart who goes about knocking at unwelcome doors in search of employment:

'Severely scolded by the sturdy-armed gatekeeper that blocks the way,
gnashing his teeth out of rage at the callous creak of the doors,
the servant is eager to get in even through the tightly pressed legs of the man on duty
by bending his back;
and he enquires of the dumb outgoing comrades if there is any chance of his getting in'.

And there is caustic sarcasm in this running commentary of his:

'His eye fixed at the door, his hands folded,
his tongue devoted to flattery,
his head bent low ---

Ah, the servant has dedicated every limb of his
to social?service'

Verily the servant is as blind as the master: 'one out of arrogance, the other out of avarice: dehumanised
by riches or poverty, who cares to look at whom ?'

The cartoon of a hoarder (whose tribe is not extinct yet) even today makes an interesting study in
unrelenting malevolence:

'The greedy hoarder has, indeed, forgotten the all-
devouring time also;
why, otherwise, shouldn't he sell the paddy
stored some sixty years ago ?
He dances round in glee whenever the rains fail
or it rains too much.
The miserly fellow pines for a severe famine
occasioned by a rise in food prices.'

Kshemendra's verse is compact of such literary cartoons of unfailing social appeal. He has not forgotten
even his own fellow-workers, but has tellingly screened the peevish arrogance of an upstartish scholar
'who gets headache the moment he hears of others' rise.'

Thus, though mostly burlesque, Kshemendra's satire quite often touches great heights of artistic
excellence. Nevertheless, on appropriate occasion, it tends to become lampoon, and sometimes even
borders on vulgarity, narrowly escaping the clutches of pornography. Absurd buffoonery, however, is
seldom permitted by him to mar the dominant tone of decency. A few jarring notes here and there, of
course, sound intolerable; but these lapses are temperamental rather than technical, and deviations are
generally deliberate. Parody, caricature, ridicule, lampoon, irony of contrast, antithesis and anecdotal fun,
all are there in him, very competently employed to suit the genius of his satire; and herein lies his forte
as a literary debunker.

His Brhatkathaamanjaree, however, is doubtlessly surpassed in craftsmanship by the Kathaasaritasaagara
of Somadeva, a junior contemporary of his, who about 1070 A. D. presented to the world one of the
finest collections of tales strictly in accordance with the original (paishaachi) text of the Brhatkatha. In
his preamble he talks of his primary concern about 'facilitating comprehension of the tangled web of the
narrative' rather than about 'display of literary sophistication' (perhaps a dig at Kshemendra's Manjaree).
Yet, he calls his work "a compilation of the essence of the Brhatkatha":

<verses>

Somadeva has covered the whole range in 24,000 verses, comprising 18 lambakas spreading into 154
tarangas, all severally and collectively contributing to the 'Ocean of the Streams of Stories'. The vast
expanse of the Ocean comprehends tales of myth and mystery, wit and wisdom, fad and folly, fun and
frolic, love and ambition and adventure, meanness and magnanimity, cowardice and chivalry, greed and
gratification, envy and jealousy, tact and strategy, campaign and intrigue, hate and infatuation, creed
and dogma, feud and fraternity, trust and betrayal, faith and frivolity, solicitude and allergy, chastity and
easy virtue, rape and rescue, prudery and recklessness, fetish and sagacity, divinity and devilry, and
much more. They tell not only of bird and beast, but also of adventurous lovers, intriguing wives,
fastidious vampires, puzzling ghouls, obliging giants, considerate profligates, callous brothers, scheming
step-mothers, unsuspecting stepsons, guileful bawds, alluring pimps, resisting ladies, stubborn beauties,
succumbing simpletons, self-sacrificing idealists, exploiting self-seekers, and such other typical,
individuals, covering quite a wide cross-section of human behaviour and social panorama. All this is done
in a highly pleasing manner weaving story out of story, so that interest in what follows is effortlessly

sustained. The language used is lucid and the style appropriate, taking full advantage of the situation or the context, and yet steering clear of conventional ornamentation. This very simplicity of effective narration, perhaps, helped the Kathaasaritsaagara in gradually superseding the Braatkathaa as well as the Brhatkathaamanjaree, so much so that, in course of time, it became the foundational source-material for translation in other languages. The first Persian rendering (in Kashmir) was prepared at the instance of Sultan Zain al-Abideen (mid XV cent.), under the title Bahar al Asmaar (wrongly regarded by some scholars as a rendering of the Raajataranginee). A few lines from such a vast treasure of views and perspectives can at best present just a limited sample or two. Nevertheless, here they are:

<verses>

(Naravaahanadatta felt progressively agitated like the ocean, as she (Madanamanchukas) digit by digit, gradually developed into a full blown beauty like full moon.)

