

### **Brief History of Kashmir**

Sage Kashyap made the land of Kashmir habitable. His son Neel became the first ruler of Kashmir. (This must have occurred sometime around the time of king Barhi, long before 10,000 BC.) Detail records of his rule are available in Neelmat Purana.

### **Gonand Dynasty**

Gonand-I (king of Kashmir) fought for Jarasandh against Krishna. Krishna killed Jarasandh, and Balaram killed Gonand-I. His son Damodar attacked Krishna, to avenge his father's death. Damodar was killed by Krishna in the battle. Krishna installed Damodar's wife Yashowati on the throne of Kashmir. Queen Yashowati gave birth to Gonand-II a few months after the death of Damodar. 35 Gonand kings ruled Kashmir after Gonand-II.

### **Pandava Dynasty**

23 kings of Pandava dynasty also ruled Kashmir. During the rule of Pandava king Bhimsen, the Kashmir border extended from Kanyakubja (Kanauj) to Gandhar (Afghanistan). A later King Ashoka (not to be confused with Maurya Ashoka) built the city of Srinagari (Srinagar). Jalok the son of king Ashok proved to be a very brave general and an able administrator. The administrative setup made by him continued for the next 300 years without an able king.

### **100 AD:**

Kashmir came under the rule of Kushan king Kanishka. Kanishka became a Buddhist and under him Buddhism spread to Afghanistan and Turkey.

### **Early 600s:**

After the attack of Huns, Mehrkul became the ruler of Kashmir. He was a very cruel king. But the teachings of Shaiva Pandits made him calmer. Mehrkul became a worshipper of Shiva. A Shiva temple built by him Mehrashwar (Mamleshwar) stands in Pahalgam. Years after his death, Vikramaditya (of Ujjain) sent his minister Pratapaditya to head the state of Kashmir.

Karkota Dynasty ruled Kashmir for 254 years.

Durlabhvardhan is a famous king of this dynasty.

During Harshavardhan's rule, Kashmir was a tributary

state. King Chandradeep of this dynasty defeated the Arabs in 713 AD.

Other notable kings of Kashmir during this period were: Meghawan (fought against animal sacrifice), Lalitaditya (who extended the boundaries of Kashmir) and the father-son-grandson trio: Avantivarman, Shankarvarman and Gopalvarman.

### **950 AD, Queen Didda:**

Didda was queen of the Kashmir king Khemgupta. She ruled Kashmir as a queen, guardian and ruler for 54 years (950-1003 AD). She crowned her nephew Sangramraj as the king of Kashmir. Sangramraj defeated Mohd. Gazanavi in 1015AD. Mohd. Gazanavi was defeated again in 1021 AD by joint efforts of Trilochanpal (the last Hindu ruler of Kabul) and Sangramraj.

### **Kota Rani**

Rinchan a Buddhist fugitive from Tibet was given shelter and a key administrative post by the king Sahadev. After a revolt Sahadev fled to Tibet. Rinchan killed the Army chief Ramchandra, and became the king of Kashmir.

Rinchan converted to Islam and adopted the name Malik Sadruddin. After him his queen Kotarani (daughter of Ramachandra) became the queen of Kashmir. Sahadev's brother Udayandev returned to Kashmir with an army. Kotarani offered to marry him and make him the king of Kashmir. Though Udayandev became the king, Kotarani conducted all the administration. She later defeated the Persian Sardar Tatar when he attacked Kashmir.

In 1343 Shahmir (a Muslim religious preacher) killed this brave queen Kotarani and became the king of Kashmir.

### **1343 - 1819 AD: The Islamic Tranny**

During the rule of Shahmir, Islamic people started pouring into Kashmir. Among him and the later muslim rulers like Sikander, Saifuddin, Fateh Shah, Moosa Raina, Sultan Hassan Khan, Hyder Shah, Ifthihar Khan, Azad Khan, Mir Hajjar Khan, Subedar Assad Khan it would be difficult to name the worst.

They started the conversion of Hindus to Muslim. Islamic foundation was laid by hundreds of Muslim preachers who were invited from central Asia. Later force was used for conversion. Kashmir had many Hindu temples; which were wonders of architecture. Filled with jealousy and hatred Sikander destroyed about 300 Hindu temples. Sanskrit books and schools were burnt. Hindus were given only 2 options: either accept Islam or die. Villages were converted to Islam, by force. Kashmiri women were sold as slaves in Arabia. Thousands committed suicide. Hundreds of thousands migrated.

### **1819 - 1947 AD:**

Pt. Birbal joined Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh defeated Ajim Khan, then the ruler of Kashmir. Ranjit Singh appointed Gulab Singh as the head of Kashmir. Gulab Singh united the state of Kashmir. After him his son Ranbir Singh became the king of Kashmir. He opened many centres for the teaching and study of Sanskrit, built libraries and made efforts for re-establishing the values of Hindu life. The next king Pratap Singh was succeeded by Maharaja Hari Singh. When India gained freedom, Hari Singh opted to remain independent.

3 Mistakes committed by Kashmiri Pandits

1. Kashmiri Pandits declined to convert Buddhist Rinchan to Hinduism. Enraged he converted to Islam. And a seed of 500 year tyrannical Islamic rule was sown.
2. When Hindus assumed the power in Kashmir, the king Ranbir Singh, asked Kashmiri Pandits to allow those (who were earlier converted to Islam by force) to join Hinduism. Narrow minded, short sighted, and not having learnt anything from the 500 years experience, Kashmiri Pandits declined to do so.
3. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

**Source: Converted Kashmir: A bitter saga of religious conversion - by Narendra Sehgal**