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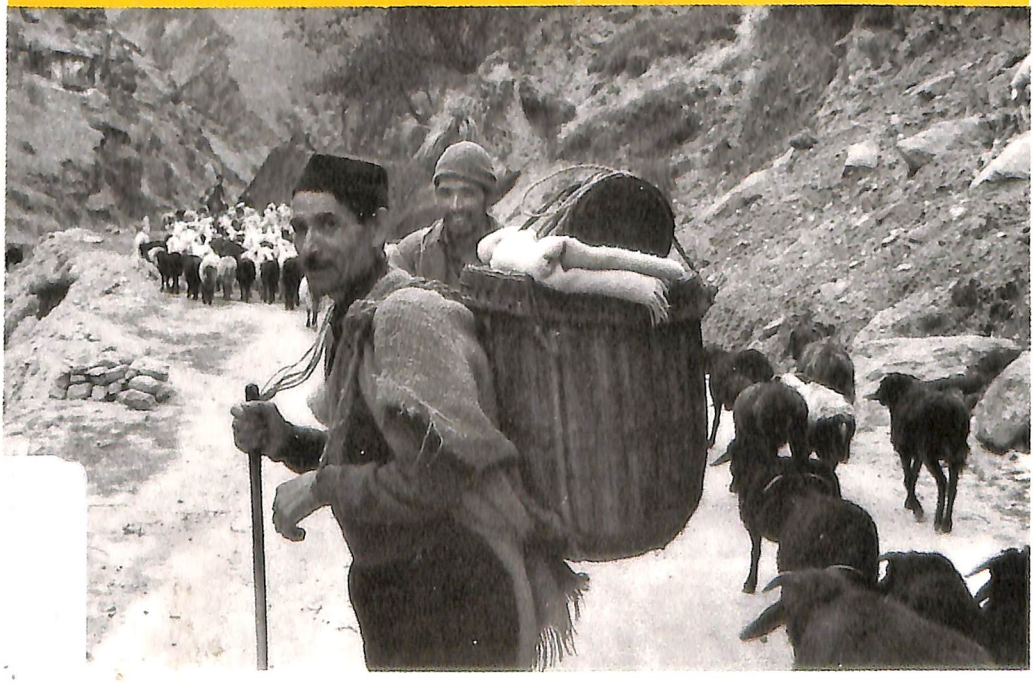

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Preface

In the present study an attempt has been made to study the life and culture of various communities, which in ancient times inhabited the Himalayan region of Kumaon, Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh. A discussion on the origin of different communities, their status in the Himalaya, whether they had been aboriginals or immigrants to this region, has also been initiated alongwith details of their history, culture and several other aspects of life of these communities from the earliest times to *c.* 1000 A.D. The study has been aimed at knowing in depth, the existence, history and culture of various human groups who had made their settlements in the Himalayan region of Kumaon, Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh in the ancient times. No study has been done prior to this, which could give an account of the ethnic settlements in the Himalayan region. Therefore, the present study is a pioneering attempt to tell about the ancient ethnography of the area. The present text has been divided into six chapters.

The first chapter introduces the study-area, which is the Himalayan region of Kumaon, Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh. A brief geographical background of the area has been given. An attempt has been made to unravel the myths related to the names of Kumaon, Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh. Linguistic characteristics, peculiar to our study-area and distribution of population around 1000 A.D., is one of the main thrusts brought out of the first chapter.

The second chapter gives an insight into the history of Himalayan region of Kumaon, Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh. This has been done with the help of original as well as secondary

sources. Archaeological explorations and excavations have definitely unfolded many of the mysteries pertaining to the history of the region, and have been of immense assistance in confirming the historical data supplied by literary evidences.

