

KALHANA: A HISTORIAN OF ANCIENT INDIA(PART-2)

M.A HISTORY , SEM-3, PAPER CC:10

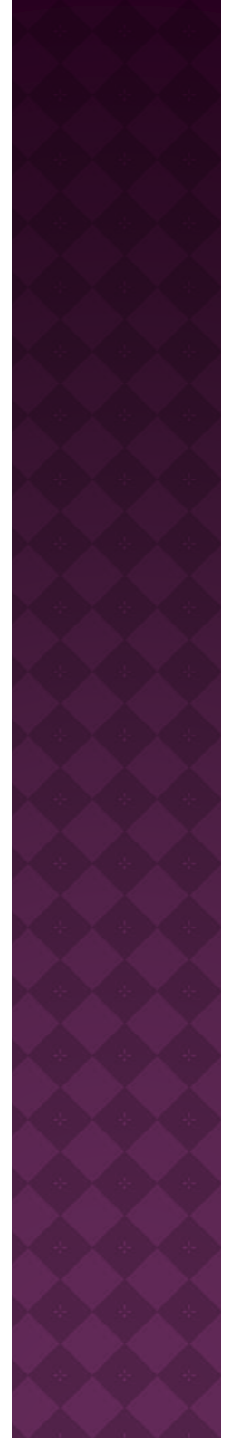
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STYLE OF RAJATARANGINI

In style the *Rajatarangini* narrative is sometimes considered as versified prose on a massive scale, yet its strong structural appeal made it a model for later historians. In fact, the history of Kashmir was continued, along Kalhana's line, down to some years after the annexation of Kashmir by the Mughal emperor Akbar (1586) in the following works: *Rajatarangini* (by Jonaraja), *Jainatarangini* (by Shrivara), and *Rajavalipataka* (by Prajyabhatta and Shuka). Neither in style nor in authenticity do these works approximate the quality of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*

STYLE OF RAJATARANGINI

Kalhana provides us with a full account of the Kings of Kashmir which had existed before him. He refers to the legendary king Lava, narrates the events of the reign of Lalitaditya, Yasaskara, Meghavahan, and Mihirakula. He also gives us a detailed account of the reigns of Uccala and Jayasinha. Rajatarangini was so much superior to the earlier works that soon it came to be recognized as a standard work of History of Kashmir. In fact his Rajatarangini was a sincere attempt at providing a true history in Sanskrit verse.



STYLE OF RAJATARANGINI

His description of the events is fair and his judgment on the activities of the king is impartial. While condemning his contemporary ruler Jayasinha for having murdered his minister Sujji, he also admires his good qualities. Similarly he criticizes and admires the good qualities of kings like Harsha and Uccala.

Kalhana had sketched a detailed description of the history of Kashmir from geological age up to his own age His writing was much more important than that of the others during the same period because it was of much more historical importance. Not only had he described the deeds of a brave person but he had also tried to understand and explain the conditions of that time.

STYLE OF RAJATARANGINI

As he was into the political system directly, he was able to understand the political activities very minutely. Though he was under several kings, he didn't get any patronage from them. That is the reason that Kalhan was able to write an unbiased and clear historical writing without any pressure from the kings upon him. So, his writing was devoid of rhetorical and clear of praises, evident in other writers under the patronage of the kings.

He chose the medium of verse for his writings. Although his writing seems to be inclined towards ornate style, he has mingled the historical truth in it. In his historical writing, he laid emphasis on the transience of the worldly life and physical materials.

STYLE OF RAJATARANGINI

He wished that people should learn lesson from the mistakes of their past. For this, he had to analyze the conditions and events very minutely. This very analysis makes his writing much more special than that of others.

The Rajatarangini depicts the kings and queens in equal measure. While his personal bias does seem to creep in, there is no attempt to hide or tone down the importance and relevance of women, who have ascended the throne or have been powers behind the throne. While he clearly disapproves of women rulers like *Didda*, he describes their role in founding and destroying royal lineages.

STYLE OF RAJATARANGINI

‘The contrast between the narrative and didactic sections of Kalhana’s text, evident in his alternate glorification and denigration of women, not only stresses their agency but also reveals the complex power equations in the royal domain.’

Kalhana clearly was attempting to create the first *historical* account of the kings of Kashmir. Most translators and later historians however, are of the opinion that while the intent for removal of bias was there, it was not always followed. Regardless, the purpose, structure, and method help us classify this as a valid historical account.

STYLE OF RAJATARANGINI

Kalhana takes care to ensure that, while being a historical account, it is not dull. He believed that a historical text should also be a work of art. The accounts are graphic, vivid and show the love he has for the country, when he describes certain scenes.

The most definitive translation of Kalhana's Rajatarangini is that by *Sir Auriel Stein*. The others are by *Jogesh Chandra Dutt* and by *Ranjit Sitaram Pandit*.

Three Rajataranginis followed that of Kalhana's Rajatarangini; by Jonaraja, Pandit Srivara, and the last is a work of two authors, Prajyabhatta and Suka.

In short it can be said that Kalhana's notion of historiography was a clear improvement on the romantic chroniclers like Bana, Bilhana, Jayanaka etc.

कल्हणकृता
राजतरङ्गिणी ।

प्रथमो भागः ।
(आदिका सप्तमतरङ्गावधि ।)

जयपुरमहाराजाधिराजेण पण्डितब्रजलालच्युतना
पण्डितदुर्गाप्रसादेन
संशोधिता ।

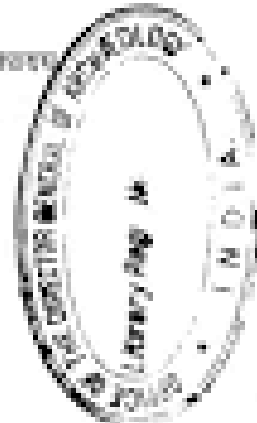
वर्ष १९१२

राज्यपुस्तकालयेन मुम्बयी शिबेयसामोसाविभवे मुद्रणशालये मुद्रिता ।

एषा वा कल्पलालाभिः (L.C.L.) कायस्थपुस्तकालये
पुस्तकालये मुद्रिता ।

१९१२

मूल्यं शतपञ्चाशत् ।



Kalhana's Rājatarāṅgiṇī

A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir
Volume I



M. A. STEIN