CHAPTER I

Introduction

Analysis

Purpose of the thesis - Kashmir, a seat of learning and a spot of inspiration - Kashmir's origin - Causes for the composition of original works in Kashmir - Her supremacy and superiority from time immemorial.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Dr. M.A. Stein, in his preface to "A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir" (English translation of the Rājatarangini of Kalhana), has significantly remarked as follows:

"The favours with which nature has lavishly endowed 'the land in the womb of Himalaya' are not likely to fade or vanish. But those manifold remains of antiquity which the isolation of the country preserved and which help us to resuscitate the life and condition of earlier times are bound to disappear more and more with the rapid advance of Western influences.

Great are the changes which the last few decennia have brought over Kashmir, greater, perhaps than any which the country has experienced since the close of the Hindu Period. It is easy to foresee that much of what is of value to the Historical Student will before long be destroyed or obliterated. It is time to collect as carefully as possible the materials still left for the study of old Kashmir and its earliest records."

1) Page xxiv of the Preface
This beautiful quotation of the learned Doctor not only reveals the importance of Kashmir, but also clearly stresses with sufficient force that strenuous efforts are necessary to unearth the treasures of antiquity that are hidden there, before it is too late and before much of what is of value is lost for ever due to rapid foreign influences. It is therefore the primary concern of the student of Sanskrit and Research to collect all the invaluable records of old Kashmir and show their value to India and to the world, without any more loss of time, as all these treasures are in the shape of books written on various topics in elegant sanskrit. It is evident that without these ancient records a proper study of old Kashmir is almost impossible. An attempt is therefore made in this thesis to give an idea of the nature and extent of the available ancient records of Kashmir.

Though Kashmir is occupying a prominent place in the current news ever since the dawn of Indian independence, the purpose of this thesis is not to discuss her political relations but to lay bare, with facts and figures, (supported by quotations from the works of great ancient thinkers of India and Kashmir) her cultural history and to substantiate, on cultural grounds, that her interests are legitimately and intimately knit with those of India. Situated as she is on the Himalayas, amidst charming natural surroundings and occupying as she does a very enviable position, she has been the source of inspiration - nay a fountain - to many a renowned poet of India. The geographical elevation has been in her case the main cause for her cultural elevation also.
Standing amidst the lovely landscape scenes in Kashmir, it is rightly said, that even a man with mediocre talents would be inspired spontaneously to compose sole captivating poetry. How much easier for a talented or gifted poet or philosopher it is to compose poetry of the first order. Just as it is said of Western Poets, that it is impossible for them to write good poetry, without a tour of the continent and a visit to the Alps, so it must have been the case with every great poet of India, that, if he was not born as a Kashmirian, he must first have paid a visit to that land of beauty before he even thought of attempting to worship at the sacred feet of the Muse. Poetry composed after a visit to Kashmir would be as elevated as she is, as sweet as her famous scented products and as faultless as the sacred flow of the Gangā in those lofty regions.

It is no wonder then, that Kashmir was a great centre of learning and the centre of attraction for students, scholars, poets and philosophers alike. There was a famous University at Kashmir which was on par in fame with the Universities of Takṣaśila and Nalanda. Many scholars thronged in this renowned Citadel of Learning. Kashmir has thus wielded a tremendous influence on the mental outlook of almost every Indian from time immemorial. Students flocked together from every nook and corner of India to become experts in one or other branch of learning. It would not be far from right if it is stated that Kashmir virtually ruled India and Indian affairs. The best of men that had a hand in the administration of this vast sub-continent had their brains drilled in this seat of
of learning before they became eligible to hold such high offices with courage and confidence. Even to-day the destinies of India are being guided by Kashmir as our beloved Prime Minister is a hundred per cent Kashmirian who has imbibed all that is good and loveable in Indian culture. The present rulers of Kashmir are speaking in clear-cut tones from many a pulpit that Kashmir is part of India historically, socially, economically and last but not least, culturally. This relationship that has existed for ages is substantiated by outstanding instances in the pages of recorded history of India that is at present available, either in manuscript or in print.

