

Pilgrimage and Temple Economy in Early Medieval Kashmir (c. 625-1012 CE)

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Abstract

This paper looks into the significant role played by pilgrimages in the temple economy of Jammu and Kashmir. There have been many scholarly writings on the subject, but most of them deal with the temples in the southern part of India. The temples, pilgrimage of Jammu and Kashmir and their economic significance were never examined in the historiography. The reason cited for this may be the paucity of sources; the epigraphic records which are available for temples in southern India are not available for temples in Jammu and Kashmir. This study is an attempt to add to existing literature and the study relies on the Kalhana's *Rājataranginī*, regional histories and colonial records.

Keywords: *Temple Economy, Pilgrimage, Jammu and Kashmir, Kalhana's Rājataranginī*

Introduction

The recent effort by the Government of India to open up the Sharda Peeth Corridor is a step to revive the ancient pilgrimage which was long obstructed by cross-border terrorism. The important temples of Jammu and Kashmir such as Martanda Temple dedicated to Lord Sun, Avanatiswami Temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu, Avantishwara temple dedicated to Lord Shankara indicate the robust economic system of the empires that ruled Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India over a period of time.ⁱ

This system not only facilitated the accumulation of immense wealth but also

enabled the sustained patronage required for the conception, construction, and embellishment of such architecturally and iconographically significant religious structures. It stands as a testament to a bygone era when the temple economy would have yielded wealth for the expansion and maintenance of these temples and other public structures (Kalhana, trans. Stein, 1989, Book V, pp. 80–112), ultimately playing a crucial role in the lives of Kashmiris and pilgrims who travelled from distant regions. Temple economy refers to the role that religious institutions and practices play in the economic activities of a region. Unlike the temple economy of medieval South India, which has long been a focal point for scholars seeking to understand the intersection of religion, economy, and society, medieval temples in Kashmir have seldom received as much attention. Temples in Southern India have been extensively studied as pivotal institutions for the redistribution of economic resources, with scholars like Burton Stein and G. W. Spencer underscoring their role as agents of economic integration and resource management (Spencer, 1968; Stein, 1960; Stein, 1978). Donations and endowments to temples, as Anthropologists Arvind Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge have shown, facilitate the incorporation of corporate units such as families, castes, and sects into the broader temple networks, creating intricate systems of social and economic interdependence (Appadurai & Breckenridge, 1976; Appadurai, 1981). The donations that were given to the temples also served as an instrument for socio-political empowerment. Scholars like Cynthia Talbot and Carol Breckenridge argue that the purpose of these donations were to negotiate power not only with the local communities but also with powerful polity and their areas of influence (Breckenridge, 1986; Talbot, 1991). Scholars like Hetitzman, Ludden and Nicholas Dirks emphasize how temple's role are important in economic and political integration and thus bringing cohesion and stability in the region (Dirks, 1976; Hietzman, 1987; Hietzman, 1991; Ludden, 1979). Fuller and Inden, on the other hand, have highlighted the cultural role played by the temples, arguing that it is a place where hierarchies and identities are expressed and negotiated (Fuller, 1988; Inden, 1985). Equally important contribution is made by Branfoot who investigates on the cultural aspect of the temples (Branfoot, 2008). In line with the above studies that highlight the multiple functions of temples in South India, this article underscores the economic significance of temples in Kashmir alongside their religious roles.

Situating the Study

At the outset, it is essential to acknowledge that, unlike the extensively documented temple economy of South India, the study of Kashmir's temple economy faces two significant challenges. First, unlike South India, which possesses a rich corpus of well-preserved epigraphic material, Kashmir suffers from a dearth of historical sources, such as copper plate inscriptions and other inscriptions critical for reconstructing temple economy history. This lack of material evidence complicates efforts to reconstruct the economic dimensions of pilgrimage and temple patronage in Kashmir. Therefore, writing the history of pilgrimage and its role in the temple economy of Kashmir necessitates a reliance on alternative sources, such as literary texts like Kalhana's *Rājataranginī*, archaeological findings, and the critical analysis of material culture, all of which require careful interpretation to fill these evidentiary gaps. Second, unlike the numerous well-preserved temples found elsewhere in the Indian subcontinent, Kashmiri temples are primarily known for stone structures dating to the eighth to tenth centuries, located within and around the Kashmir Valley. These stone edifices likely had timber predecessors, which have not survived due to the region's climatic conditions and the perishable nature of wood (Fergusson, 1910). The most prominent example of this architectural heritage is the Mārtanda Sun Temple at Martand, attributed to King Lalitāditya of the Kārkota dynasty (r. 724–761). This temple stands as a testament to the grandeur of early medieval Kashmiri temple architecture and the significance of royal patronage in shaping the region's sacred geography.