<verses>

(Evil often rebounds on the person intending to perpetrate it on others, like a ball repeatedly tossed on to the wall.)

The work is replete with well-turned phrases and expressions like the following that have acquired a proverbial ring:

1. Krtaghnaanaam shivam kutah ? (I.3.44)
2. Yaa vasyaabhimataa moorkha suroopaa tasya saa bhevet. (I.5.51)
3. Bhadrakrt bhadramaapnuyaad abhadram chaapyabhadrakrt. (III.6.212)
4. Upapradaanam lipsoonaamekam hyaakarshhasaadhanam. (V.1.119)
5. Aapadi sphurati prajnaa yasya dheerah sa eva pi. (II.4.41)

Another remarkable feature of Somadeva's narrative art in economy of strokes to conjure up setting and atmosphere relevant to the theme.

The art of narration carried to such a high pitch by Somadev, was, no doubt, there in his contemporaries and predecessors also a good deal, and was put to maximum advantage by his successors too, but only as a secondary tool. Kalhana's Raajataranginee, for instance, has a number of stories embedded into the Historical narrative. His literary contribution, nevertheless, is qualitatively different: it lies in realistic depiction of the grim socio-political life of the land, not in chronological isolation or dynastic seclusion of the ruling powers he has used as practical framework for his 'kaavya', but in a perpetual flux of cause and effect (despite the occasional reference to mysterious intervention of destiny, individual as well as collective), Kalhana's has been a unique experiment. It is unique in the sense that before him no classical poet had cared or dared to take such a vast historical canvas into his poetic sweep. Kalidaas's canvas was confined to the Raghu dynasty - Bilhana preoccupied his poetic fancy with the loves and conquests of his patron; while Kalhana wove his 'poem' out of the total continuum of his historical awareness. The weak links here and there, particularly in the earlier tarangas call for no apology; these are understandable in terms of his limitations, material as well as intellectual. These are there despite his resolve to ensure authenticity of statement, (to use his own term: bhootaarthakathanam) by dint of personal observation, documentary evidence, objective inference and plausible conjecture.

Kalhana's keen historical sense and sharp critical talent, matched by his flexible imagination and fine sensibility, despite his failings and shortcomings, cannot but be recognised as a telling differential of his work. He is fully conscious of his responsibility as a historian; but at the same time he bows to the innate greatness of the poet's creative faculty, and emphatically asks: 'Who else but poets as creators, adepts in charming creativity, have the calibre to bring the past to our very eye?' 'Charming creativity' (:ramya-nirmaana, in the poet's own words), certainly, has got to be wedded to what he has called 'bhootaarth-

kathana,' (authenticity of statement). It appears that Kshemendra's Nrpaavalee (not extant) which Kalhana consulted but did not very much admire as history, must have been rich enough in candid and realistic depiction, like his other works. What, however, provoked Kalhana to censure it must have been its tendency to fictionalize factual situations, Kalhana in this respect, was an anti-thesis of Kshemendra. Yet, his account of times he has dealt with is not merely a matter-of-fact narrative, but a portrayal with poetic insight particularly of the period nearer his own. His chronicle is rich in glimpses of the socio-political setup of the times, and numerous are the realistic pictures of the distress caused by famine, food and frost, as well as by avaricious opportunists, unscrupulous self-seekers, and wicked mischief-mongers that ruined the lovely land of which he was so and proud. His devastating denunciation of all these antisocial elements is inspired by dignified indignation quite in keeping with the spirit of 'impartiality' he had adopted as his poetic credo; for to him it meant neither connivance nor indifference, but a fair assertion based on objective analysis of situations. To make such stuff the subject-matter of poetry, therefore, is no mean achievement.

The whole work, in fact, has been conceived by him as an organic whole, all the eight tarangas flowing severally collectively one into the other as well as all together. Various rasas are found here emerging in various situations and then merging into the shaanta, the dominant rasa. It, goes to Kalhana's credit that, unlike mahaakavis who create scope for a particular rasa in a poem. Kalhana simply 'uncover's' a particular rasa in a situation and appropriately manifests it in creative treatment, without getting bogged down in conventional technicalities. Here, for instance, is the portrayal of a famine caused by an untimely snowfall, a piece complete in itself, and yet forming an integral Part of the contextual whole:

<verses>

'Unexpectedly in the month of Bhaadon all of a sudden
there was a heavy snowfall
on the fields covered with autumn crop (of paddy)
ripening fast.
It appeared as if Kaala (: Time, the Destroyer),
was out to annihilate the universe;
Into it sank the crop, along with peoples'
hope of survival.
Then came the disaster of a dire famine,
like the rampart of Niraya (the child of fear and death),
the hell,
thronged by dismal hordes of ghost-like famished men.
The tormented (victims, distressed by hunger, anxious to fill
their (empty) bellies, all,
forgot love for wife, affection for son and regard
for father.....'