Any work that did not carry the seal of the seat of learning in Kashmir was not easily recognized at the time when the glory of Kashmir was at its peak. The following interesting anecdote is described in the introduction to the Naiśadhā of Harsa edited by Pandit Śivadatta. King Jayantacandra of Kanyakumāra asked Harsa, his court-poet to compose a mighty work. Accordingly he composed the Naiśadhā and presented it to the king who, it is stated, asked him to take it to Kashmir, to show it to the Pandits there and place it in the hands of the Goddess of learning and if approved by her to bring it back and report to him his experiences. The poet accordingly went there and placed his work in the hands of Goddess Saraswati who, it is stated, flung it away as a mark of disapproval - the reason being that there was a flaw in the sixtysixth verse
verse of the eleventh canto.¹ But later, when the learned author explained that his composition was flawless, she accepted work in the presence of the conclave of pandits and thus showed her approval. The story runs to show how the pandits were jealous of him and though repeatedly requested did not take him to the king of Kashmir. But somehow he came into contact with the king and proved to him that he was a gifted poet. Thus Naigdha which is hailed even to-day as one of the five great compositions and is described as a medicine for scholars² became famous throughout the country. This anecdote shows how a poet, however great, was first required to go to Kashmir and get the seal of consent of the seat of learning before he could be recognised as such in other parts of India.

It was a belief among the people of India that the Goddess of learning was actually living there in Kashmir and that if she approved a work she would continue to have it in her hands and place it on her head; otherwise she would throw it at a distance. The full text of the incident is given below in the foot-note³.

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1) देवी पवित्रितकुण्डास्मानाग
बागालमित्राणिं गनिनामिरामासुः।
प्रत्यथ्य निश्चिताकामाणि:।
पाणिनादुसूत्वाणि गण्युपानात्मी॥

2) नैनच विद्वाचारणम्।

3) नृश्रेणाःकलः क्वचि: - वादीन्द्र: सिंधितस्यन्धरल्युऽनु:।
तत्रे नैनच महाधे: कः दिच्चास्य महामृद्युष्णासारं राजे दक्षिणा:॥
राजेण: - सुसूतस्यभिभुधः। केवल कार्त्तिक रान्नव तत्त्वद्विद्विद्यो व्याख्याति हस्तेष्या च मुँि मार्यति च तत् पीढ़े तम्।
Kashmir is stated to have been created by the great sage Kasyapa. A detailed account of its origin is given in the Neelamata Purana, one of the earliest works on Kashmir, now available in fragments only. It also gives a connecting link between Kashmir and India and supplies authority for the various rites now prevailing in Kashmir. It is this ancient work that Kalhana seems to have used as the basis for his great Chronicle, the Rajatarangini, the first of its kind in Sanskrit literature. When Kashmir was first created Gods occupied it along with Nagas and Goddessess dwelt there in the shape of rivers. Thus the land is even to-day called the daughter of Kasyapa. Jonaraja in his Rajatarangini refers to it as Kasyapapuri or Kasyapi.
Some say it was the land given to Kusa by Rama who gave Lahore (Lavapuri) to his other son Lava. They infer that Kashmir is another form of Kusapuri. But no data is forthcoming to substantiate this surmise, whereas specific references are available in various works such as the Neelamata Purāṇa and the Rājastārangini that it was formerly Kasyapapuri and later became Kashmir.

It is indeed unfortunate that very little is known of the glorious intellectual and spiritual past of Kashmir. It must have been a veritable house of learning at one time in the sense not only of erudition but also of wisdom which is the end and aim of all existence. Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning is supposed to have her home in Kashmir, as is clear from the following well-known verse.

नमस्ते शारदे देवि कार्मिकः पुराञ्चिनि।
त्वामां प्रार्थ्ये नित्यं विधायानं च देहि मे।।

There does not appear to have been a divorce at any time between learning and wealth there. The capital was (and is today) Srinagara, city of spiritual as well as material wealth. Perhaps it has something to do with Śrīvidyā, a term very familiar to Tantric writers.