The third chapter is comparatively exhaustive and discusses the habitat of different communities in the Himalaya in the remote past. Distribution of various communities, such as Bhotiya, Darad, Katyuri, Khasa, Kinnara, Kirata, Kol, Kunet, Kuninda, Naga, Rajya-Kirata, Saka, Sulika, Tangana-Partangana, Yaudheya, Vidyadhara etc., have been discussed in detail. It has been the endeavour to identify the status of different ethnic groups of the area, i.e. whether they had been aboriginals or immigrants; if immigrants, what were the routes adopted by them for their arrival in the central Himalayan region? What was the impact of that migration on the aboriginals of Himalaya? Did it create a harmony or a disturbance? All these issues have been thoroughly dwelt upon.

The fourth chapter deals with historical account of the socio-economic and political life of the communities under study. Social structures and organizations, hierarchical set-ups and related social issues have also been discussed and thoroughly tested in historical perspective. The status of female in the backdrop of the semi-civilized societies of the communities finds some description of an utmost interest.

The economic life of various ethnic communities is a subject matter of interest. What was the mode of livelihood of the communities in this remote corner of the country, is an enigmatic question. Therefore, attempt has been made to furnish an answer to the problem.

The political aspect is equally important. We have reached a conclusion that a few of the communities were politically awakened and, thus, they had set up their own political system. But, several others were not politically conscious. Among the ruling dynasties, the Katyuris, Kunindas, Nagas, and the Yaudheyas had distinct political systems. The Kunindas and Yaudheyas were known for their republican form of government whereas the Katyuris and the

Nagas were ruling through the monarchical system. Religious faiths and beliefs of the communities are discussed in this text.

In the fifth chapter, a discussion has put the communities under a test, whether they were guided by nature while dwelling in the lap of nature or developed themselves into a life of religiosity? An attempt has been made to find out the real crux of the prevailing religious beliefs of the area. A few other aspects of the culture of the ethnic groups, such as art, architecture, iconography and numismatics have also been studied in the historical perspective.

The sixth chapter concludes the study of the text. A few tentative conclusions have been derived as regards to the communities in the Himalayan region of Kumaon, Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh. Their history and culture, society and religion and all the other aspects of life during ancient times have been touched upon.

Acknowledgements

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I am highly thankful to the U.G.C., I.C.H.R. and I.I.A.S. Shimla for providing me financial assistance under different schemes, which made it easy for me to visit different libraries.

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D.P. SAKLANI

Contents

List of Illustrations

Abbreviations

AISH	– Ancient Indian Society History
AKID	– Archaeology of Kumaon including Dehradun
ASIAR	– Archaeological Survey of India Annual Reports
EI	– Epigraphia Indica, Delhi
FFCHP	– Festivals, Fairs and Customs of Himachal Pradesh
HHP	– History of Himachal Pradesh
HSL	– History of Sanskrit Literature
IHQ	– Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta
JASB	– Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta
JNSI	– Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Patna
JUPHS	– Journal of the U.P. Historical Society, Lucknow
UAM	– Uttarakhand Ke Abhilekh Evam Mudrayen
UB	– Uttarakhand Ke Bhotantik
VINS	– Vedic Index of Names and Subjects

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Socio-Cultural Geography

The Himalaya is supreme among the mountains of the world. Kalidasa describes it a 'Devatama Himalaya' whereas Lord Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita*, 'among mountains, I am the Himalaya'. Its glories and its obscurities, its myths and mysteries have influenced all the spheres of human life from times immemorial.

Inspite of the several geological investigations made in many parts of the Himalayan mountains, its large tracts are still lying unexplored. As is evident from the various studies[1] the Kumaon and Garhwal region fall into three broad stratigraphical zones. Outer or sub-Himalayan zone composed of sediments mostly of Tertiary age; Central or lower Himalayan zone composed of granite and other crystalline rocks of unfossiliferous sediments, and higher Himalayan zone composed of a series of highly fossiliferous sediments.

