CHAPTER-X

ECONOMIC LIFE

The economy is a very essential factor for the overall development of human civilization. Therefore, scholars, while explaining the past happenings, give more importance to economic causes in relation to other as it is this factor which brings all sort of development. The civilization cannot flourish in absence of a proper economy. That’s why while giving the information about the political aspect of Kashmir in his chronicle; Kalhana could not exempt economy of that period. He has given ample information about the economic life of the valley.

OWNERSHIP OF LAND

On the vexed question of the ownership of land in India including Kashmir, there is a sharp division of opinion among scholars. Scholars have mainly two views, one which believes in the State ownership of land like D.C. Sarcar and R.S. Sharma and second which believes in individual holding of land like Altekar and P.N.K. Bamzai. R.S. Sharma believes that in ancient India, land was more or less the personal property of the King. D.C. Sarcar believes in the ownership of the state but he also said that King had no absolute rights over land. He was the owner only in limited sense. There are scholars who believe in the theory of individual ownership of land. Altekar says that the ownership of the cultivable land vested in private individuals or families and not in the state. Lallanji Gopal clearly states that the peasant was the proprietor of the land in every sense of the term. The King, as the absolute sovereign of everything in his state, had, no doubt, some right over the land. He received revenue from the peasant as the wages for the protection he gave to the people. In Kashmir, according to literary evidences, it appears that individuals used to enjoy the land whenever there were benevolent Kings like King Candrāpaḍa and King Lalitāditya, But people’s right over the land were encroached
whenever there were kings of atrocious nature like King Kalaśa and Harṣa, who adopted oppressive fiscal policy. Kalhaṇa tells that King Candraśīla did not force a tanner to give up his land for the purpose of constructing a temple.⁶ On the other hand in the Rājatarangini; the term Sarvabhauma which means the universal monarch is used for King Lalitāditya.⁷ It might be contended that the King was the sovereign lord of the land in his kingdom. P.N.K. Bamzai says that the immemorial tradition in Kashmir considered all land as the property of the ruler, and those who cultivated it as his tenants.⁸ This explains the innumerable grants of agrahāras or jāgīrs to favourite officials and ministers by several kings and queens and the endowment of villages for the maintenance of temples and hospices. This practice of granting jāgīrs is perhaps responsible for the growth of the Dāmaras landlords who played an important role in the politics of Kashmir during the rule of the later Hindu kings. According to R. S. Sharma, the difficulties in collecting taxes made impossible to run the state and as an alternative land grants were made. Thus at this period of time peasant was viewed as having only a qualified ownership of the soil, the king being endowed with the superior claim to it. Kalhaṇa tells many examples of it as he speaks of King Sreṣṭhasena as the lord of those kings who are cultivators of the fields that is the whole earth. Here King Sreṣṭhasena is said to have occupied the same position as of the lesser kings, as does a king with the cultivators. The implication seems to be that the cultivators are the owners of their land but the King has a superior title.⁹ In other reference King Jayāpiḍa is said to have gone, in his persistent greed, so far in cruelty that for three years he took the whole harvest, including the cultivator’s share.¹⁰ This shows that sometime kings viewed themselves as owner of the whole or a major portion of the cultivated land or of a crop?
TAXATION

The agriculturists or cultivators were most hard pressed of all sections of the people. Though they produced the bulk of the national wealth, they had little share in the produce. They were constantly exploited by the land lords on the one hand and the Kāyastha, revenue officer of the king on the other. The Rājatarangini is silent on the rate of taxation, but it may be assumed that in normal times the proportion was one sixth of the produce as the share of the government. This increased to one half during the times of the later kings. Kalhana tells that major portion of the produced crop was taken by the king as the tax and revenue. In one instance we learn that the king took away even the cultivator’s share of the produce for three consecutive years. There is no indication of a proper settlement of land revenue, but the mention of the office of Grāmakāyastha or village revenue officer and of the Skandaka the modern Patwari, indicates that there must have existed some sort of record showing what a man’s holdings in land amounted to, and what his revenue liabilities were. Except land revenue, the cultivators had to pay other taxes, both direct and indirect. In realising the land revenue in rice or other produce, it was easy for the king’s officials to systematically defraud the cultivator by the use of wrong weights. Kalhana mentions thirteen kinds of begar which a villager could be called upon to render to the king. Though these are not specified, they possibly included, like the Kar-i-Begar of the last century, various requisitions for village produce free of payments, which could be made by officials.

Besides the revenue from land, the kings levied direct taxes of all sorts from town and city dwellers, from artificers and market shops. Jayāpīda resorted to several exactions, but his officials "carried off all property of the subjects while delivering only the smallest fraction of what they realised." During the reign of Ajitāpīda, his chief minister, Utpala, carried away the revenue realisations collected by three departments of revenue and created another for the maintenance of the king. Šarikaravarman established two new
revenue offices called _ALERTきれ_ and .Alertライ_ (domestic affairs). The collection of revenue from a variety of direct taxes was entrusted to the former and the latter was responsible for collection of revenue from deducting or adding to the due weights, from fines and similar imposts. They may also have possibly included fees at certain domestic events, such as marriages, Alertギナータ, etc. To assist the officer in charge of .Alertライ_, he appointed five secretaries (divira) as also a treasurer (gaṇjavara), Cakravarman who on his restoration to the throne in CE 935 had to pay heavy bribes to his supporters, the Tantrin foot-soldiers, resorted to heavy taxation through the officials of Aksapatala and .Alertライ_, but the people having been reduced to the lowest depths of poverty could not pay these additional levies.

King Yasaskara appointed four city-prefects (Nagaradhikṛta) in order to increase his revenue by the contributions they had to offer by competition. For that these officials had to recoup themselves by increased exactions from the citizens. The variety of taxes and fines that they used to collect can be estimated from the fact that they levied fines even "on householders in the case of immoral conduct on the part of a married woman and on persons alleged to have had carnal intercourse with dancing girls who had been received into households as wedded wives." Under Abhimanyu (958-972 CE) when Diddī was the regent, the officer-in-charge of the treasury named Sindhu, created new imposts and thus "became the founder of the revenue-office called after him Sindhugañja." The condition of the people was deplorable during the reign of Harṣa, given to extravagant expenditure on his court and personal enjoyment and "upon various corps of his army". He stooped to all means of collecting funds to meet these expenses." The people who evaded payment were tormented by his officials who inflicted heavy fines "as if a boulder were thrown on an old bullock which has become worn out by dragging the plough." Kalhaṇa clearly confessed that these oppressions exasperated them so much that whenever there were internal conflicts in the country, they left their peaceful pursuit and took up the swords eager for rebellion.
There is no indication in the *Rājatarangini* of the amount of revenue collected by the kings of Kashmir from land and other sources. Considering the huge amounts spent by the kings and queens on dress and jewellery, and the magnificent temples and palaces erected by them, it seems to have been considerable. The army and the civil service were besides, a great drain on the revenues as also the several expeditions against neighbouring principalities. Often, the king of Kashmir had to pay subsidies to them. We also learn from several passages in the Chronicles that some enlightened kings like Lalitāditya and Avantivarman undertook extensive irrigation projects. Suyya’s expenditure on clearing the bed of the Jhelum at Baramula of rocks and silt has already been indicated.\(^{25}\) It seems that large amounts were also spent on the maintenance of roads and bridges.\(^{26}\) Public bath-houses on the Jhelum in Srinagar were also built by the government.\(^{27}\) There is mention at several places of schools and hospitals as well as of public rest houses set up by the kings and other important people.\(^{28}\) Large stipends and scholarships were paid to outstanding poets and authors, as also to artists, musicians and dancers. Udbhaṭṭa, Jayāpīda’s Chief Pandit, was paid a sum of 100,000 *dīnāras* as his daily allowance.\(^{29}\) Similarly, heavy subsidies like those paid to Sahi princes who lived at the court of king Ananta constituted a serious drain on the royal treasury.\(^{30}\)