To understand a region's temple economy, we need to understand the interplay between religious activities, agriculture, and trade. Why does the temple economy become important? How does it inform us about other aspects of Kashmir's premodern socio-economic and cultural practices? Historians have established that the promotion of pilgrimage by the rulers and the priestly community emerges as a significant strategy to sustain the local economy amidst declining trade. This promotion can be seen as a strategic move to generate income and sustain the local economy. Pilgrimages attracted visitors from various regions, which in turn stimulated local businesses and supported the maintenance of religious institutions. Kalhana's *Rājataranginī* provides critical historical evidence of these efforts, highlighting the economic importance of religious

institutions and the dense network of sacred sites.

Historical Background

The trade in early medieval period in Kashmir faced disruption primarily because of the invasions from the north-western part by the Hunas and also because of the decline in the authority of the Kushans (Jamwal, 1996). The commercial linkages of Kashmir especially with the Afghanistan and Central Asia was on the verge of decline. Rulers like Lalitaditya tried to start alternative trade routes to keep the economy in a stable position. This was the period when temples became the nerve centres that kept the economy going. Temples and pilgrimages were revived to sustain the economy. Sites associated with Naga, Sakta and Saiva traditions were focused to encourage tirthas. These tirthas were along the old routes and at the confluence of rivers. Encouraging tirthas was a deliberate attempt to support the declining economy (Jamwal, 1996).

The priestly community in Kashmir played a pivotal role in transforming the region's sacred geography into a network of interconnected pilgrimage circuits. These circuits were designed to maximize both religious devotion and economic gain, incorporating sites dedicated to Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, and Buddhist deities. Prominent examples include the Sharada Peeth pilgrimage, which drew devotees from across North India, and the sacred springs associated with Naga worship. The strategic location of these sites along trade routes ensured a steady flow of pilgrims, even as long-distance commerce declined. "The revenue of the great villages which he gave as endowments for each linga, has through the lapse of time become lost now-a-days to the Purohita-corporations (*parṣad*) (Kalhana, trans. Stein, 1989, Book II, v. 132)".

Rājatarangini informs us of the existence of the *purohita*-corporations, or *parṣad*, which played an essential role in the management of temple and pilgrimage resources. The term *parṣad* is central to this analysis, as it denotes the organised groups of priests (*Purohitas*) responsible for managing temples and pilgrimage sites (*tirthas*). These corporations, which existed at major pilgrimage centres, functioned as collective religious bodies that pooled the fees and *daksinās* (offerings) received from pilgrims (Kalhana, trans. Stein, 1989). This collective system ensured the equitable distribution of resources, with each family receiving its share according to a predetermined structure. Such an arrangement demonstrates the existence of a regulated economic system within

religious institutions, one that maintained a level of economic stability for the families involved.

The mention of state benefices in kind, such as rice, further underscores the role of these corporations as both religious and economic entities. These benefices, distributed according to the same rules of partnership, highlight the continued interaction between the state and religious bodies, suggesting that religious institutions were integrated into the broader political and economic framework of the region. Despite the loss of certain endowments, the *parṣad* corporations seem to have maintained a comfortable status during Kalhana's time, as evidenced by their continued political influence. The frequent references to the *parṣads'* involvement in political affairs during later reigns suggest that these corporations held considerable sway in both religious and secular matters. Efforts to promote Kashmiri pilgrimage sites extended beyond the region, as the priestly class cultivated connections with temples and religious communities in the rest of the Indian subcontinent. Narratives emphasizing the sanctity of Kashmiri tirthas, such as the *Papasudana Tirtha* mentioned in Kalhana's *Rājataranginī*, were disseminated to attract pilgrims from afar (Kalhana, trans. Stein, 1989, Book VII, vv. 190–193). These efforts served as an early form of cultural diplomacy, enhancing Kashmir's reputation as a sacred and prosperous region.

Sources & Methods

The historical study of Kashmir has long grappled with the paucity of epigraphic sources, a limitation noted by both colonial scholars and early historians (Stein, 1899). Unlike other regions of South Asia, where inscriptions on stone and copper plates provide critical data for reconstructing local topographies, administrative practices, and historical events, Kashmir's epigraphic record is sparse and fragmentary. Existing inscriptions, typically dated to relatively late periods, lack the depth and comprehensiveness seen elsewhere and offer little insight into the region's early historical geography.