The Tarai region which is at the foot of the Himalaya is significant. It consists of a zone of recently formed Gangetic alluvium, while the Bhabar is a sloping mass of coarse gravel, still being formed from the debris brought down by mountain streams. A sub-Himalayan zone of low hills known as the Siwaliks, contain deposits of the upper tertiary. Wadia comments about them, "they are nothing else than the alluvial detritus derived from the subaerial wastes of the mountains, swept down by their numerous rivers and streams and deposited at their foot."[2]

Dehradun situated in the midst of Siwalik ranges especially the southern part of it is full of these low hills. This Siwalik range is

composed in its lower and southernmost parts with sand-rock and a few thin mammalian fossils. The Siwalik chain is widest in the valley of the Beas. The best and at least for the lower formations, the thickest depositions of Murrees and Siwaliks occur in the Punjab section of the Himalaya.[3] The thickness of Siwalik here ranges between, 1800 to 2700 metres. The Sirmur series are separated by a fault from the Siwalik series and it is along this fault line that the epicentre of Kangra earthquake (1905) was situated.

The lesser Himalayan zone is not a single continuous chain of or range of mountains, "but a series of several more or less parallel or conveying ranges, intersected by enormous valleys and extensive plateaus. The individual ranges generally present a steep slope towards the plains of India."[4] Particularly the western Himalaya of the Punjab and Kumaon rise gradually from the plains by the intervention of many ranges of lesser altitudes, their peaks of everlasting snows are more than a hundred miles distant, hidden from view by the mid-Himalayan ranges to the inhabitants of the plains.[5] Most of the part of this zone is composed of granite and other crystalline rocks of unfossiliferous sediments. The Krol belt stretching from the Shimla region towards the east continuing almost throughout the Garhwal and Kumaon Himalaya separates this region from the Siwalik system.

The Great Himalaya comprises the innermost line of high ranges rising above the limit of perpetual snow. The highest is the Nanda Devi peak in this class (25,645 feet). Then the snowy peak of Badrinath is about 23,190 feet and Gangotri about 21,700 feet. Both the lesser or middle Himalaya together with the great Himalaya are "composed of crystalline and metamorphic rocks, granites, and schists with unfossiliferous sedimentary deposits of very ancient age."[6]

Garhwal and Kumaon (U.P. Himalaya), situated in the central Himalaya, are both one and the same geographically. This Garhkum Himalaya is popularly known as Kumaon Himalaya. Physically, this region occupies the extreme northwest corner of northern India. Its boundaries are well marked by mountains and rivers. Tons

separates this region from Himachal Pradesh in the west and the Kali from Nepal in the east, starting from the foothills in the south, the region extends upto snow-clad peaks of the Himadri, marking the Indo-Tibetan boundary.

U.P. Himalaya rises from the sub-Siwalik Bhabar to a magnificent series of glacier-garlanded peaks. The Garhkum Himalaya, being situated centrally in the long sweep of the Himalaya, forms a rather transitional zone between the humid eastern and rather dry sub-humid western Himalaya. It looks like the crown of Uttar Pradesh and stands guard to the Upper Ganga plains. Although culturally, the region resembles the Himachal Himalaya, it has its own distinctiveness, reflecting the sublime blend of Indian cultural traits associated with Badrinath-Gangotri complex which has absorbed the Mongoloid cults into Hindu moulds. In the Puranic literature, this region bears the name of Uttarakhand or Kedarkhand. Ved Vyas attached so much importance to it that he wrote an *up-Purana* about it. It is because of this that the region is regarded as one of the holiest parts of Bharat (India), being frequently visited by great saints and kings from different parts of the country. Every rock and rivulet is dedicated to some deity or saint and an appropriate legend attached to it.