In the *Rājatarangini* it is mentioned that the revenue was collected from cultivators by the officers known as *Skandakas*.\(^{31}\) They were assisted by *grāmakāyasthas*.\(^{32}\) According to Stein, *grāmakāyasthas* can be compared with the modern day *patwari* who keeps the papers showing the area of the holdings of the villagers, with their revenue assessment etc.\(^{33}\) The *grāmakāyasthas* were also in charge of the maintenance of village records with the help of *grāmadivirās*.\(^{34}\) These officers received their salaries out of the revenue collected from the villagers.\(^{35}\) The revenue realized from the various villages used to deposit in the departments of *attapatibhāga*, *grhakṛtya* and gaṇja.\(^{36}\) Śaṅkaravarman had appointed five secretaries in the office of *grhakṛtya*.\(^{37}\) The
main source of income of this office was to collect revenue by frequently making changes in the weights and measures.

Other important term frequently used by Kalhana in his chronicle is Dāmara. The word Dāmara, in the sense in which it is used in the Rājatarāṅgini and the later Chronicles, has not yet been traced outside Kashmir. Neither Kalhana nor his successors have thought it necessary to define or explain the term. Wilson, owing apparently to some misunderstanding of the first passage in which the word occurs, had formed the opinion that the Dāmaras were a fierce intractable tribe inhabiting the mountains to the north of Kashmir, which was not acceptable to all. Professor H. Kern assigning to Dāmaras the meaning Bojar, i.e. feudal landowner or baron. D D Kosambi infers that such large an establishment could not be maintained without collecting some due from the villages and also that there would have been no conflict with the centre if a reasonable share had been passed on to the later. Kalhana in his chronicle says that King Lālitāditya warns his successors not to leave with the cultivators of the land more than what is necessary for their bare sustenance and the tillage of their fields. The reason assigned for this draconic injunction is, that "If they should keep more wealth, they would become in a single year very formidable Dāmaras, and strong enough to neglect the commands of the king." It is clear that the danger, against which the Macchiavellian advice of the king is directed, cannot have been a sudden transformation of his Kashmirian land-holding subjects into powerful rural aristocracy. Next reference related to Dāmaras we get when King Avantivarman’s visit to the shrine of Bhūteśvara. The temple-priests, questioned by their royal visitor about the evident destitute condition of the shrine, ascribe it to Dhanva, a powerful Dāmara of the district (Lahara) who has appropriated the villages forming the temple’s’ endowments. Dhanva who owes his unrestrained local predominance to the patronage of the king’s powerful minister Śūra, neglects summons after summons. When he ultimately he arrives to receive his due punishment with a host of armed attendants.
Kalhana clearly describes here that a member of that land-grabbing oligarchy which in his own time was threatening to destroy all remnant of royal power.

When King Cakravarman had been driven a second time (CE 935) from his capital by his mutinous praetorians, the Täntrins, he took refuge with Sāṅgrāma, an influential Dāmara, resident in Maḍavarājya. At the conclusion of a solemn compact the Dāmaras rose in support of the deposed king, and with the help of others of his class, who joined him, succeeded in reinstating him. The Täntrins were exterminated and the Dāmaras, who are referred to among the vassals obtained great influence. Subsequently, the ungrateful conduct of Cakravarman led to a conspiracy among the Dāmaras and to his murder. Both under Unmattavanti and Diddā special mention is made of the success of royal commanders-in-chief in coercive measures against Dāmaras. It is, however, in the subsequent period, after the accession of the house of Lohara (CE 1003), that we meet with the fullest development of the Dāmara power. During the long succession of weak reigns from Sāṅgrāmarāja to Utkarṣa’s death (1003-1089 CE), the position of the Dāmaras as semi-independent feudal lords seems firmly to have established itself. Dāmaras set up pretenders, and siding either with father or son maintained Anantadeva and Kalasa in their internecine struggle. The commanders of the royal troops are more than once represented as engaged in regular expeditions against these turbulent barons of various districts.

In the midst of these troubles Kalhana relates the personal story of a Dāmara, which throws an interesting light on the origin and growth of this feudal class. Jayaka the clever son of a householder at the village of Selyapura (the present S’ilipor in Đunts), had, gradually raised himself to the position of a Dāmara. By the revenue of his lands and by exporting victuals to distant regions, he accumulated exceptional wealth, which he kept safe by having great quantities of coins buried in the soil. He ultimately found his death in an attempt to seize, by armed force, territory in the neighbouring district of Bangila. His buried treasures were confiscated by King Kalasa, and were so
great as to relieve the latter of all his money-troubles. This story proves clearly that the position of Dāmaras was not necessarily restricted to a particular tribal division or set of families; it also indicates the means by which this status could be attained apart from direct inhabitation.

Another incidental note referring to the time of “Kalasa helps to show that sometimes strongholds important for the safety of the whole land were in the power of Dāmaras. Lakkanacandra, a Dāmaras, had held the castle of Dugdhaghāta which guarded the old route to the Darad country, corresponding to the present Dudakhut Pass. He had been executed by order of King Ananta. Subsequently his widow had offered the hill fort to King Kalaśa, apparently, as the succeeding narrative shows, with a view to better assuring the safety of the neighbouring tract from inroads of the Darads. King Kalaśa refused the offer. The stronghold then fell into the power of the Darad king, from whom Harṣa subsequently vainly endeavoured to recover it with the assistance of the neighbouring Dāmaras. The circumstances here alluded to justify the conclusion that strongholds as well as lands had practically become hereditary possessions in the families of these feudal lords, whenever the central authority in the land was unable or unwilling to assert the right of resumption.