In medieval Kashmir, temples and *matha*-s were not only central to religious and social life but also integral to the local economy, serving as nodes of resource distribution, labour organisation, and cultural production. Despite their importance, the study of temple economy in the region has received limited

scholarly attention, largely due to the paucity of source materials, particularly the absence of extensive epigraphic records, such as stone and copper plate inscriptions, which are abundant in other parts of South Asia. However, the textual tradition of Kashmir, especially the *ślokakathā* (narrative verse), provides a valuable resource for reconstructing the socio-economic dynamics of these religious institutions (Malhan, 2023).

The *ślokakathā*, exemplified by Kalhana's *Rājataranginī* and related texts, is a distinctive literary form within the broader Sanskrit cosmopolitan tradition (Malhan, 2023). This genre, deeply embedded in the cultural milieu of Kashmir, offers insights into the interplay between political authority, religious patronage, and economic practices. Composed in the royal courts of eleventh-century CE Kashmir, such texts reflect the period when temples had become firmly established as centres of worship and regional architectural styles evolved, characterised by the Kashmir school's unique sculptural and architectural forms.

The *Rājataranginī* underscores the abundant donative activities of monarchs, court elites, queens, and concubines, documenting their contributions to temple-building, endowments, and religious institutions. By situating these activities within the literary framework of *ślokakathā*, historians can decode the symbolic and practical dimensions of the temple economy. For instance, the portrayal of temples as both divine sanctuaries and royal palaces reveals the interdependence of political and religious authority. Kings were often depicted as stewards of the divine, their legitimacy reinforced through temple patronage, while temple deities were envisioned as sovereigns residing in opulent sanctuaries, complete with hierarchies and courtly rituals. This interconnectedness between political and religious spheres is further illuminated by the *kāvya* tradition, which offers a nuanced lens for understanding the spatial and social dynamics of temples (Malhan, 2023). As Daud Ali argues, the overlap between notions of religious and political lordship within *kāvya* reflects a homologous chain linking cosmic, political, and spiritual hierarchies. Such texts underscore how temples operated as spaces where political authority, devotional practices, and economic exchanges converged, actively shaping the socio-political realities of the region (Ali, 2006).

Moreover, the *ślokakathā* contextualises the integration of the temple economy

into broader cultural and economic networks. Through its poetic and often folkloric imagination, it situates the actions of Kashmiri patrons and institutions within both local and transregional contexts, linking the temples of Kashmir to the larger sacred landscape of the Indian subcontinent. This connection is particularly significant given the absence of conventional archival sources, as it allows for a reconstruction of how temple practices influenced and were influenced by the economic and cultural currents of the time.

By combining the *śloka-kathā* and the broader *kāvya* tradition with archaeological and material culture studies, scholars can gain a more holistic understanding of the temple economy in medieval Kashmir. This approach underscores the temples' roles not merely as places of worship but as dynamic centres of cultural, economic, and political activity, deeply enmeshed in the region's historical and social fabric. In this aspect Kalhana's *Rājataranginī* serves an important source which is not only important as it provides historical account of Kashmir but also helps us in understanding historical geography of the region (Stein, 1900). On the one hand we have scarcity of inscriptions and on the other hand we have enough literary evidence which makes historical enquiry quite distinctive. That is why it requires a multidisciplinary approach to deal with this region so that gaps in the sources can be addressed (Stein, 1899). While the paucity of inscriptions in Kashmir, particularly those predating Kalhana, limits the material evidence available to modern scholars, these categories underscore the varied nature of historical documentation that Kalhana had access to. The inscriptions he referenced likely offered insights into temple foundations and royal endowments, enriching his chronicle with a depth of detail absent in purely oral or literary traditions. This also reflects the broader historical practice in South Asia, where such records served not only administrative and commemorative purposes but also as instruments of political legitimacy and religious patronage.