Unlike most other contemporaries of his, Kalhana does not revel in offering mere types of character. He delineates individuality even in those that belong to typical groups. In this respect he appears to be at his best while presenting complex personalities like Ananta, Kalasha, Harsha, Uchchala, Sussala and Jayasimha and even Didda who was not so near him in point of time. The lame-footed queen surprised her subjects when she successfully broke through all the barriers set up by her swarming enemies, and Kalhana describes her achievement very crisply thus:

<verses>

'The lame-footed (queen) whom none would suspect of
the strength to go across a puddle,
displayed the mettle of Hanumaana in crossing the ocean

of hostile swarms.'

The Raajataranginee abounds in masterly descriptions of matters, men and manners. Even campaigns and expeditions, invasions and confrontations, are graphically described with rich details of topography and terrain, without jeopardising literary excellence. The campaign of Dugdhaaghaata may be cited here as one of the many events which are so graphically described that while reading the lines we feel as if we are being treated to a running commentary.

The tradition so gracefully set up by Kalhana in 1148-50 A. D. was followed by Jonaraaja in his sequel to Raajataranginee, about three centuries later with admirable efficiency. He seems to have secured better intensity in his work perhaps because of the narrower range of his chronicle, which covers, more or less, the earlier period of the enlightened Sultan Zain al Aabideen's life (1417-59 A. D.) against the gruesome background of his predecessor's bigotry and the depredations by marauders like Zulqadr Khan and desperadoes like Renchan. This is how Jonaraaja depicts the citizens' panic at the unholy combine of these marauders;

<verses>

'They were rich in foodstuffs and had resorted to shady nooks
like snakes having abundance of fruit and rest in shade.
But they dreaded Dulcha (;Zulqadr Khan) below, and Renchan
on the hill above,
like the snakes afraid of the rapid current of water below
and the storm on the hill above.'

And when Dulcha left, the surviving citizens come out of their hide-out like frightened rats; but the threat of Renchan was still there, as if the 'sunset peak with its lofty cliff was obstructing movement of the moon after it had just escaped the 'Raahu's grip.' Talking of the tyranny on the eve of Zain al Aabideen's accession, Jonaraaja observes:

<verses>

'Wicked people belonging to his faith worked havoc
with the spiritual tradition of Kashmir,
as the storms do with trees, or locusts with paddy-crops.'

Zain al Aabideen's genuine solicitude for his subjects irrespective of colour, caste or creed, warms up his heart

<verses>

'His policy, excelling in quality, dulled the peoples yearning
for kings of yore,
like sugar of a superior quality that alleviates longing
for the sugarcane juice.'
He went on restoring the old administrative conventions
that had disappeared,
just as Spring rejuvenates the creepers blasted by winter.
In him dwelt, indeed, in new accord,
qualities both sublime and awesome.
Where else but in the ocean do we find together
nectar, and poison, fire and water?
That king broke up the arrogant, and uplifted the low,

as if he were levelling down the
ups and levelling up the downs,
preparing thereby the soil, the earth, for sowing
seeds of his reputation.'

Unfortunately Jonaraaja died in 1459 A. D. leaving his chronicle unfinished, but his brilliant pupil, Shreevara who was a very intimate associate of the King, wrote the third Raajataranginee which is far superior to his preceptor's work, and at times closely approaches the sublimity or Kalhana's composition. He also seems to be very much concerned about the people's welfare. Here, for instance, is the description of a famine caused by an untimely snowfall:

<verses>

'It appeared as if the earth was trying to cover her face
with a white sheet of snow;
How could she afford to look (helplessly) at the people
afflicted with the scourge of a famine ?
Day and night, throughout, long unending processions
of people begging for food
entered houses hoarding food-grains
as if arrows were (incessantly) going in.'

And, here is an account of flood occasioned by successive rains:

<verses>

'The bubbles (of rain-water) rise like wicked serpent-hoods
bent upon doing rain-mischief,
eager to take away the bumper crop.
The sound of showers falling through the tree-foliage
created the impression
that the trees, out of solicitude for the people
were shedding tears and crying aloud.
The turbulent waters in turmoil had really run amuck:
they knocked down the high, they lifted up the low.'

Shreevara's chronicle (1459-77 A. D.) is a rich storehouse of such apt and effective description of pleasure trips, social festivals, bitter quarrels and fateful mishaps. The poet's intimacy with his patron had stood him in good stead, no doubt; but it was his keen observation and good taste that conditioned his artistic choice. The masterpiece of a letter from the distressed king to one of his sons, deserves being quoted in full for its urgent pointedness in terms of poetic appeal.