Another region of the Himalaya i.e. Himachal Pradesh—the Dev-Bhoomi—was known to the ancients, it lies in the heart of the western Himalaya. Numerous places, peaks, rivers, lakes, springs and temples became places of pilgrimage because of the sanctity of their association with numerous deities. According to the *Puranas*, Himachal is the 'Jalandhar Khand' of the Himalaya. In praising the glories of Himachal, the *Skand Purana* says, 'In a hundred ages of the gods, I could not tell thee the glories of the Himachal[7]. Stream of pilgrims, Buddhist monks, merchants and travellers from Central Asia, China and Tibet travelled across to Kullu, Mandi; Rampur, Kangra and the plains of India. From different parts of India, pilgrims come to pay their homage at the temples of Nagarkot, Jwalamukhi, Chintpurni and Naina Devi. In the north, it is bounded by Kashmir, in the east by Tibet, in the

southeast by Garhwal and Uttar Pradesh plains, and in the south and southwest by Haryana and Punjab. The whole region is formed of the hilly as also of the plain parts. There are, no doubt, attractive and pleasant hill stations such as Shimla, Kullu, Manali, Dalhousie and also many pilgrimage destinations of great importance.

As regards the climatic conditions of both, the Kedar Khand and Jalandhar Khand of the ancient times, meagre description is given in the *Rigveda*. The noble range of the Himalaya, originally called the 'abode of snow, was looked on as the home of the storm-god, the mother of rivers', the haunt of fierce wild beasts and more fierce wild man. The climatic condition of the mountainous region, though stormy, may be assumed as pleasant and harmonious as it has been described the home of gods and the land of sages and saints. There had been no systematic survey of the climate of the region during ancient times, nor does this exist even in the modern times. But, it can be safely assumed that the climatic condition of the area was almost the same in the past as it is today. No significant change has been recorded in it since the ancient times.

There is much diversification in climatic conditions due to variation in elevation and other aspects. Owing to its complicated relief, microclimates are of considerable importance. In the summer months, the valley experiences hot and stormy tropical climate, while at a distance of about 75 km, the great range bears some of the highest snow-fields of the world. Valley winds in narrow valleys and heavy fog during the winter in wide valleys are a few conspicuous features of weather of this region. The precipitation of every locality is directly related not only to the altitudinal zone in which it exists, but also to its situation in the front or the rear of a ridge or overlapping spur. The monsoon commences towards the end of June and ceases by the middle of September. Winter depressions cause snowfall for seven to eight days in each of the three months from January to March. April and May are rather marked by thunder and occasional hailstorms. In May and the first half of June, before the break of monsoon, convectional rain occurs in the afternoon, in small amount (12 to 25 m) practically every

third and fourth day, often at high elevations. There are marked differences in the amount of rainfall in the front and rear of the main range. It is on account of these two reasons that Niti, located beyond the snowclad peaks, gets only 14 cm of rain during the summer period.[8] In general, the rainfall average is between 37 to 50 cm from June to September in the frontal zone, and 20 to 25 cm in the rear. Winter depressions cause 3 to 5 metres of snowfall from November to May.

The micro-climatic conditions usually differ from valley to valley and locality to locality according to the direction of ridges, degree of slope, aspects of slope, intensity of forest cover, and nearness to the glaciers.

In the Himachal region, there is much diversification in climatic conditions similar to the Uttarakhand region. In general, the climate of this area is distinguished from the Punjab plains by a shorter and less severe hot weather, to a somewhat higher precipitation and colder and more prolonged winter. The two main climatic characteristics of the region are the seasonal rhythm of weather and the vertical zoning. The climatic conditions vary from hot and sub-humid tropical in the southern low tracts to temperate, cold alpine and glacial in the northern and eastern high mountains. Lahaul and Spiti areas experience drier conditions as they are almost cut off by the high mountain ranges. The distribution of rainfall varies from less than 500 mm in greater part of Lahaul and most of Spiti to over 3400 mm at Dharamsala (Dhauladhar range). Kullu receives about 915 mm rainfall while Jogindarnagar, less than 35 km on the windward side receives 2327 mm. However, there is no month without rain. In all places below 900 m, heat is excessive during summer.

Generally, the region experiences a low normal monthly maximum temperatures. The highest monthly maximum temperatures are experienced in June, after which the temperature continue to fall and the lowest monthly minimum temperature is experienced in January. Mandi has as many as seven hot months while Shimla has none. The relative humidity is generally higher in Himachal region than in the adjoining plains during the

pre-monsoon (May-June) and the monsoon period.