An attempt in this latter direction may have been the real reason for the cruel persecution of Dāmaras of which we read in Harṣa’s reign. In narrating the war of extermination by which Harṣa endeavoured to rid the eastern portion of the valley of the powerful Dāmaras, Kalhaṇa indiscriminately also uses the term la vanya to designate them. Harṣa’s efforts to suppress the Dāmaras produced the reverse of the object aimed at. The exasperated Dāmaras conspired with the refugee princes, Uccala and Sussala, and by a successful rising put an end to Harṣa’s rule and life. The reigns which followed this revolution, represent an almost uninterrupted series of struggles between the central authorities and the Dāmaras, and between various factions of the latter themselves. Throughout these troubles Kalhaṇa’s narrative brings out strongly the local character of the Dāmaras power. The districts to which they belong
are regularly mentioned, and show that their homes were invariably in the fertile cultivated portions of the valley. These alone, in fact, were able to support a large class of territorial barons of this type. Their seats (*upavesāna*), which evidently formed strong places capable of defence are often referred to.

From the above sketch it will appear that the materials which Kalhaṇa’s Chronicle supplies, are sufficient to give us a just idea of the political power and the social position held by the Dāmaras of that time. But they leave us in the dark as to the conditions under which their landed property, the basis of their influence, was acquired and held. If we compare the conditions prevailing in other parts of India where a similar class of landed aristocracy is still extant, the view suggests itself that a kind of service-tenure, the grant of land in return for military or other services, may have been the original foundation of the system. Yet even as regards this point the absence of all exact data prevents us from going beyond mere conjecture. Still less can we hope to ascertain the exact relations in which the Dāmaras may have stood towards their sovereign and towards the cultivators in matters of revenue, administration, etc. It is well known how multifarious and complicated the conditions regulating feudal tenure usually are even within a single Indian province or native state.

**IRRIGATION**

The main crop of Kashmir is paddy, which was the staple food of the population during that time as well, generally grew on the fertile lands adjoining to the river. So in Kashmir it was grown on the nearby places of river Vitastā. Due to the lack of rain and proper system of irrigation it could not be cultivated in other parts of the valley. The produce, which was never sufficient, could feed the entire population only with great difficulty. Kalhaṇa gives this information in his the *Rājatarangini* that up to the middle of the 9th century CE the price of a *khāri* of rice was 200 *dīnāras* even in times of great abundance. Sometimes when the snow melted, the great Vitastā rose to the top of the banks.
and overflowed the arable lands around. Heavy summer rains also often caused disastrous floods and immense damage to the crops.

The floods and the famines which followed as a consequence, were constant dangers in old times. The cost of a khari of rice rose as high as 1050 dinaras during the rule of the later feeble Karkoṭa kings when the country was overtaken by disastrous floods. In CE, 917 when the whole autumn rice-crop was destroyed by a flood, the khāri was sold for a thousand dināras. In CE, 1099 when Harṣa was the king of Kashmir, many villages were flooded by an inundation and 500 dināras had to be paid for a single khāri of rice.

Thus from a very early time attempts were made to protect the cultivable lands from the disasters of floods. In the earliest traditions recorded in The Rājatarangini the construction of irrigation canals plays a significant part. The Suvarṇamaṇikulyā which is ascribed to King Suvarṇa and which still brings water to a great part of the Adavin district is also noticed by Kalhana. A king called Dāmodara is said by Kalhana to have built long stone-lined dykes in order to guard against inundations. The minister of king Bālāditya erected an embankment. The constructions of embankments were meant to protect the cultivable lands from floods whereas the surplus water which was thus obtained had the chance of being passed into several channels to irrigate other fields. An attempt to this direction was made by king Lalitāditya who arranged for conducting the waters of the Vitastā at Cakradhara (modern Tsakadar) and distributed it to various villages. On account of the high plateaus around Cakradhara, the lands enclosed between Tsakadar and Vijabror could not be irrigated by means of ordinary canals and Lalitāditya had to take recourse to the construction of a series of water-wheels (ambhahpratārana) which lifted water from Jhelum. With this drainage operations of Lalitāditya made the country productive to a certain extent. But the work of irrigation started by the great monarch was neglected by his incompetent successors when serious floods visited the valley.
An attempt mentioned by Kalhana in his chronicle, was made by Suyya, the irrigation minister of king Avantivarman to regulate the waters of "the Vitastā and to drain the whole valley." Near Yakṣadara (mod. Dyargul) large rocks which had rolled down from the mountains lining both river banks obstructed the Vitastā. Suyya dragged out the rocks from the river and the level of the river was lowered. Next a stone dam was constructed across the bed of the river for seven days when the river bed was cleared at the bottom and stone walls were erected against further fall of rocks. The dam was then removed and the river flowed with great rapidity through its newly cleared passage.

Wherever inundation breaches were known to occur during disastrous floods, new beds were constructed for the Vitastā. Formerly the Vitastā and the Sindhu met at a place between the village of Trigām and the Paraspor plateau, now they came to meet at a junction opposite to Shādipūr. By changing the course of the Vitastā from the north of Trigām to the south of it, Suyya reclaimed the marshes south of the Vular lake. The Vular lake was dammed and the new river course now carried its waters to that part of the Vular lake which by its depth and well-defined boundaries was naturally designed as a great reservoir to receive the surplus waters of the dangerous floods. On the land reclaimed, new villages were established. Suyya, then decided for each village the extent and distribution of the watercourse on a permanent basis and by using for irrigation the Anūla and other streams enriched all regions by prosperous irrigated fields that suited their splendid "and bounteous crops."

The endeavours of Suyya met with unique success. It is noted on the evidence of Kalhana, that up to the middle of the 9th century CE, the price of a khāri of rice, even in times of great abundance was 200 dīnāras. As a result of Suyya’s operations, the khāri of rice came to be bought for 36 dīnāras only.

Suyya’s example to irrigate the unfertile plateaux of Kashmir was probably followed by others. An inscription discovered at Hatun, in the Punial tract up the Gilgit river records that Makarasimha, a feudatory of the Sāhi kings
of Gilgit, cut a canal (kulya) and brought water to a land which was a waste before (atavi). It is likely that similar projects were undertaken in Kashmir proper also. M.A. Stein has even come across the traces of old irrigation-cuts which brought down the water of the melting snows from alpine plateaus high above the forest zone.

The irrigation scheme of Suyya or of any other person, however, could not permanently save the country from the clutches of famine, serious recurrences of which took place at least during the reigns of Pàrtha and Harsha. With the growth of population, there must have been an increasing pressure on the total produce of the valley. The high plateaux could not be cultivated. The cultivable lands being limited the food-grains which grew from them were also of a limited quantity. In normal times the restricted quantity of food-crops might have been just enough "to meet the requirement of the entire population. But if any disaster, whether natural or man-made, deprived the country from a portion of its limited food supply, famines were the invariable result.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

With its fertile soil and abundance of water supply, Kashmir has been from ancient times depending mainly on agriculture as the principal source of food and wealth. The Valley was dotted with numerous villages and, according to Kalhana, the villagers were wholly absorbed in agriculture. Among the agricultural products, rice has been the largest and the most important produce of the valley. It seems to have been cultivated extensively from an early period as it was the staple food crop. Dhânya has been frequently mentioned in the Nilmatapurâna and in Kalhana’s chronicle as a major food of the people which was also offered in worship to gods. It is also quite clear from the pages of the Râjatarangini where it is also called dhânya or rice which was the staple produce of the valley, the scarcity of which often resulted in disastrous famines. According to the Venetian traveller Marco Polo (13th, century CE)
rice was the principal food of the people of Kashmir. Cultivation of rice presupposes abundance of irrigational facilities which exist in the Valley. The novel and elaborate contrivances by which water taken from rivers and streams is distributed over the rice-fields seem to have existed in one form or the other from ancient times. That there are definite indications of an elaborate system of irrigation having been present proves further the antiquity of rice cultivation in the Valley. It appears that all available land on the hill sides, karewas and low lying tracts by the marshes, must have been under cultivation.

