

Kashmir Saivism

- ❖ Siva and Vishnu had dominated the Hindu religion since its inception. Siva and Vishnu have remained the focal point for the evolution of the Saiva and Vaishnava sects. According to the Puranas, Brahma is the creator of the universe, Siva its destroyer and Vishnu its preserver. However, the followers of Saivism believe that Siva is the supreme deity and performs all the three functions.
- ❖ The history of introduction of Saivism in Kashmir is shrouded in mystery. The Nilamata Purana says that Saivism was prevalent in Kashmir even before the advent of the Aryans. The country itself was originally called Satidesa, after the name of Siva's spouse. It is said that Siva was one of the gods who came to help sage Kashyap against Jalodhava and later established their abode here. The Purana tells that, besides building there, his own shrine at a place, god Vishnu "got erected such establishment of Sambhu and the goddess (Parvati)." Kalhana says that there was a shrine of Siva Vijaesvara in the pre-Ashokan days. He also writes that Ashoka himself visited the Valley and built two temples of Siva Ashokaesvara and worshipped Siva at the sacred shrine of Bhutesa.
- ❖ Siva was worshipped in Kashmir by other names also such as *Jyestharudra*, *Nanirudra*, *Nandisa*, *Hara*, *Narendrudra*, *Nndisa*, *Hara*, *Narendemsvara*, *Mahakia*, *Bhairua*, and *Ardhanarrisvara*.
- ❖ The most popular emblems of their deity are the phallus or the Linga.
- ❖ The Karkotas and the Utpalas built a large number of shrines devoted to Saiva. Lalitaditya, his wife Navendraprabha and Mitrasraman, his minister respectively, built the temples of Jyestharudra, Narendraesdeva and Mitresvara.
- ❖ King Avantivarman laid the foundation of the temple of Avantisvara. He also fitted pedestals with silver conduits at the Siva temples at Tripuresvara, Btesa and Vijayesa. Although, Avantivarman was a devotee of Vishnu, he used to worship Siva regularly at the temples of Bhutesa and some other places in deference to the sentiments of his devoted minister, Sura. Avantivarman's son and successor, Samkravarman was a great devotee of Siva.
- ❖ After the Utpakalas, many kings continued to be the devotees of Siva like Parvagupta. Suryamat, Ananta, Kisa and Simhadva were the great patrons of Saivism. Queen Suryamati founded two temples of Gaurisivara and Sadadasiva. She also consecrated Trisulas, Banalingas and other sacred emblems of Saivism. King Kalsa got constructed two new temples of Tripuresvara and Kalesvara. He also got repaired the temple of Vijasvara, and decorated all of them with golden parasols, cups and other things of worship.
- ❖ Saivism always remained a popular religion in Kashmir. But the form in which it was practised after the 8th and 9th centuries was different from the one practised in the earlier period.

Perhaps the most important of the achievements of the ancient Kashmir is the system of thought called Saivism (Shaivism) but better known locally as *Tricka Shastra* (the threefold science). It is also known by two other names *Sampardayas* and *Tryambaka*. *Sampardaya* is called so because it accepts as most important the triad.

- ❖ The Kashmiri Saivism or *Trika* system has two main branches, *Spanda* or *Pratyambika*. It is called Kashmiri Saivism because the writers who revealed it and wrote its literature belonged to Kashmir.
- ❖ The founder of Kashmiri Saivism was a holy sage, named *Vasugupta* who probably lived in the beginning of the 9th century A.D. *P.N. Kaul* observes, "The doctrine of the *Trika* may be regarded as a permanent and enduring heritage which Kashmir has contributed to the rich treasure of Indian philosophy."
- ❖ In order to resolve the tension and bring back composure of mind, the mighty thinkers of the age exercised their faculty of creative thought, evolved a new philosophy of life, namely *Tricka*, a synthesis of fundamental doctrines of all the Indian philosophies added with the knowledge gained by the Kashmiri thinkers through their own contemplations, observations and experiences.
- ❖ As the name indicates *Tricka Shastra* (Kashmiri Shaivism) deals with three objects namely man, the universe and The principle that keeps on restoring order, equilibrium and harmony which are disturbed by constant change.
- ❖ The *Tricka* is essentially a spiritual philosophy in which spirit and matter are not two different things but are fundamentally one in two different forms. Spirit is matter and matter is nothing other than the spirit. The *Tricka* is based on three energies of Lord Shiva, called *Para*, *Parapara* and *Apara* (Supreme, Intermediate and Inferior).
- ❖ The Kashmiri Saivism is essentially based upon *Tantras*. The *Tantras* have been classified as *Bhairava* (monistic), *Rudra* (mono-dualistic) and *Siva* (dualistic). Four great Masters in four great schools of *Paratvabhigna*, *Karma*, *Kula* and *Spanda* have taught this Tantric philosophy.