George Bühler distinguishes four categories of records referenced by Kalhana in the *Rājataranginī*, providing a critical framework for understanding the historical documentation available in Kashmir during Kalhana's time (Stein, 1900). These categories are: *Pratisthāśāsana*, *Vastuśāsana*, *Prasastipatta*, and *Śāstra*. *Pratisthāśāsana*-s are inscriptions found on temples, monuments, and various buildings—both religious and secular—such as palaces, images, and funerary monuments (Stein, 1900). These inscriptions primarily commemorate

the dedication or establishment of temples and other structures. Although such inscriptions are common in other parts of South Asia, only a small number of examples have been discovered in Kashmir. Notable among these is a fragmentary inscription from the reign of Queen Diddā, housed in the Lahore Museum. Additional examples, albeit brief and undated, have been noted at sites like Khunmuh, Varāhamūla, Vijabrōr, and Mārtand. Kalhana likely utilised these records to gather details about the foundation and construction of temples, monasteries (*matha*-s), and Buddhist institutions (*vihāra*-s) referenced in his chronicle. *Vastuśāsana*-s are inscriptions often engraved on copper plates that document grants of land, allowances, or other resources. Such records were vital for preserving the details of royal and private endowments, particularly those made to temples or religious institutions. While no examples of this type of inscription have yet been definitively identified in Kashmir, textual evidence, including Kalhana's narrative, suggests their historical presence. For instance, the story of Ranga hints at the use of copper-plate inscriptions for recording land grants. *Praśastipatta*-s are laudatory inscriptions or tables celebrating the achievements of individuals or the significance of specific locations. Found occasionally in temples and public buildings, such inscriptions often served to elevate the social and religious status of the individuals or places they described. While this type of record is relatively rare in Kashmir, their existence elsewhere in South Asia provides a model for understanding how they might have been used to convey prestige and authority in Kalhana's historical context. And *śāstra*-s are manuscripts covering a wide range of scientific and literary disciplines. The colophons of these works often contain information about the authors, their patrons, and the period in which they were composed. In Kashmir, such colophons provide an invaluable source for reconstructing intellectual and cultural history, as they offer chronological and contextual data. Kalhana may have relied on such sources to supplement his historical narrative, particularly regarding the reigns of kings and their scholarly pursuits.

Bühler's classification provides a foundation for understanding the historiographical techniques employed by Kalhana and invites further exploration into the extent and nature of epigraphic and manuscript traditions in early medieval Kashmir.

Pilgrimage

“In that [country] which Keśava (*Visnu*) and Īśāna (*Śiva*) adorn as Cakrabhrt and Vijayeśa, as well as in other [forms], there is not a space as large as a grain of sesamum without a Tīrtha” (Kalhana, trans. Stein, 1989, Book I, v. 38). The above lines from Kalhana’s *Rājataranginī* provide critical historical evidence of the dense network of sacred sites in Kashmir. *Tīrtha-yātrā* or Pilgrimage is a deeply rooted practice in South Asian religious traditions, particularly within Hinduism, where it plays a central role in sustaining temple economies by establishing sacred sites as focal points of spiritual, social, and economic activity (Branfoot, 2008). Hindus often view specific locations as especially potent and accessible manifestations of divine power, forming a sacred geography that inspires journeys to mythologically significant sites. The multiplicity of deities, names, and forms in Hinduism creates an expansive network of pilgrimage destinations, which has evolved since the early centuries CE, shaped by mythic narratives from the *Rāmāyana*, *Mahābhārata*, *Purānas*, and *Māhātmyas*. This network generates continuous pilgrim traffic, driving economic activity in temple towns and surrounding areas.

The study of Hindu pilgrimage is inherently multidisciplinary, combining textual analysis, ethnography, history, and religious studies. Texts in Sanskrit and regional languages like Hindi, Marathi, and Tamil detail the spiritual benefits of visiting sacred sites, such as the *punya* (merit) earned through specific rituals or offerings. Pilgrimage sustains a wide array of individuals and institutions, from pilgrims to religious specialists, including priests, gurus, and panda-s (pilgrim guides), who facilitate rituals, interpret texts, and mediate between pilgrims and deities.

Additionally, pilgrimage infrastructure, *dharmashalas* (guesthouses), *annadanas* (food distribution centres), and other charitable services further bolsters temple economies. Historical and contemporary studies of pilgrimage reveal how temples adapt to shifting social, religious, and political contexts. Large-scale festivals like the Kumbha Mela exemplify the symbiotic relationship between pilgrimage and governance, as political authorities manage infrastructure, derive revenue, and bolster legitimacy through their involvement. Ultimately, pilgrimage supports not only localised economic vitality but also broader socio-political structures within South Asia.

