

Three-Day International Conference on

**CULTURE, HERITAGE AND
SPIRITUALITY OF KASHMIR:
*Retrospect and Prospect***

18th – 20th October 2022

**IUST,
AWANTIPORA**

1-University Avenue,
Awantipora, Pulwama,
Pin: 192122, Jammu and
Kashmir



ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY:

The Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST), Awantipora, was established in the year 2005. The university came into existence with a mandate to advance and disseminate knowledge, wisdom and understanding amongst all the sections of the society within and outside the region of J&K. Despite being a young university, IUST has been at the forefront of re-imagining and re-articulating the values of higher education. It has a thriving culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. At the same time, the university has created a unique intellectual ecosystem of centres and departments focussed on researching the historical, linguistic, philosophical and cultural traditions of Kashmir in particular and South Asia in general.

The University Centres/Departments involved in organizing this conference are as follows:

- Averroes Centre for Philosophical Studies
- Habba Khatoon Centre for Kashmiri Language and Literature
- International Centre for Spiritual Studies
- Department of Architecture

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:

From the earliest known historical records, we find Kashmir at the intersection of various religious, philosophical and socio-economic networks. By dint of location and intense acculturation that spans millennia, the Valley of Kashmir could be read as a palimpsest of various civilizational traces. It is no surprise then, that once upon a time in the first two centuries of the Common Era, the region was ruled by the Kings who minted coins with Greek inscriptions. The principal river flowing through the Valley, the Jehlum was known to the earliest Greeks as Hydespas.

It is in this period of history (1st and the 2nd centuries CE) that the encounter of Hellenism with the Buddhism, in and around Kashmir, would lead to a great efflorescence of artistic activity, especially in the fields of architecture and sculpture. The Kashmiri language, even today retains the millenia old Sanskrit word for the Greeks: Yavana. The influence of the Greek architectural aesthetic that filtered into the region through Bactrian culture and Gandhara Buddhism can be well discerned in the archaeological and architectural remains of some of the earliest sites of Kushana Buddhism in Ushkuru, Baramulla and Harwan, Srinagar. In the early history of Buddhism, Kashmir holds a special position. One of the earliest schools of Buddhism, the Sarvastivada, established their orthodoxy in Kashmir, and they would be instrumental in the genesis of all major philosophical developments within the Buddhist canon. The 4th Buddhist council convened by the Kushana King Kanishka at Harwan (2nd century CE) would be a great event in the history of Mahayana Buddhism. The great Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna, some say, himself was part of

this council. Eventually, it is from Kashmir that Mahayana Buddhism would enter China. The great translator of Buddhism into Chinese language, Kumarajiva, was from Kashmir. In its interactions with the Kashmiri Shaivism, the Mahayana Buddhism from 6th century onwards, would also give a fresh impetus to the already philosophically dense and mythically rich Hindu spiritual tradition of Kashmir. This immensely active and thriving tradition that combined in itself the currents of philosophy and literature would find its culmination in the figure of Abhinavagupta (11th century CE), the great philosopher-mystic and aesthetician, whose theory of Rasa would be highly instrumental and impactful in the formulation of the theory of Indian aesthetics. With much experimentation and variation, the same aesthetic is realized in the architecture of the period. The ruins of the magnificent stone temples of Martand, Tapar and Awantipora are a testament to the architectural and aesthetic imagination of the locals.

By the end of the 12th century, as remarked by Sheldon Pollock, the great culture of Sanskrit language was already on the wane in Kashmir. The vacuum was not merely political, but was spiritual and cultural too. The arrival of Islam in Kashmir in 13th and 14th centuries, as a fresh spiritual force was consolidated with the rule of Shahmiri Sultans. Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani and his companions, in addition to introducing the teachings of Islam - both pietistic and theological- to the local population, also introduced various arts and crafts in the valley. His theological views, enriched by the contents of philosophical-sufism, complemented the already extant Shaivite and Buddhist spiritual traditions of Kashmir. By the end of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's reign in 1470 CE, Kashmir was already a major centre for translation. Jami's Yusuf Zuleikha was translated from Persian into Sanskrit by Srivara, the court chronicler of Budshah. Kalhana's Rajatarangini was translated into Persian by Mulla Ahmed Kashmiri, Budshah's poet laureate. At the same time, however, people like Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, were rendering the rich spiritual, theological and philosophical precepts of faith in the local vernacular of Kashmir. Certainly, every great age of literature is also a great age of translation, as Ezra Pound once wrote. Architecture of the period is no exception to the synthesis that arose out of the act of translation.

Kashmir remains the hallmark of a unique and syncretic architectural idiom. With the arrival of Islam in the region in the 13th and 14th centuries, a new architectural language was seen complimenting the interaction of Islam with the spiritual and philosophical traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism. With the inception of the Shahmiri Sultanate, a distinct and peculiar creative ingenuity was seen embodied in the Mosques (Jamia Masjid, Srinagar), Khanqahs (Shahi-Hamdani's Khanqah) and Mausoleums (Budshah's Dumnath). With the onset of the Mughal Rule in Kashmir in 16th century, its art and culture received immense patronage. Apart from the establishment of Khanqahs of various orthodox spiritual orders like Suharwardiyyah, Naqshbandiyyah and Kubrawiyyah, the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries saw the flourishing of Persian literature in Kashmir in prose as well as poetry. Hagiographies of saints especially Nund Rishi or Sheikh Nuruddin, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani and Hamza Makhdum among many others, Diwans of poetry, Tazkirahs, calligraphic albums, remain the characteristic literary and artistic output of the Mughal period in

Kashmir. In 17th century, during Zafar Khan Ahsan's governorship of Kashmir, under his patronage major poet laureates of Mughal Empire assembled in Kashmir which led to the major renaissance of Persian poetry in the Valley. Poets like Ghani Kashmiri, Mohsin Fani, Kalim Kashani, Qodsi Mashhadi spent later parts of their lives in Kashmir and were eventually buried in Mazar-i-Shu'ara – the grave yard of poets - on the banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar. Mughals were also instrumental in enriching the architectural landscape of the valley. With their arrival, the architectural typology of mosques and shrines acquired greater charm, refinement and dignity. The Mughal Gardens, needless to say, continue to remain a source of attraction for people all over the world.