Kashmir is thus the land of beauty and learning, sweetness and glory, kumkum and grapes. It is, in fact, the kumkum on the forehead of mother India and must continue to be with her so long as her glory and greatness exist. The importance and sanctity
sanctity attached to kumkum on the forehead of Indian women need not be stressed. There is no necessity for it to women other than Indian. This is enough to prove, if proof were necessary, how closely knit are the interests of Kashmir with India. The glory of this land has been sung in unmistakable terms by many a poet of India and of Kashmir. Bilhana, for instance, has described, in his immortal poetic composition, Vikramāṅkadeva Caritam, every spot of beauty in Kashmir in such a charming and artistic manner that one is carried away to high altitudes of delight. The description reveals not only the grandeur of the land but also the poet's intimate association and acquaintance with every part of Kashmir as is clear from the following verse:

ब्रह्मस्तत्रय प्रकाःकल्यारुम्भमान ज्ञानाः
किं श्रीकुशद्वसुशिलिनिन्ध्रोहेलि लालाम्बानाः।
एको भागः प्रकृतिलुम्बं कुलमं वस्थं दूते
श्रवणा भत्रः सरस्यामुपस्थितक्षेपायुम्॥ (Vik.XVIII.72)

He also has stated that sanskrit was the language of the country and even women spoke that language as they would speak their mother tongue.¹ He calls the composition of the poets of Kashmir as the brothers of saffron as they flowed from their lips as naturally and as lavishly as saffron grows there.²

1) यत्र स्त्रीणामधि किमपि ज्ञानमाणावदेव
प्रत्यावासै विज्ञसिति वच: सङ्कृतं प्रकृतं च || (Vik.XVIII.6)

2) दहोदरा: कुदुम्बिनां पूजन्ति नृन कविःकिलासाः।
न शारदेशमालयुक्तस्थितं यदन्त्य मया प्ररोधः। || (Vik.I.21)
काव्यं शेषं: प्रकृतिलुम्बं कुलं निर्गतं च || (Vik.XVIII.16)
Sanskrit Poetry took its roots in Kashmir and gradually took shape in course of time. It was there, perhaps, that even Vedic Hymns were first composed. The first lessons in Alankāra-sāstra or the Science of Poetics, were propounded in Kashmir and later spread into other parts of India and the world. The various schools of thought in Poetics were founded there and gradually developed until the Dhvani theory was expounded by Ānandavardhana, also a Kashmirian. It holds the sway even today. As in Poetics, the way to write history and to record events in the form of chronicles was shown by Kashmirians. Even so in other branches of learning like Social Science, Music, Medicine and Philosophy. A new Philosophy called Kashmir Saivism sprang up there and attracted many scholars because of its novelty, simplicity and practical utility.

The progress in the composition of original works went on unchecked for several centuries and many valuable works were written to the delight and astonishment of all the people. Sanskrit flourished and held all the people in her grip. The Buddhists in India and abroad and other foreigners were very much influenced by these Sanskrit works. There was a free policy of give and take on all sides and a remarkable degree of tolerance was displayed. This state of affairs continued until, unfortunately Kashmir fell a prey to Muslim influence - which, barring a few exceptions, mainly consisted in proselytisation and destruction of the sanctity and time-honoured traditions attached to the various institutions in Kashmir. As the influence consisted in war and conversions it was devastating in many respects and the ultimate effect
effect was to wipe out even traces of the original wealth of sanskrit composition in the very land of its birth. This is the most tragic aspect of it. The situation has worsened now as other nations are claiming it as a part of their own.

Thus, any sincere and serious student of history or sanskrit will not fail to discern, in the course of an intelligent and detailed survey of the vast field of sanskrit literature, the various contributions that Kashmir has made to it which are standing even to-day as monumental evidences of the bonds of cultural relationship that exists between Kashmir and the rest of India. These contributions are many and marked and embrace various branches in the extensive field of literature. There are famous poetic compositions, prose works, historical treatises, works on poetics, sociology, philosophy, grammar, medicine, fine arts, music and material sciences. The environs in Kashmir were very conducive for the development of thought and research in these various spheres. In the following pages the contributions in each sphere are dealt with in detail with comments, and references wherever possible, to leave no room for doubt in drawing certain definite conclusions. Attempts have also been made to give the name of the composition, a short biographical sketch of the author with references to date and time wherever possible and reference to contemporary works.

Before commencing a detailed treatment of the contributions of Kashmir to sanskrit literature a brief account of the geography and history of Kashmir is first furnished with a view to give an idea of its situation and background.