Several key themes illuminate the role of pilgrimage in the Hindu temple economy. First, landscapes of devotion underscore the sacred geography that guides Hindu pilgrimage, highlighting the transformative spiritual power of specific sites. Second, sacralized spaces emphasise the role of topography and temple architecture in shaping the pilgrim's experience, with spatial arrangements, sanctums, corridors, and ritual areas, designed to orchestrate movement and emotional engagement. Third, fruitful sites reveal how myths, rituals, and iconography imbue pilgrimage destinations with profound spiritual significance, encouraging offerings and donations that support temple economies. Finally, renovation and renewal reflect the ongoing processes of temple maintenance, expansion, and restoration, which preserve sanctity while adapting to contemporary demands, thereby sustaining the social and religious relevance of pilgrimage sites.

Temples, Tirtha and Dana

The study of pilgrimage sites (*tīrthas*) provides a critical framework for reconstructing a region's historical geography. As both a spatial and cultural practice, pilgrimage inscribes landscapes with religious meaning, allowing scholars to trace historical continuities, shifts in sacred geographies, and the entanglements of myth, memory, and materiality. In Kashmir, Kalhana's *Rājataranginī* serves as an essential source for understanding the Valley's sacred landscapes and their historical transformations. Kalhana describes Kashmir as so densely mapped with *tīrthas* that "not a space as large as a grain of sesamum" remains without one.

The material remains found at the Avatiswami temple gives us an insight into the material, religious and the cultural practices of that period of time. Among these antiquities, the *mat*, a large earthen vessel used for grain storage, stands out due to its inscription in Śāradā script, an early alphabet used primarily in Kashmir.

Maha Śrī A(va)ntivarma ghata 1543, or the storage vessel (ghata)

(belonging to) the great and illustrious A(va)ntivarma.

Mahā śrī A(va)ntivarma ghata. 1546

The storage vessel of the great and illustrious A(va)ntivarma.

(serial number) 1546 (Kaul Deambi, 1977).

Such references to *ghata* in an inscriptional context suggest that these vessels were not merely utilitarian objects but were likely used in religious or ceremonial contexts, signaling their symbolic and ritual importance. The association of Avantivarma's name with a ritual object like a *ghata* suggests a specific act of religious endowment or donation. Such objects would not only have had a practical use within the ritual economy, possibly for storing consecrated water, grains, or oil used in ceremonies, but also, carried symbolic value, reinforcing the donor's spiritual merit and social prestige.

Temple Architecture

Kashmiri temples and pilgrimage sites were often located in clusters, forming significant religious landscapes (Ferguson, 1961). The Martand and Mamaleshwar temples, along with the Ver Nag spring, each holding great importance in ancient Kashmir are situated within the Maraj division (Ferguson, 1961). According to Kalhana's *Rājataranginī*, King Lalitaditya built the Martand temple in the eighth century CE. He describes its towering stone walls and grand enclosure, noting that the nearby town was abundant with grapevines. However, recent excavations suggest that an even older temple existed at the site, with its foundation incorporated into Lalitaditya's structure. Scholars believe this earlier temple was constructed by King Ranaditya a few centuries prior.

Figure 1

Martanda / Sun temple, Kasmira; 700-750 CE



Source: AIIS Photo Archive

The Martand temple's location on the elevated *karewa* (alluvial plateau) above Anantnag offers breathtaking views of the Kashmir Valley and the distant Pir Panjal range. Just over a mile to the northwest, at Bhawan, sacred springs have served as a pilgrimage destination for centuries. These springs are linked to myths about the creation of the sun, reinforcing the temple's dedication to Vishnu in his solar incarnation as Martand (Ferguson, 1961).

The architectural remains at Mārtānda are generally attributed to the reign of Lalitāditya Muktāpīda, a celebrated ruler of the eighth century CE from the Kārkota dynasty of Kashmir. The *Rājataranginī*, the twelfth-century chronicle composed by Kalhana, provides explicit testimony regarding the temple's construction under Lalitāditya's patronage. In the section devoted to his reign, the text states: "That liberal [king] built the wonderful [shrine] of Mārtānda, with its massive walls of stone within a lofty enclosure (*prāsādāntar*)" (Kalhana, trans. Stein, 1989, Book IV). However, while Lalitāditya is credited with the construction of the grand structure that now stands in ruins, he was not the original founder of the sacred site. Rather, his temple was likely a reconstruction or an extensive renovation of an earlier sanctuary, possibly dating to the sixth century CE, which has since disappeared without a trace.

