

Sources of Kashmir History

The sources from which is a knowledge of the early and medieval history of Kashmir is derived many conveniently be divided into two broad categories: the rich collection of indigenous records, traditions and archaeological and new numismatic finds; and to augment and corroborate these, the notices in foreign chronicles, records of travelers, as also recent archaeological discoveries in places adjoining the borders of the state.

Historical literature in Sanskrit

- *Rajtarangini* written in Sanskrit verse by Kalhana in 1148-49AD. "This is the only work in ancient Indian literature that may be regarded as a historical text in the true sense of the word. The author has not only taken great pains to collect his material from the existing chronicles and other sources, but, at the beginning of his work, he has set down a few general principles for writing history which are remarkably far in advance of his age. Indeed, these may be regarded as anticipating to a large extent the critical method of historical research which was not fully developed till the nineteenth century AD."
- Kalhana's qualities as a historian are unsurpassed. For the collection of material for his history he not only consulted older works on the subject but also used original sources like inscriptions of various kinds- those recording the construction of temples, memorial or places; records of land grants or privileges etc. He also studied coins and inspected old buildings he is a master of accurate topography of ancient Kashmir. Kalhana's impartiality as a historian and his honesty of purpose are remarkable.
- Kalhana mentions by name some of the compositions on history of Kashmir which he consulted-Kshemendra's *Aneka7ali*, chronicles of Padmami-hira and Chavillakaran and the Nilamatpurana.
- Kalhana's work was continued by his countrymen Jonaraja (d. 1459), who brought the Chronicle down to the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70AD). Jonaraja was a scholar of considerable attainments and seems to have been well-acquainted with the old nomenclature of the Valley. The greater portion of his Chronicle deals with the reigns of the late Hindu rulers from Jayasimha to Queen Kota. His pupil Srivara took up the thread and in four chapters wrote about the events from 1459-1486 AD.

- The earliest work was the Persian translation of the Rajtarangini/by Mulla Ahmad who undertook it under orders of king Zain-ul-Abidin. Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri, pupil of Muhammad Afzal of Bukhara who had come to Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Sikandar, was a profound scholar, a distinguished poet and a historian. His translation of Kalhana's Rajtarangini named Bahr- ul-Asmar or the 'Sea of Tales', was perhaps not completed by him, for in 1594AD. Akber, asked Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni to rewrite and complete it.
- As early as the 15th century, King Zain-ul-Abidin had it translated into Persian. Later, under orders of Akbar, Abul Fazl incorporated long abstracts in his Ain-1-Akbari. Bernier who visited Kashmir in 1665 makes a mention of it in his Letters. Moorcroft obtained a copy of the Rajtarangini during his visit to the Valley in 1823AD. This copy was translated into French by M Troyer. Later several European scholars worked on its translation, but were handicapped for want of a reliable text. Finally, through the efforts of Dr Buhler, such a text was found in Kashmir and this formed the basis of Dr Steins monumental translation of the Chronicles published in 1900. In 1935, RS Pandit brought out his English translation of the Rajtarangini laying emphasis on its poetic and literary qualities.

Persian Historical Literature

- Some Kashmiri Chronicles written in Persian are also useful source of information Twarikh-i-Kashmir is written by Malik Haidar a noble in the court of Yusuf Shah in 1578 A.D. Although his work is based on Rajatarangini yet he made some addition in the later period.
- Haider Malik besides being a historian was also an architect He rebuilt the Jamia Masjid of Srinagar which had been consumed by fire and also the Khanqah of Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi. Narayan Kaul Ajiz, a distinguished scholar of Persian language and literature and a poet, followed Haider Malik in writing a history of Kashmir. His Twarikh-i-Kashmir written in 1710AD gives an assessment of the reigns of the Sultans and early Mughals from a liberal's point of view. The tradition of writing history was continued by Khwaja Muhammad Azam Kaul of Didamar quarter of Srinagar, who flourished in Kashmir under the rule of the later Mughals. His history entitled Naquat-i-Kashmir was commenced in 1735 and completed in 1746.