That there was a greater pressure on land in olden times due to the swelling population is attested to by "traces of old irrigation-cuts long ago abandoned which brought down the water of the melting snows from alpine plateaus high above the forest zone. Their distance from any lands capable of rice cultivation is so great, and the trouble of their construction must have been so considerable that only a far greater demand for irrigation than the present one can account for their existence."

The seeds of rice were probably sown during the month of Caitra. By the month of Bhādrapada the fields were covered, with ripe autumnal rice-crop and the harvest was reaped in, the month of Aśvina (October). After this a, ceremony of new crops (navāṇa) was performed. The method adopted for husking rice appears; to have been the same as it is in modern times. Before removing the outer husk, the rice had to be dried. We have an interesting reference which closely resembles the modern practice among householders of drying their paddy in the sun before husking. In the story of the Nāga maiden who married a Brahman youth and who was watching her paddy spread on the ground to dry we get a good example of the same. Dāmodaragupta’s Kuṭṭāṇīmata also gives the reference of husking rice and Kalhaṇa mentions about rice corn being grinded in hand mills. Lands had to be ploughed properly before the sowing of seeds and oxen were employed for tillage of fields. The fact that the destruction of rice crops always resulted in scarcity and famine shows that rice was the staple food of the people.
Besides rice we have evidence of the cultivation of barley and pulses too. These crops, according to the Nīlamatapurāṇa, ripened in the month of Jyeṣṭha (June). The pulses consisted of several varieties such as gram (canā), lentil (masūra) and blackgram (mūga).  

Hsuen Tsang visited Kashmir in the 7th century CE and declared that the country 'was a good agricultural one and produced abundant fruits and flowers'. The pear (li), the wild plum (nai) the peach (t’au), the apricot (hang or mui) and the grape (pe-tau) were the principal fruits noticed by the pilgrim. It shows that Fruit cultivation have been practiced in Kashmir from ancient times. Kalhaṇa has mentioned grapes and grape-gardens in his Rājataranginī. Grapes “which were scarce even in heaven were common in Kashmir.” The town of Mārtanḍa, for instance, was “swelling with grapes” during Lalitādiya’s time. Bilhaṇa when singing of the beauties of his homeland mentions grapes growing in abundance in the Valley. Apple (palevata) was also cultivated.

Of the other products of the valley important name comes of saffron. cultivation of saffron has been a monopoly of Kashmir from ancient times. Known also as Kashmiriraja it was, according to Kalhaṇa, one of the five things for which Kashmir was famous, and the privilege of royalty to use it as a scented salve or emollient. He further tells that things which are difficult to find even in heaven like grapes and saffron are common here. Saffron was also used as an ingredient in Greek medicine and cuisine and it continues to be so used in Kashmir. In the Nīlamatpurāṇa, we often find references tolkamkum (saffron) and Bilhaṇa testifies to its growth in the Valley. The legend about its origin connects it with the plateau of Padmapura (Pampur) where the first bulb was planted by the famous physician, Vāgbhaṭṭa, who received it as a gift from Nāga Takṣaka on his being cured of an eye disease. The elaborate method of its cultivation in well-prepared beds seems to have been followed from ancient times.
Kuth (Saussrea Lappa) which is an important forest product, though not cultivated as such, was also used in medicine and incense. So was dhūpa, another forest by-product from which incense was prepared for use in worship. Kalhana has several references to dhūpa, which seems to have been an article of trade among the Brahman priests in the temples of Kashmir.80

INDUSTRY

Though the majority of the inhabitants of early Kashmir were engaged in agriculture, a considerable number of the populace took up various industries and crafts as their vocations. The most notable of these were textiles, particularly of wooden, jewellery, smithery, leather-work, stone-work, woodwork and pottery. Both wooden and cotton textiles were produced in ancient Kashmir. There is a depiction of finely-clad figures on the terracotta tiles unearthed at Harwan, where lady is wearing transparent robes.81 There is the direct evidence of Hsuen Tsang who records that the people of Kashmir wore clothes of white linen. "Their garments are made of Kaiu-She-Ye (Kanṣeya) and of cotton. Kaiu-She-Ye is the product of the wild silk worm. They have garments also of Ts′o-mo (Kṣaumo) which is a sort of hemp; garments also made of Kien-po-lo (Kambala) which is woven from fine goat hair garments also made from Ho-la-Jī (Karala)-this stuff is made from the fine hair of wild animals it is seldom this can be woven, and therefore the stuff is very: valuable and it is regarded as fine clothing."82

Various kinds of woollen blankets and garments such as lohita-kambala, sthūla-kambala, kuthā and prāvira are referred to in Kṣemendra’s Narmanālā and Samayamātrkā and in Kalhana’s the Rājatarangini pāṭana (mod. Paṭan, the town founded by king Śaṅkaravarman) was a city famous for the weaving of cloths.83 Wooden industry naturally presupposes the existence of a population devoted to pasture and there must have been many people in Kashmir who took up cattle rearing as their means of livelihood. The Rājatarangini tells many markets in different cities of Kashmir.84 In this
connection it is interesting to note, that Paṭṭana which was a cloth weaving centre and was also a city famous for the transactions and sale of cattle.

Thus we find the existence of a kind of silk industry in Kashmir in ancient times. In the Sabhā Parva of the Mahābhārata mention is made of a "thread spun by worms" among the many presents offered to Yudhiṣṭhira by a feudatory prince from the north-western side of the Himalayas, presumably Kashmir. We find an echo of its antiquity in Mirza Haider Dughlat’s Tarikh-i-Rashidi (1540 CE) wherein he records that "among the wonders of Kashmir are the number of mulberry trees cultivated for their leaves for the production of silk."

The Ho-la-Ii (Karala) of Hsuen Tsang definitely refers to pashmina or cloth made out of fine wool (pashm) of the shawl goat. The history of this industry goes to remote antiquity. When Kashmir took to it is not known, but a mention of shawls is made in the Mahābhārata. Besides shawls, several kinds of blankets were also manufactured. Kṣemendra’s Narmamālā and Samayamatrākā have several references to these blankets. The chief centre of woollen manufacture was Paṭṭan which had also a market for the sale of sheep and cattle.