Popularly the year is divided into three seasons: *Hyund* or cold season (October-February), *Taundi* or hot season (March-June) and *Barsat* or rainy season (July-September).

Drainage

There are many glaciers in the Himalayan region of Garhwal, Kumaon and Himachal Pradesh. This region has been the source of moisture reservoir which has highly influenced the climate of Indian subcontinent.[9] During the Pleistocene period vast areas in U.P. Himalaya experienced glaciation. A large tract is still covered by permanent snow. Hence, the present glaciation is but a shadow of what it was during the Ice-Ages.

Generally, all the Himadri valleys, between 2000 and 3000 m depict glacial features wherever they have not been completely obliterated by fluvial action. The important glaciers of Uttarakhand region are: Gangotri, Kedarnath, Bhagirathi-Kharak, Satopanth, Pindari and Milam.

Lying between the lat. 30°45'-30°-55' N and long. 79°5'-79°15' E at the elevation of about 3900 m, the Gangotri glacier is located on the western slopes of the Chaukhamba peak. It is 30 km long and about 2 km wide, thus it occupies a little over 200 sq. km and with a total volume of 20 cu. km ice. The river Bhagirathi, the headwater of holy Ganga takes its origin from this glacier.

The Kedarnath glacier is located between the lat. 30°5'-31° N and long. 79°-79°5' E. The glacier is about 14 km long with average width of 500 m. The river Mandakini has its origin from this glacier. Bhagirathi-Kharak glacier is located between the lat. 30°48'-30°50' N and long. 79°15'-79°25' E. This is a transverse glacier, extending in about 9 km. The glacier is connected with the Satopanth glacier which lies in the south. Satopanth glacier is located in the southeast of the Bhagirathi-Kharak glacier between the lat. 30°41'-30°47' N and long. 79°19'-79°25' E. A beautiful Satopanth Tal is also located here. The snout of the Bhagirathi-Kharak and the Satopanth glaciers are connected with each other

and the river Alaknanda takes its origin from here. The Pindari glacier is located at 3353 m in the west of the Nandakot peak, between the lat. 30°15'-30°25' N and long. 80°0' E. It is about 30 km long and 385 m wide. The Milam glacier is located at just south of Trisul (7120 m) and is about 16 km.

Other glaciers of the region are Arva, Kosa, Tata and Sarasut, Ramani, Kuramtoli, Poting, Shankolpa, Raulphee, Guna, Dhingchingmori, Kharsa, Naulphee, Baling, Chaulugee, etc.

There are a few glaciers in Himachal region such as Bhadal and Tant-Gari etc. The famous glacier of Himachal region is Gara, the detailed study of which was taken up in 1973.[10] The Gor-Garang glacier in Himachal Pradesh is also one of the important glaciers.

Rivers

In Indian subcontinent, the central Himalayan region has the unique distinction of providing water to major and minor river basins. The drainage can be divided into seven main systems—the Ganga system; the Yamuna system; the Kali system; the Satluj system; the Beas system; the Ravi system; and the Chenab system.

Major part of the region is drained by the Ganga system covering the whole of Garhwal except western parts of Almora and Nainital districts. The Bhagirathi and the Alaknanda originate from the opposite sides of the Chaukhamba peaks (7138 m) and they bend at Devprayag taking a garland shape.

The Yamuna has its sources in the Yamunotri glacier lying on the southwestern slope of the 'Bandarpunch peak. The Tons, the biggest tributary of the Yamuna, takes its rise from the northern slope of the Bandarpunch peak, and flowing in a valley north-west of the Yamuna joins the latter below Kalsi.

Yamuna is the westernmost river of Uttar Pradesh and eastern-most of Himachal Pradesh forming the boundary of both. It receives two significant tributaries from Himachal Pradesh, the first being Tons with its sub-tributary Pabar. Another is Giri or Gori Ganga as it is known in the Jubbal hills.