- Pandit Birbal Kachru who wrote his history of Kashmir in 1835AD, when Kashmir was under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was a great scholar of Persian and a poet too. Besides throwing light on the later history of Kashmir under the Mughal and Afghan rulers, his work is of immense value in assessing the economic condition of the various classes of people during this period.
- Moulvi Ghulam Hassan's *Twarikh-i-Kashmir* which in three volumes deals with the geography, political history and the arts and crafts of Kashmir. Moulvi Hassan was born at a village near Bandipur in Kashmir in 1832 and died at the same village in 1898.
- *Tarikh-i-Hasan* by Pir Hasan Shah's describes the history of Kashmir from earliest times to 19th century. It is the most comprehensive and detailed of the all the indigenous Persian works on Kashmir history.
- It is however with the rise of the Mughals that Muhammadan historian to India take interest in Kashmir and its people. The earliest historical reference to this part of India is in *Zafar-nama* by Sharaf-ud-din, the historian of Timur, which was completed in 1424-25 it throws light on Sikandar's relation with Timur when the latter invaded India. It also gives a brief description of the geography and people of Kashmir.
- Hassan seems to have taken great pains in writing history which throughout maintains a high standard of historical sense and impartiality.
- In 1910 Pandit Anant Kaul who held high post in Kashmir Government and who was one of the first Kashmir's to learn English contributed two papers to the Asiatic society of Bengal on the early period of Kashmir history, which were published in the journal of the society. Besides his geography of Jammu and Kashmir he wrote books on the archaeological remains in the state and on the Kashmiri language, folklore and arts and crafts of the valley.
- Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Sufi, a former register of the Delhi University began his history of Kashmir entitled *Kashir* in 1925 and completed it in 1949, when it was published by the Punjab University (Pakistan). Similarly, Muhammad-ud-din Fauq, a Kashmiri settled in Lahore, wrote extensively in Urdu on the geography, history and folklore of the valley. His history of Kashmir was published in 1910. In 1936, he published an exhaustive survey of the origin and history of various communities and well-known families of Kashmir, which is of considerable interest from anthropological and ethnic point of view.

Some Other Historical Accounts

- *Tarikh-Rashidi* authored by Mirza Haidar Dughlat. This work throws light on the invasion of Kashmir by Mughal and contemporary life of the people.
- A detailed account however, of Kashmir, its people, agriculture, religion, architecture, arts and crafts is given by Mirza Haider Dughlat in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*. Mirza Dughlat, a cousin of Babar and an adherent of Humayun, twice invaded Kashmir; once from Kashghar in 1533 and again from Lahore in 1540 when he ruled the Valley for ten years in the name of the puppet king, Nazuk Shah. It was during these years of his stay in Kashmir that he wrote his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, which though a history of the Mughals of Central Asia gives a detailed account of his invasion of Kashmir and draws a contemporary picture of the land and its people. Begun in 1541-42, it was completed in 1544-45.
- *The Tabagat-i-Akbari* by Nizam-ud-din contains a section dealing with the history of Kashmir from the earliest times to the conquest of the Valley by Akbar.
- *Twarikh-i-Farishta* compiled by Muhammad Qasim Farishta gives detailed information about the agricultural products, religion of the people and building of Kashmir.
- *Muntakhab-ul-Mubarak* by Abdul Qasim Badauni throws flood of light on Akbar's relation with Chak rulers of Kashmir.
- Abul Fazl's *Akbar Nama & Ain-i-Akbari* contains useful information regarding administration, agriculture, history, geography, industries, social and economic conditions of Kashmir under Shamiri and Mughal rulers.
- *Tuzak-i-Jahangiri*, the memories of the emperor Jahangir throws light on social and economic conditions and gardens and topography of Kashmir.

Foreigner's Historical Works

- There is a full and detailed account of Kashmir recorded by the great Chinese pilgrim Heun Tsiang who reached the Valley from Urusha (Hazara) in the west in 631 A.D

and stayed on for two years to study Sanskrit and Buddhist lore. Not only does he accurately describe the routes by which he entered and left the Valley, but he mentions the names of several viharas and stupas whose identity has been now established with several ancient sites in Kashmir.