Smithery, of course, exists in Kashmir from ancient times. With agriculture as the main occupation of the people and with a large standing army of the kings always eager to launch conquering expeditions out of the Valley, there must have been a roaring business for the blacksmith. Besides, cooking vessels and other utensils were made of brass and copper. Both Kṣemendra and Kalhaṇa testify that kings and nobles took their meals in cup and dishes which were made of gold and silver. Golden pitchers too have been alluded to. Ancient images in brass and copper of gods and goddesses have been discovered during excavations and this also presupposes the existence of a highly advanced industry of casting and moulding metals.
Closely associated with the metal industry was that of pottery, which was used to be mainly by poor people. Excavations carried out at Burzahom by De Terra and his party have revealed a large quantity of earthenware. While the lower culture yielded a type of highly polished black ware and potsherds with incised assignable to a period ranging from 3000 to 1800 BCE, the upper culture layer was found to contain potsherds belonging to the same Buddhist period as Harwan, which represents the 4th century CE. We have already referred to this in our chapter on the Prehistoric period. At Avantipura large numbers of huge jars for storing grain and other vessels have been recovered. Similarly we have the fine specimens of Gandhara art in the terracotta heads discovered at Ushkur in the Valley and Akhnur in Jammu. We have mention by Kṣemendra of earthen rings worn by women of Kashmir as also a reference by Kalhaṇa to a potter-woman. This indicates the existence of a highly developed and flourishing industry.

It seems Kashmir was also fairly advanced in glass manufacture, particularly bangles. In the Rājatarāṅgini it is stated that the merchant Padmarāja regularly dispatched to king Bhoja of Malwa, the water of Pāpasudāna tirtha filled in large glass jars. A quantity of ancient glass fragments was found strewn on the road leading to the spring of Pāpasudāna from the village of Kother.

Goldsmiths must have of course flourished in ancient Kashmir. Considering the numerous references in the Rājatarāṅgini to gold bangles, armlets, rings and other ornaments worn by kings, queens and noble, goldsmiths must have always had a busy time, particularly when the fashions in these changed from time to time.

In ancient Kashmir there were large number of masons and sculptors present. The presence of numerous ruins of old temples with exquisite sculpture, fluted columns and trefoil arches directly shows it. Most of the temple buildings were no doubt in stone, but the cities and towns were, as now,
built in timber. The mention of several devastating fires which burnt Srinagar and other towns to ashes clearly indicates the use of timber in buildings. Naturally the carpenter and wood worker had a flourishing trade.

Rich riverine traffic too was carried on along the navigable parts of the Jhelum. The boats were used in the valley for conveyance from a remote period and References of river journeys, boats, boat bridges and ghats or landing places are given frequently in the chronicle of Kalhana.² It may be presumed that many of them were employed for carrying commercial goods from one end of the country to the other. Daya Ram Sahni is of opinion that the large sized stone blocks which were needed for the construction of big temples must have been carried in strong boats.⁹³ That the river Vitastā played an important part in the commercial traffic of the valley is also evident from the fact that most of the cities and towns of ancient Kashmir flourished on its banks.⁹⁴ Thus for building of boats, palanquins and manufacture of household furniture were also some of the items for which the services of a carpenter were in demand.

Among other industries, leather-work was important. Kalhana speaks of leather tanners as members of a particular profession.⁹⁵ Kṣemendra refers to leather water bag among the important camp luggages of a Kāyastha officer.⁹⁶ The peacock shoes and other foot-wears must have been made of leather.⁹⁷ In this connection, it is interesting to note Kalhana’s remark that a hundred dināras were given to one leather worker for the repair of a torn shoe and of a whip.⁹⁸

Besides the above there must have flourished other minor industries too. There are references to gardeners, fishermen, garland-makers, barbers, teachers, and Vaidyas or physicians. There were copper and iron mines which must have given employment to a good number of workers.⁹⁹
THE TERM DINNĀRA AND THE MONETARY SYSTEM

The numerous passages of the chronicle which state in exact figure prices of commodities, amount of salaries and the like, or otherwise refer to the currency of the country, furnish valuable material for the numismatic and economic history of Kashmir. Their evidence, however, cannot be fully utilized unless the character and value of the monetary system to which they refer, is clearly established.

The first question which presents itself, concerns the value of the Dinnāra, which we find almost invariably used or implied in Kalhaṇa’s monetary statements. The word, undoubtedly derived from the denarius of the West, is well known to Sanskrit lexicography as the designation of a gold-coin, usually spelt dīnāra. But the manifest impossibility of accepting this meaning for the passages of the chronicle which mention sums in Dinnāras, had already struck Wilson. Noticing that in two passages figures are given which if calculated in gold, would be large beyond all credence, he suggested that the ‘dinnars’ meant might have been of copper. Curiously enough, however, none of the subsequent interpreters seems to have followed up the suggestion thrown out by Wilson, or to have otherwise paid attention to the subject.

If the passages related to Dinnāras of Kalhaṇa are examined, it can be noticed that they range themselves under two heads. Either Dinnāras are mentioned in a general way without any particular amount or quantity being specified. Or we have exact statements of the cash amounts, coupled with the term dinnāras and expressed in figures which with rare exceptions move in round hundreds, thousands, lakhs and crores. That in the first case the term dinnāra had to be taken in the general sense of coin or money was made quite evident by different passages where it is mentioned that under King Harṣa, Dinnāras of gold, silver and copper. Here we can clearly understand that narrator is taking Dinnāra as Mudrā or coin.
As regards the second class of passages we have important evidence in the note of the Kalhaṇa where he expresses dinnāraṇāṁ daśaśatiṁ means ten hundred Dinnāras, he states that dinnārah means the same as dyar in Kashmir. The latter word is commonly used to this day in the sense as ‘money’, in particular, ‘coined money’ or ‘cash’. It is evident that according to the interpretation of the glossator dinnāra is not the designation of any particular monetary value, but a term of much more general significance, corresponding somewhat to our’ cash’ or ‘currency’.

It fully agrees with this interpretation that we see in numerous passages plain figures, without the addition of the word dinnāra, used exactly in the same way for the indication of money amounts. If we compare the passage102 in which one lakh Dinnāras as the daily pay of the Sabhāpati Udbhata with another passage,103 where the daily pay of Rudrapilā Śahi is referred to by the simple term of ‘one lakh and a half,’ it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the currency meant is the same in both cases.

Equally significant evidence may be deduced from the anecdote which is told in Uccala’s reign of the depositor and the trader. Here the sum originally deposited is described as “a lakh, Dinnāras”104. In the subsequent narrative the fraudulent Bania is made to give details as to the various items of expenditure which are supposed to have exhausted the deposit. These items are then invariably expressed by figures moving in round hundreds, to which neither the word dinnāra nor any other term indicative of monetary value is added.

