

**Three-day National Seminar on
Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī: An Historical Perspective**

3-5 May 2018

CONCEPT NOTE

The *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa is the most authentic text which provides an extensive account of the history of Jammu Kashmir. Excogitating on the entire text of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, it appears that Kalhaṇa in his text not only brings the history of Jammu Kashmir stretching from 3000 B.C. up to 1148 A.D. but also the history of entire India. In the very beginning of his text, Kalhaṇa recounts twelve earlier texts (eleven earlier works which were lost along with the *Nilamata Purāṇa* of sage Nīla). These records evince that there was an extensive practice of *itihāsa-lekhana* in our country but totally in a different perspective in contrast to modern discipline what we call today as "history". If India occupies such type of rich materials which clearly manifests the sense of history, then how the notion that India has no sense of history is surfaced? It seems that Alberuni (1030 A.D.) who travelled to India, had tried his best to set this notion when he says that"

Unfortunately the Indians do not pay much attention to the historical order of things, they are very careless in relating the chronological succession of their kings, and when they are pressed for information they are at a loss, not knowing what to say, they invariably take to tale-telling. But for this we should communicate to the reader the traditions, which we have received from some people among them.¹

It is the need of time to re (think) this misconception that early India had no sense of history. In fact, this notion takes its origin from the basic difference between the attitude of two civilizations - the Indian and the European - and their practice of looking at the past and its re-construction. European traditions conceive and developed 'History' as a discipline which concerned with rigorous study and collection of facts. On the other hand, Indian knowledge tradition conceives *itihāsa* as an event of earlier time intertwines with a story with an aim to inculcate the four goals of human life, i.e. *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa*. Indian intellectual tradition is replete with abundant materials signifying consciousness of the past.

The *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa unfolds a vivid picture of social, economical, political intellectual and cultural practices of Kashmir from ancient period up to the 12th Century A.D. In his *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, Kalhaṇa sketches an outstanding description of numerous

¹ Alberuni's *India: an account of the religion, philosophy, literature, geography, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about 1030 A.D.* Volume II, pp-10-11

cultural centers like Śāradā Pitha (the seat of goddess Sarasvatī), Mārtaṇḍa (the temple of Sun god), Sri Vijayeśa, Bhūteśa, Avantiswamin, Avantisvara, Buddhist Vihāras, Maṭhas & Caityas which are the most remarkable achievements of Indian art and architecture.

It is pertinent to put the historical facts provided by Kalhaṇa in a proper perspective as well as to explore the intellectual-cultural beauty of Jammu Kashmir. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, the Indian Council of Historical Research in academic support of Jammu Kashmir Study Centre is going to organize a three-day National Seminar on Kalhaṇa's *Rājataranḡiṇī* by inviting eminent scholars, researchers who through their presentations would try to investigate various aspects of the *Rājataranḡiṇī*.

Sub-themes of the Seminar

1. The *Rājataranḡiṇī* and history-writing
2. Indic tradition of history writing: before & after *Rājataranḡiṇī*
3. The *Rājataranḡiṇī* and history of Kashmir
4. Temple architecture as depicted in the *Rājataranḡiṇī*
5. The *Rājataranḡiṇī* and religious practices of Kashmir
6. The *Rājataranḡiṇī* and art, literature of Kashmir
7. The *Rājataranḡiṇī* and common people
8. The *Rājataranḡiṇī* and King Lalitāditya
9. The *Rājataranḡiṇī* and geography of India
10. The *Rājataranḡiṇī* and economical life of Kashmir
11. The *Rājataranḡiṇī* and social life

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