The Mārtānda temple was dedicated to Sūrya, the Sun god, who is specifically referred to as Mārtānda in the *Rājataranginī*. The temple complex is laid out in a rectangular plan, comprising a principal sanctum (*garbhagrha*) and a pillared hall or mandapa. Flanking the mandapa on its western end are two double shrines. The entire complex is enclosed within a vast courtyard, which is bordered by an impressive peristyle wall punctuated by eighty-four subsidiary shrines. These secondary shrines, originally housing images, most likely various manifestations of Sūrya—reinforce the temple's iconographic program, which emphasises Mārtānda as a cosmic and universal deity. Additional representations of the sun god were also placed around the temple's plinth, reinforcing the radiating presence of the central icon.

The peristyle columns, characterised by their distinctive fluted shafts, feature bases and capitals that evoke strong formal affinities with Syrio-Roman architectural traditions. The western side of the compound features the principal gateway, while significant secondary shrines are situated at the centre of each of the two lateral walls. The articulation of the architectural space, with

its axial symmetry and rhythmic colonnades, suggests a sophisticated interplay of spatial organisation and sculptural adornment, underscoring the temple's role as both a ritual space and a monumental expression of divine kingship.

Figure 2

Collonaded peristyle, Kasmira; Martanda / Sun temple; 700-750 CE



Source: AIIS Photo Archive

Figure 3

Main temple, Martand, Anantnag; Martand; Detail of exterior; 8th-14th century AD



Source: AIIS Photo Archive

Despite its grandeur, the Mārtānda temple was likely not a radical innovation in Kashmiri temple architecture. Rather, it appears to reflect and monumentalize an already established regional tradition, one that may have originally been rooted in wooden architecture. The persistence of specific architectural motifs and construction techniques across centuries suggests a deep-seated continuity in the architectural idiom of the region. Comparisons with the Parthian-period architectural forms at Taxila, particularly in terms of columnar orders, suggest that the underlying stylistic conventions had been present in the northwestern subcontinent since at least the first century CE. By the eighth century, these aesthetic and structural elements had become integral to Kashmir's built environment, shaping the visual language of its sacred spaces.

Cultural Patronage and the Confluence of Temple and Courtly Spaces in Pre-Modern Kashmir

Royal support for temple construction, literary production, and performance traditions facilitated a cultural milieu in which religious, aesthetic, and political concerns were inseparable. The *kāvya* tradition, far from being a passive record of these relationships, actively shaped how temples were perceived and experienced in pre-modern Kashmir (Malhan, 2023).

Cultural patronage in late eleventh-century Kashmir, as exemplified through *kāvya* literature and temple construction, reveals a sophisticated interplay between royal authority, religious devotion, and artistic expression. The patronage of temples by monarchs and elites, the representation of temples in *kāvya* narratives, and the performative and ritual dimensions of temple spaces all point to the deeply integrated nature of courtly and sacred life. By moving beyond rigid distinctions between the secular and the religious, scholars can better appreciate the ways in which *kāvya* literature functioned as both an artefact and an agent of cultural production in pre-modern South Asia.

Conclusion

To understand a region's temple economy, we need to understand the interplay between religious activities, agriculture, and trade. Why does the temple economy become important? How does it inform us about other aspects of Kashmir's socio-economic and cultural practices? Historians have established that the promotion of pilgrimage by the rulers and the priestly community

emerges as a significant strategy to sustain the local economy amidst declining trade. Existing research informs us that the rulers and the priestly community actively promoted pilgrimage in response to declining trade. This promotion can be seen as a strategic move to generate income and sustain the local economy. Pilgrimage in Kashmir played an important role in shaping cultural and economic dynamics. It was known for its multifaceted role; as economic centres, centres for bringing social change and instrument of political legitimacy. There was a clear interdependence between temporal authority and sacred authority. Temples as a centre and using pilgrimage as tool, it unified different sects with the Hinduism, i.e., shakta tradition, naga worship and shaiva traditions.

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i For dating of Kashmiri architecture, I am following Krishna Deva, Susan Huntington, and Adam Hardy. (Deva, 1988; Huntington, 1985; Brown, 1959).

B.K. Kaul Deambi notes that “It is also worthy of note that though Kalhana explicitly states in the *Rājataranginī* that he studied all types of inscriptions including the *Vastu-śāsanas* or the inscriptions recording grants of things chiefly of land for writing his chronicle, no copper-plate inscription recording the grant of land has come to light so far. The copper-plate inscriptions are regarded as mines of historical information which fact is amply demonstrated by the copper-plate inscriptions of Chamba which have provided a solid base for the reconstruction of the history of this ancient hill state from the 9th century to the last known ruler in an almost continuous strain. The absolute absence of copper-plate grants in Valley cannot but be severely felt by any student of Kashmir history.” (Kaul Deambi, 1977, p. 80)