This fictitious account is instructive also from another point of view. When we find that for such trifling expenses as the repair of a shoe and whip, purchase of honey and ginger for a sick child, a load of broken pots, etc., sums of "one hundred," “three. Hundred”, etc., are charged in the account, it is manifest that the basis of the currency to which these figures refer, must be a very low one. The same conclusion is forced upon us by those passages where
Kalhana relating events near his own time and known to him evidently on good authority, mentions some sums which unless calculated on such a basis would appear on the face of it extravagant and impossible. Thus we have, apart from the daily allowances of 1,50,000 and 80,000 Dināras, the statement made the ransom of thirty-six lakhs paid for a court favourite at a time of financial pressure, etc.

The indications thus furnished by the Chronicle are by themselves not sufficient to give any distinct idea as to the ancient monetary system of Kashmir.105 But, fortunately, we are able to supplement and elucidate them by the evidence of the coins, and by the short but very valuable account which Abul-Fazl has left us of the Kashmir currency in the time of Akbar. His description of the system is as follows: ‘Rab Sasnu’ is a silver coin of nine mashas. The Pancuhu is of copper, equal to the fourth of a dam, and is called kasira. One-fourth of this is the barakani, of which again one-fourth is called shakri.

The merit of having first recognized the value of this account and explained its true bearing on Kashmir numismatics belongs to General Cunningham, who has discussed it at length in hisCoins of Medieval India. He realized the plain decimal basis of the system described by Abul-Fazal, notwithstanding the defective forms in which the names of the several coins are recorded. He also found the links which connect this system with the extant coinage of the Hindu kings of Kashmir.

The numerical relation indicated by Abul-Fazal between the Pancuhu, Hat and Sasnu, viz. 1: 4 :40, makes it quite certain that Gen. Cunningham was right in connecting these terms with the modern Kashmiri words for 25, 100 and 1000. The Kasmiri terms intended by Abul-Fazal, in fact, puntshu, hath and sasun. All of these, as we shall see below, still survive in popular use to the present day as designations of monetary values. Pantshu is clearly a derivative of puntsah, 'twenty-five', 'hath is identical with the ordinary
Kalhana’s word for ‘hundred,’ and sasun plainly derived from sas, ‘thousand’. The coin or value meant by the hat was equivalent to 1 dam of Akbar or 1/40 Rupee, as shown by the equation of 1 Puntshu=1/4 dam. The puntshu was a copper coin and may, according to the accepted value of the dam of Akbar have weighed about 81 grains.

Descending below the, puntshu or 'Twenty-fiver,’ we find in Abul-Fazl’s table the barakani, as the edition reads. This is described in the text as one-fourth of the puntshu, but it is easy to show that Gen. Cunningham was right in treating this coin, or value, as representing one-half of the former. The barakani of the edition is, as the translation already correctly recognized, nothing but a wrongly spelt form of the Kalhana’s bahagan, which in the popular reckoning to be described below, represents one-half of the puntshu. The clerical error is easily accounted for by the peculiarities of the Persian characters.

Turning now to the higher monetary values, we have the higher monetary values, hundreder which was equal, as we have seen, to the copper Dam of Akbar. The sasun or "Thousander" was the equivalent of 10 haths, and must hence be reckoned as 10 dams, or one-fourth of a Rupee of Akbar. The lakh, as its name shows, was equal to 100 sasuns, and accordingly represented the value of 1000 dams, exactly as Abul-Fazl’s final remark puts it.

The sikka which is mentioned as = 1 ½ sasuns, stands apart from this purely decimal scale of monetary values. We receive no indication as to the particular coin, if any, which may be intended by this term. The latter means simply 'coin,’ and was one of the designations applied to the silver coins of the Delhi kings approximating the standard of 175 grains troy which was subsequently adopted by Akbar as the standard for his Rupee.

As 1 ½ sasuns were equal only to 15 dams it is clear that Abul-Fazl in
our passage cannot mean Akbar’s Rupee of 40 dams. The reading *tanka* which one of Prof. Blochmann’s MSS. offers for the word *sikka*, does not help us to clear the point as its application is equally general. Fortunately, the question as to the real character of the coin, or monetary value, intended by Abul-Fazl’s *sikka* does not affect the general basis of calculation. It can, hence, safely be left unconsidered here.

It is a striking illustration of the tenacity with which tradition and custom have maintained themselves in Kashmir, that with but one exception all the above monetary terms have survived to this day in the popular system of reckoning, notwithstanding the repeated changes which the currency of the country has undergone since Akbar’s time. In this popular system of calculation with which Stein acquainted himself by repeated inquiries, both among the Sarafs of the city and among villagers, the term *hath* is used for a copper coin corresponding in value to the British *pice*. Ten coppers or *pices* are reckoned as one *Sasun*. The *puntshu* represents one-fourth of the *hath*, and the *bahagani* one-eighth.

It is necessary to call special attention to this point, because the testimony of the passages of the *Rājatarangini* and the later Chronicles, to which we now return, incontestably shows that the monetary terms and the system of reckoning which we have traced from Akbar’s time to the present day, were already in use in Kalhana’s time and probably centuries earlier. The true meaning of the term *Dinnāra* is brought in to relief by passages where it is used in evident contrast to *Dhānya*. Grain particularly rice, has formed, practically to the present day, a regular medium of currency in Kashmir.

After discussing the coinage of Kashmir, it can throw light on the old monetary system of the country; it will be useful to summarize here briefly the results of concerning this system. The comparison of Abul-fazal’s account and of the still surviving tradition with the data of the *Rājatarangini* has shown that the currency of Kashmir, at least from the ninth century onwards, was based on

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It is clear now that the prices were an extreme cheapness of all indigenous produce in Kashmir, not only for the Hindu period, but also for centuries after its close. They might, indeed, excite doubts as to the correctness of our price calculation, had we not the evidence of Abul-Fazl to fall back upon. But Kashmir is not the only part of India to astonish us by the cheapness of its commodities. For what, Ibn Batuta, the traveller of the fourteenth century, tells us of the prices current in Bengal of his own time, comes apparently very close to the economic conditions of old Kashmir. An acquaintance of his, Ibn Batuta informs us, used to buy there a twelvemonth’s supply for his household of three, for a silver dinar, equivalent to a rupee. The quantity of unhusked rice thus purchased was eighty Delhi rothls, or about 2300 lbs. He saw a milk cow sold in Bengal for three silver dinars (or 1 ½ rupee), eight fat fowls sold for a dirhem (one-eighth of a rupee), etc. And from a note of Sir H. Yule we learn that even at the end of the seventeenth century 580 lbs. of rice were bought at Chittagong for a rupee, and sixty good tame poultry for the same money. Such were the prices in a large provinces boasting of easy communications by sea and river, and forming part of a great empire. We can, hence, scarcely wonder at the cheapness that reigned in the Kashmir of Hindu times, when the great obstacles to commerce arising from the valley’s natural situation were increased by a system of rigid political isolation. It is manifest that the rates of victuals, and in particular those of rice, as recorded by Kalhaṇa, afford the best gauge for an estimate of the relative value which cash sums, such as salaries, represented in the Kashmir of Hindu times.

