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Kalhana' Rajatarangini - History of Kashmir, - Historical Analysis

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Abstract: *The Kalhana's Rajtrangani, the waves of the river is an epic poem(Mahakavya) in Sanskrit running into about eight thousands verses spread over eight books or sections, having been composed in Kashmir itself during the period 1148-1150 A.D. Kalhana happened to be a member of the ancient Indian learned class of Brohmins, apart from a son of a high dignitary of royal court, therefore said Ratrangani exposes an account of numerous royal dynasties, which ruled the ancient kingdom of Kashmir, though claimed to be from mythical origin down till arrival of Kalhana's own time. It gained the iconic stature ever since 19th and 20th centuries' scholars by labelling it as the first work of history considering it to have gathered from the entire corpus of Sanskrit literature . The reason behind this perception was that the scholars observed much more because of the prime reason that the deference of the text focussing on the chronological record to historical causation alleged to be with objectivity.*

However this objectivist interpretation of the text bracketed out and rejected other aspects of the text that did not fit their empiricist idea of what history should be. This included all aspects of figuration, such as myth, rhetoric and didacticism, that were a major part of the Rajatrangani and typical of a traditional poetic discourse. Correcting this lopsided assessment of the seminal Indic text, recent approaches have attempted to rehabilitate the Rajatrangani in its parent genre, kavya, and the literary culture it spawned. Adopting this prospective, it emerges that the historicity of the Rajtanganimay lie in the poetic structure and narrativity rather than merely in its factuality. Furthermore, viewing the text and its literary strategies like myth, rhetoric and dedactic as a unity a deeply ethical understanding of history is revealed which defines, in a culturally specific yet potentially universal manner, what " True" knowledge of time anf the human action may be..

Keywords: South Asia, India, Kashmir, 12th century, Rajatrangani, Kalhana, Kavya, Sanskrit, Poetic, narrativity, epistemic, didactic, ethics, power, temporality

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