Even though Lal Ded, Sheikh Nuruddin and Habba Khatoon are acknowledged spiritual and literary giants of Kashmiri literature, by 17th century Kashmiri was no longer the preferred mode of poetic or literary expression. However, the later part of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century saw a major revival and rejuvenation of Kashmiri language. With Persian no longer enjoying the strong patronage of the Mughal and Afghan courts, Kashmiri poets, especially the working-class subaltern poets of devotional sufism like Wahab Khar, Nyaemi Saeb and Sochh Kraal, produced some great poetry in Kashmiri language, specifically influenced by the poetic and spiritual heritage of both Persian poets and Kashmiri Shaivite (Shastra) tradition. It is important that these rich and significant parts of Kashmiri history be engaged with by the academicians and experts.

This conference is therefore conceived as a beginning to initiate a discussion and conversation regarding this rich spiritual, literary and artistic legacy of Kashmir. An academic debate about both the tangible and intangible aspects of the spiritual heritage and material culture of Kashmir is the call of the day and needs to be taken up with utmost seriousness. The present conference will, undoubtedly, serve as the platform for such an academic and professional deliberation.

CONFERENCE THEMES:

- Perennial Values and Kashmiri Literature
- The Aesthetics of the Sacred Kashmiri Poetry
- Modern Kashmiri Poetry and its Character
- The Buddhist Traditions of Renunciation and Monkdom in the Kashmiri Context
- Self-mortification, Asceticism and Kashmiri Mysticism
- The Malfuzat of Kashmiri Sufis: Contribution to the Development of the Mystical Movement in Kashmir
- Maulana Rumi, Jami, Mansur Hallaj, Ibn Arabi and Kashmiri Sufis
- Kashmiri Sufis and their Central Asian Counterparts
- Scientific Studies and Sufism
- Kashmiri Indigenous Culture and Postmodern Pluralism
- Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change
- Economic, Political and Informational Effects of Globalisation on Kashmiri Identity and Tradition
- Kashmiri Mysticism and International Cultural Interaction: A Critical Philosophical Perspective
- Syncretic Traditions of Islamic Architecture in Kashmir
- Archaeological and Architectural Heritage of the Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic Period of Kashmir
- Mughal Gardens and Sacred Landscapes
- Significance of Water in the Architecture and Landscape of Kashmir
- Craft Traditions of Kashmir and their Spiritual Context
- Legacy of Handicrafts in Kashmir

& Other Related Topics

CALL FOR PAPERS :

Any student, researcher, academician, practitioner or other professional interested in any of the themes and sub-themes of the conference from Indian or international institutions may submit their paper.

A. ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

1. Each applicant must submit a maximum 500-word abstract by e-mail to *chsk@iust.ac.in* no later than September 28th, 2022.
2. Abstract must contain details about the names of the author(s), contact details, institutional affiliation, and designation.
3. Maximum of 5 keywords are to be provided along with the abstract.
4. Acceptance of the abstracts shall be communicated via email by October 1st, 2022.
5. On selection of the abstract, the author(s) must pay the required fees no later than October 6th, 2022.
6. The link for the payment portal shall be sent to the authors whose abstract would be selected along-with the acceptance mail.

B. PAPER SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

1. Last date for submission of full paper is October 15th, 2022.
2. All papers must be submitted to *chsk@iust.ac.in*.
3. Paper Format: Single Column, A4 Size and 1.5 line spacing
4. Font Style: Times New Roman (size 12)
5. Page Limit: Not to exceed 10 pages including all tables, figures and references (APA 6th Edition)
6. First Page: Title, Author(s) Name(s) and Affiliation(s) with contact email id and postal address
7. Second Page: Title, Abstract, Keywords (5) followed by the main text
8. The paper will be blind reviewed and only those approved by the reviewers will be selected for the conference presentation.
9. Similarity Index should not exceed 15%.
10. The paper must be submitted in word document (.doc or .docx) format only

C. IMPORTANT DATES:

1. Abstract Submission deadline: September 28th, 2022
2. Date of Communication of acceptance of abstract: October 1st, 2022
3. Date of Payment of Registration Fee: On selection of the abstract, the author(s) must pay the required fees no later than October 6th, 2022 via the link that will be communicated.
4. Full Paper submission by October 15th, 2022.

REGISTRATION DETAILS:

Registration Fees for Paper presentation:

1. Academicians/ Professionals/Practitioners:
Single Author: Rs. 2000/- [Foreign Scholars: 30 USD]
2. Students/Research Scholars:
Single Author: Rs. 1000/- [Foreign Scholars: 20 USD]
3. Registration Fees for participation without paper presentation: Rs. 1500/-[with certificate]

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