Estimated by this standard the 100,000 Dinnaras daily pay which Udbhata, Jayāpiḍa’s Chief Pandit was lucky enough to draw, was a very respectable remuneration ‘indeed, corresponding in value to 500 Kharis of grain. Calculated at the rate indicated by Abul-Fazl, and increased by 12 per cent, in accordance with the greater intrinsic value of the earlier copper
coinage, the Lakh of Udbhata’s daily pay would amount to 28 1/2 rupees. This daily allowance, though acceptable enough even for a Pandit of the present day, would scarcely excite the attention of a modern chronicler. But if we convert the sum named by Kalhana into its equivalent in grain and estimate the present value of the latter according to the commutation rate of 1 1/4 rupee for the Khari, we arrive at the sum of 625 rupees as representing approximately for the present day the same purchasing power which Udbhata’s 100,000 Dinnaras had in his own time.

We are all the more justified in taking the prices of grain as the true standard by which to estimate the relative value of the cash amounts mentioned in the Chronicle, because there is good reason to believe that rice has already in early times formed, a kind of subsidiary currency in Kashmir.

This belief is based primarily on the fact that such a system has survived in Kashmir to the present day. As by far the greatest part of the land revenue has until quite recently collected in kind, it was the regular system for the State to pay all salaries, grants, etc., in grain or other produce taken from the state stores.

That the system here described has come down from an earlier time is proved beyond all doubt by the detailed account of Abul-Fazl, which shows that the revenue administration of Kashmir was in the sixteenth century mainly the same as in recent times. The same be concluded for the Hindu period from such indicates as Kalhana gives us. By far the greatest portion of the land revenue being assessed and collected in Kharis of grain, it necessarily follows that the consequences in respect of the currency must have been similar to those prevailing to our time.

The system of reckoning revenues in grain is widely spread throughout Asia, and is naturally well adapted to the economic conditions of a mainly agricultural country. In a territory isolated by great mountain barriers, and hence far removed from the influences of export trade like Kashmir, such a
system based on the staple produce of the country and the main food stuff of its inhabitants, must have specially recommended itself by its stability. Its existence in old Kashmir, which we conclude from the evidence above indicated, greatly helps us to understand the facts we have ascertained regarding the cash currency of the country. A monetary system, based on the cowree unit and represented in its main bulk by a copper coinage, becomes far more intelligible if we realize that it was supplemented in all important transactions of public business and private life by the ample stores of another circulating medium, the Khari of rice.\textsuperscript{108}

**TRADE**

Geographically, Kashmir occupies a strategic position touching the borders of India, Tibet, Afghanistan and Central Asia, a feature that made her a great centre of trade and commerce. Our knowledge regarding the internal trade of early Kashmir is comparatively meagre. Kalhaṇa’s mention of regularly arranged markets (haṭṭa) in the city of Pravarapura\textsuperscript{109} and references of new foundations of market by some members of the royal family in other towns,\textsuperscript{110} however, leave no room for doubt that a brisk inland trade was carried on in Kashmir from a remote period. Kalhaṇa’s description of the semi-legendary town of Narapura where the markets were kept full of supplies shows how closely the markets were associated in the Kashmirian mind with the idea of a large town.\textsuperscript{111}

The principal items of commerce within the country were probably the different kinds of women cloth, food-grains, grape wine, saffron, cattle, iron implements, earthen “wares, bronze and copper utensils, leather-goods, etc. which were the chief natural and industrial products of the country. Though no detailed evidence is forthcoming, it seems almost certain that the various towns and cities of the valley like Purāṇādhīṣṭhāna, Huṣkāpura, Pravarapura, Parihāsāpura, Jayapura, Śaṅkarapāṭṭana, Avantipura and Sūrapura were principal commercial centres Kalhaṇa informs us that Śaṅkarapāṭṭana was a
city famous for the purchase and sale of cattle and for cloth weaving.\textsuperscript{112} As already mentioned, Srinagar or Pravarapura had several markets.\textsuperscript{113} A market called Kamālahaṭṭa was founded at Parihāsapura by Lalitāditya queen.\textsuperscript{114} Śūrapura was an important station; on the route to Rājapuri and was evidently a convenient emporium on the southern trade route. The internal trade was carried on both by land and river. Some idea of the land route may probably be had from the itinerary of the Chinese traveller Hsuen Tsang. The pilgrim entered the valley from the west through the Bārāmūla pass. From Bārāmūla he went to Huṣkāpura. The next place which he visited was Srinagar or Pravarapura, the capital. From the capital the pilgrim travelled through a mountainous district south west for above 700 Li and reached, Pan-nu-tso, i.e., modern Punch. From Punch, a journey south-west of above 400 Li brought him to the Ho-lo-she-pu-lo (Rajapuri) country which at the time of Hsuen Tsang was subject to Kashmir.\textsuperscript{115} There can be little doubt that in the 7th century CE commercial products were chiefly carried in the same road through which Hsuen Tsang travelled.

Rich revere traffic too was carried on along the navigable parts of the Jhelum. The boats were used in the valley for conveyance from a remote period and it may be presumed that many of them were employed for carrying commercial goods from one end of the country to the other. Daya Ram Sahni is of opinion that the large sized stone blocks which were needed for the construction of big temples must have been carried in strong boats. Thus the river Vitasta played an important part in the commercial traffic of the valley is also evident from the fact that most of the cities and towns of ancient Kashmir flourished on its banks.

Kashmir had very flourishing trade relations with foreign territories which are traced to a period of remote antiquity. Regular commercial contact with the countries of Central Asia must have been established as a result of the Kuṣāṇa conquest of the valley. Her trade with India was most probably carried on from an even remoter period, perhaps since the days of Aśoka. Paucity of
evidence, however, prevents us from tracing its early character or to determine its date. According to the evidence furnished by Kalhana, Kashmir had political and cultural alliance with Loh, i.e., Leh the capital of Ladakh from a considerable early period. Possibly some sort of commercial relation also existed between the two countries.

The principal routes of Kashmir leading to the neighbouring countries, references to which may be found in the accounts of foreign travellers as well as in indigenous literature, were presumably also the chief routes through which trade and commerce with other countries were carried on. The chief land route on the west was that which went from Varāhāmīla to Gandhāra. In the 7th century CE, the Chinese pilgrim Hsuen Tsang entered Kashmir through this route. Ou-kong coming from Gandhāra followed this route on his way to the happy valley about the middle of the 8th century CE. He describes this route as the road which starts from the western gate’ and goes to Kien-to-lo, i.e., Gandhāra. Kalhana’s account tends to show that king Sarha Karavarman’s (CE 883-902) expeditionary force against Urasa set out and returned by this route. Merchants and traders from Kashmir must have travelled by these routes during the Kuśāna period and afterwards.