Heun Tsiang's narrative tells us that he left the Valley in 633 A.D by way of the Tosamaidan route and reached Pun-nu-tso Parnotsa of Kalhana or modern Poonch. Both Poonch and Rajapori (modern Rajouri) were subject to Kashmir.

- The next Chinese notice of considerable historical interest is contained in the annals of the Tang dynasty. They mention the arrival at the imperial court of the first embassy from Kashmir sent by king Tchen-to-lo-pi-li (in or shortly after 713 A.D) and that of another embassy sent by his brother and successor Mu-to-pi. These names clearly refer to Chandrapida and Muktapida (Lalitaditya) of the Rajatarangini.
- Another account of Kashmir & its people is finished by a Chinese traveler OUK'ong who came to Kashmir in 759 A.D. He remained in Kashmir for four years. His accounts about the Kashmir and its people is not as accurate as that of Hiuen Tsang, but these are useful as much as it confirms the statement Of Kalhana made in the Rajatarangini.

European's Account

- Kashmir figures prominently thereafter in the works of writers on the history of India and particularly of the Punjab, there is however when scanty information from Indian sources about the conditions in Kashmir under the Afghan who conquered the valley in 1752 A.D and whose rule lasted till 1819 when maharaja Ranjit Singh forces drew them away and ushered in the Sikh rule.
- For a detailed survey of the Sikh Regime there is fortunately ample material in the accounts of several European travelers who began to visit the Frontier in increasing numbers.
- A European Traveler Francis Bernier visited Kashmir in 1665. His account of Kashmir helps in understanding the Social and economic life of the people during the Mughal rule.
- The next European traveler of note to write on Kashmir was the Jesuit Priest, the Italian Hippolyte, Desideri who hailed from Pistoia near Florence. In November 1714, he reached Srinagar and was struck by the beauty of the landscape around him. He

has left an account of the various handicraft products, notably shawls, of Kashmir. His recorded experiences during the winter of 1715 which he had to pass in Srinagar before he left for Ladakh next year, are both graphic and interesting.

- George Forster an English officer of Bengal Army, wrote about the conditions of Kashmir. He gives a brief account of the social, economic and political conditions of Kashmir during the Afghan rulers. During the Sikh rule, many more foreigner travelers visited Kashmir and left valuable accounts of the conditions of the people in the Kashmir valley.
- Afghan were followed by the Sikhs who ruled for a brief period of 27th years – (1819-1946). Valuable accounts of their rule and the condition of the people under them have been left by several European travelers to the valley, particularly Vigne (1835) who, besides the general description of the Valley, gives details about the devastating earthquake of 1828, the memory of which was still fresh in the minds of the people. Vigne also narrates interesting folklore and odd superstitions.
- Moorcraft, another traveler, besides giving a general description of Kashmir and Ladakh narrates the political and economic setup prevailing in Kashmir then. He gives an interesting account of the shawl trade which had reached its peak. Interesting and illuminating travel diaries have been also left by Baron Hugel and Baron von Schonberg who visited the valley during this time.
- In 1846, the valley came under the Dogra rulers of Jammu and suzerainty of the British Indian government. It is from this time onwards that a close and scientific survey was conducted of the state's geography, physical features, history, antiquities and ethnology and composition of its people. Outstanding contributions on the subject was made by Drew, Lawrence and Cunningham - whose work forms the bedrock of the study of Kashmir and its people.
- Frederic Drew's *The Jammu and Kashmir Territories*, published in 1875, deals with the detailed geography and physical features of the state, particularly of the Jammu region. Sir Walter Lawrence whose land settlement in the state marks a turning point in the economic and social history of its people, has given in his *Valley of Kashmir* (published 1895), an authentic and illuminating record of the physical features of the valley, its flora and fauna and folk-lore, language, history, social customs and occupation of the people.

- Alexander Cunningham's *Ladakh* is a mine of information on the 'land of the Lamas'. It is an exhaustive survey of its geography, the ethnology of its people, their religion, social customs, history and economic set-up.