<verses>

'Son, I am in grave crisis, so hard to tide over
that none else but you can save my life.
The moment you see my letter, sit up if lying down,
stand you up if sitting, ran if already up.
Yes, what else? Painful to hear. Nonetheless,
the sooner you come the better would you achieve
your end.

If you do not come quick enough
while I am precariously alive,
What use if you do come to me when I have left the world?'

Describing the festival of music and dance at Vejibror (then known as Vijayeshvara-kshetra) he remarks:

'While being treated to the performance of music and dance
the ears and the eyes argued to each other:
I have enjoyed it more than you.'

A revealing glimpse of the Dal Lake offered by Shreevara, incidentally, gives us a peep into his unostentatious diction and approach too

<verses>

'Reflected within its waters, trees appear as weeds,
mountains as tortoises,
and towns like (underworld) habitation of Naagas.
People enjoy the sight of paddy-clusters
on the floating fields
bending low as if to just inhale the fragrance
of the lotuses (growing in the crystal waters of the Dal).

Shreevara had the additional advantage of being a scholar of Persian and (perhaps) Arabic too, as is clear from the colophon of his Kathaakautuka (written in 1505 A. D.):

<verses>

This work of his, in fact, is a Sanskrit rendering of Mulla Jaami's Persian masterpiece, Yoosaf-Zulaikhaa; yet he has very creditably adapted the Persian conceit to the needs of the Sanskrit atishayokil (hyperbole) and domiciled the alien idiom, as far as possible. Here is a typical piece from the work, describing the heroine's unique beauty:

<verses>

'Wonderful, indeed, in her two opposites are seen
the day in her complexion, the night in her tresses.
The star-necklace decorates her conch-like (lovely) neck,
as if the stars have come to serve the moon, the face.'

The Persian mystical tradition of discerning the real in the phenomenal, too has been rendered in the true Indian fashion as seeing, 'vairaagya' in 'anuraaga' or 'yoga' in 'bhoga'.

<verses>

And that indeed is the moral of this romantic poem. But no poet after him seems to have gone beyond him attempting such an artistic synthesis of the Persian and Sanskrit romances. The Delaa-rama-kathaasaara of Bhattaahlaadaka (c. 1500 A. D.) nevertheless, draws upon a source and tradition other than Indian. He takes the story of Delaaraana, a courtesan, from the 'Muslim' lore and retells it briefly in Sanskrit with the express aim of 'delighting the minds' of those that could not read it in the original:

<verses>

Despite his artificial diction imitating the decadent models Aahthdaka stands out as a good entertainer. He avoids monotony by varying the metre according to the contextual need and also by naturalizing the details without making them banal as, for instance, in cantos 11 and 12. In the former he describes the garden of Delaaraama, while in the latter he describes the head-to-top loveliness of the courtesan. His sense of proportion speaks throughout the 404 verses of the story told in 13 cantos, the length varying between 22 and 56 according to the demand of subject-matter; while catholicity of outlook is apparent from the very opening verse serving the purpose Of a Mangdlaacarana

<verses>

'May the greatness of that benevolent Divinity of yours
always protect you,
Who is best worshipped with the excellent flowers
of homage
rather than with incense and the lamp.'

No more poems like this, exploiting non-Sanskritic sources have come down to us though the catholic spirit of worship, in the true tradition of Kashmir Shaivism has, all along, inspired many a hymn, including the highly philosophical ones by Saahib Kaula (c. 1700 A.D.).

The tradition of writing poetical chronicles, however, lingered on, till the conquest of Kashmir by Akbar (c. 1586A.D), and Praajyabhatta in collaboration with his pupil, Shuka, wrote the fourth Raajataranginee. Though they could not make much advance in poetic expression, yet from the thematic point of view their chronicle is not utterly devoid of lovely pieces of narration and portrayal, which are quite in line with Kashmir's contribution to Sanskrit poetry.

After Shuka's Rajataranginee, the only works worth mentioning are the Durbhiksha-taarodayaasta of Ishvara Kaula on the severe famine of 1878 A. D., and the Jitamalacharitam of Shukadeva Shastri, on the martyrdom of Baba Jito. Among other literary curiosities, however, reference may be made to memoranda in Sanskrit verse like that submitted by Kashmiri Pandits to Ranjit Deva of Jammu, the Sanskrit rendering of stray persian verse as attempted, for instance, by Raajaanaka Gopaala, or Raajataranginee sequels attempted by late Professor Govind Razdan.

This, then, in brief is an account of the Sanskrit Kaavya of Kashmir.

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