The northern route ran from the north shore of the Vular lake through the modern village of Atawat and Vijjemarg leading to Astor and Balti territories on the Indus. This route was followed by the Chinese travellers Fa-hien (CE, 399), Chemong (CE 400) ctd Fa-yong (CE 420), the Chinese official envoy Sung-yun (518 CE) and the Chinese pilgrim Ou-kong. Ou-kang described it as the second pass of Kashmir leading up to Po-liu or Baltistan. Ārānāth writes that the second pass became fit for communication soon after Madhyāntika’s death. The present Gilgit road seems to run beside the old pass. In ancient times, this route must have served as a second line of commerce with Central Asia and China, though due to its inaccessibility; it might have been less frequented. The trade link with Darad territory was also maintained by this route.
To the east of Kashmir, there was a third important route leading to Ladakh and then to Tibet and China. It is represented by the present pass of Jo-ji-la. This route was distinctly referred to by Ou-kong who mentioned it as the road which started from the gate in the east and led to Tau-tan or Tibet. Kalhaṇa’s Chronicle probably points out that when the northern route from Darad country became closed by the winter, this route of the Bhauna land (Bhūṭtarāṣṭradhvāṃ) was used for a journey towards Kashmir. The jo-ji-la pass must have played a great part in the political, cultural and commercial intercourse between Tibet and Kashmir. In the 14th century CE the Turk Dulca and Bhauṭṭa Riṅcana entered the happy valley through it.

Several other routes of Kashmir on the southern side penetrated through the Pir Pantsal range to India proper. The Bānaśālä or Banhal pass on the eastern extremity of the range maintained link with the hill states of East Punjab. This pass was the only route across the Pir Pantsal range where the snow fall was comparatively little and where communication was possible throughout the year. Hence the route was especially suitable for Bhikṣācara’s invasion to Kashmir from the valley of Chenab which took place in winter.

Proceeding westwards from Banasala comes to the pass of Siddhapatha. This pass lies on a route directly connecting Srinagar with Sialkot (ane Šākala) in the Punjab. During the reign of Sussala, Prāsa, son of Sahasramaṅgaḷa, with the view of raising a rebellion prepared to march into Kashmir by this route. Due to its hilly character traffic in the route was possible only on foot. West of the Siddhapatha pass, near the central part of the Pir Pantsal range, runs the Pir Pantsal route. In early days it was a much frequented line of commerce between Kashmir and central Punjab. The route took its start from the Kashmir town of Sūrapura which was founded by Avantivarman’s minister Śūra. It then passed across Kramavarta, Hastivaṇja, and Puṣyānanda and reached Bhairavagala in the territory of Rājāpuṛī. Kṣemendra’s mention of a part of this route as Lavaṇasāraṇī tends to show that ancient salt trade between Punjab and Kashmir was carried on by this route.
The last important route across the Pir Pantsal range was the Tosmaidan pass. It lay on an ancient line of communication which joined Srinagar and Lohara and afterwards led to the valley of Punch. Hsuen Tsang tells us that from near the capital of Kashmir, he travelled through a difficult mountainous district south west for above 700 li to the Pan-nu-ts’o country. On his way to Parṇotsa, the Chinese pilgrim in all probability seems to have crossed the Toṣmaidān route. After the death of Sangrāmarāja, the king of Kashmir, Lohara king Vigrahrāja invaded Kashmir. His army in this journey from Lohara to Śrīrtagara marched through this way. Kalhana’s Chronicle reveals that during the rule of the first and second Lohara dynasty the Toṣmaidān route was a line of frequent communication. If Alberuni is to be believed, Mahmud of Ghazni’s unsuccessful expedition against Kashmir was also directed by this route.

The western, northern and eastern routes, as well as the various passes over the Pir Pantsal range leading to the south, were important lines of communication between Kashmir and her neighbouring territories and a brisk trade must have been carried through these routes in ancient times. The several routes over the Pir Pantsal range, which as we have already seen were links between Kashmir and central and eastern parts of the Punjab, were joined by other highways which penetrated far into the interior provinces of India. Kashmir’s trade with midland and eastern India was probably carried, in the 7th century CE, by the same way in which Hsuen Tsang journeyed.

Besides this entrepot trade, Kashmir also exported its own products particularly wooden goods, saffron and Kuth (costus) and small quantities of silk. The demand for the Kashmirian saffron in Indian markets was very great in ancient times. In Harsha’s Ratnāvalī we have a reference to saffron of Kashmir being preferred to the saffron grown in the country of the Pāraśikas and Bāhlīkas. Hseun Tsang noticed woolen being worn by the inhabitants of the northern regions of India. Kashmir being a centre of woolen manufacture must have had a brisk export trade in this commodity. As the wool for the
manufacture of shawls comes from the highland of Tibet, the trade with that
country has therefore an ancient origin. The shawl is made of very fine, soft,
short, and flossy under wool called keli phumb or wool of kel (shawl goat), a
variety of caprahircus, inhabiting the elevated regions of Tibet. These regions
owing to their high altitude are intensely cold and nature has clothed the goats
with this warm wool. The higher the goats live the finer and warmer is their
wool. The finest wool comes from the markets of Turfan, the collection centre
of wool from the goats of Tien Shen Mountains. The wool traders exchanged
their raw wool for manufactured shawl goods and sold them advantageously in
various markets of Central Asia, wherefrom they were carried to famous cities
of Asia and Europe.

That wool was one of the essential commodities of trade in Kashmir is
evident from a passage in the Rājatarangin where Kalhaṇa quoting the high
prices of goods during the famine under Hārṣa, mentions besides that of rice,
the staple food of Kashmir is, the price of wool. Thus whereas raw pashm or
shawl wool formed an important item of import, the manufactured wooden
goods were the principal articles of export.133

On account of difficulty of transport, fruit do not seem to have been
exported though we may assume grapes to have been sent out of the Valley to
markets in northern India. We have an echo of this in the Ain-i-Akbari where
Abul Fazal mentions that "Kashmirians bring grapes on their backs in long
baskets. Since Kashmir was famous for grapes in ancient times,134 it is but
natural that this fruit must have been in great demand, either fresh or in dried
form.

Among other articles of import were salt,135 spices136 and cotton and silk
piece goods from the rest of India. Besides, we can safely assume the import of
precious metals and copper and brass for coinage, etc. Marco Polo mentions
that coral which was carried from the western parts of the world had a better
sale in Kashmir. Internal trade in the Valley was confined to food-grains, cattle.

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agricultural implements, earthenware and metallic vessels, and minor agricultural and industrial products

The mountain passes, through which trade was carried on, were well protected for fear of foreign invasions and each of them had a watch station at the end of the route. In addition to soldiers, customs officers were posted in these stations for collecting duties. Kṣemendra refers to the śulkasthāna of the Kashmirian end of the Pir Pantsal route and the šaulkikas who were posted on duty there. A passage from the Rājatarāṅgaṇī clearly points out that commodities coming and going through the watch stations were stamped and registered by the customs officers and duties had to be paid to them on export and import of articles.
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