About one-fourth of the U.P. Himalaya region is drained by the Kali system covering the district of Pithoragarh and the eastern parts of Almora and Nainital districts. The Kali has two headwaters, i.e., the Kalapani and the Kuthi Yankti. After the confluence the Kali flows in a southwesterly direction upto 120 km where the Gori Ganga meets it at Jaulijibi. The Sarju, a greater feeder of the Kali, meets it at Pancheswari about 45 km below Jaulijibi. The Kali enters the plains at Baramdeo, henceforth known as the Sharda. The Ramganga, the Kosi and the Gola are other important rivers in the eastern part of the region. The Song, the Khoh, the Dabka, the Nihal, the Bhakra and the Nandhau are the main Siwalik rivers, draining outer ranges of the region.

The Satluj contributes most to the western drainage system. It rises from the southern slope of the Kailash mountain. Davies thinks that Satluj is the youngest of the great Himalayan rivers and has developed owing to the collapse of the main Himalayan axis along the line of an old Gondwana fault-trough. Between the Zaskar and the great Himalaya crossing, the Satluj receives the Spiti from the north-west. In Kinnaur it is joined by Baspa river which rises from the southern Baspa hills. Just below Rampur, it is joined by Nogli stream. Travelling through Kinnaur, Shimla hills and Bilaspur district, it leaves Himachal Pradesh and enters the plains of Punjab at Bhakra, where one of the world's largest dams has been constructed.

The Beas, which forms the world-famous valley of Kullu rises from 3978 metres high Rohtang pass. The main course of this river is southward to Larji and then to the west. Its main tributaries in the east are Parbati, Spin and Malana nala and in the west are Solang, Manalsu, Sujoin, Phojal and Sarvari streams. At Bajaura it enters Mandi district, the Mandi town of which is situated on its left bank. There are many tributaries of this river.

The Ravi rises from an amphitheatre-like basin called Bara Bhangal, a branch of Dhauladhar. It first flows westward through a trough separating the Pir Panjal from the Dhauladhar range and then turns southward cutting the latter through a deep gorge. During its course from Bara Bhangal to the place where it leaves Himachal

Pradesh and enters Punjab, it receives several streams from both directions. The most important left bank tributary is Chirchind nala near Chhatrari rising from the northern slopes of Dhauladhar. The right bank tributaries such as Bodhil, Tundahen, Bejedi, Saho or Sal and Siul are of considerable importance. Chamba town, the ancient capital of Chamba state and now the headquarters of Chamba district, stands on the right bank of Ravi.

The Chenab or Chandrabhaga rises on the opposite sides of the Baralacha pass at an elevation of 4891 m—The Chandra on the southeast, the Bhaga on the northwest. These rivulets unite at Tandi (2286 m) and form one river of great size and volume, which flows immediately to the north of this mid-Himalayan range and parallel to it. A little beyond Bhujind, it enters Pangi valley of Chamba district and leaves the district at Sansari nala and enters Padar valley of Kashmir and the hinterland of Kishtwar.

Most of the rivers of Himalaya are snow-fed. During the monsoon, they become raging torrentials carrying enormous quantity of water, and in winter when snow and water get frozen at high altitudes, they shrink to smaller sizes, yet indomitable.

Lakes

The green hills of the Himalaya, are studded with beautiful lakes as well. The lake region of Kumaon has its own characteristic features. These lake basins are roughly confined to a belt of approximately 25 km length and 4 km width near the outer fringe of the lesser Himalaya in the district of Nainital. Apart from the Nainital lake basin, a group of lakes comprising the Bhimtal, Naukuchiyatal, Sattal, Punatal, etc. lies to the east of the Nainital lake, forming considerably low-lying open lake basins. The lake basins of the Khurpatal, Sukhatal and Sariatal are very small in their extension.

In the Garhwal Himalaya the Gohna lake is very important in the valley of Birahi Ganga, a tributary of the Alaknanda. Another important lake is Diurital which lies 10 km to the northeast of Ukhimath.

In Himachal region also lakes are in abundance to enhance the natural beauty of the hills. In Chamba district Ghadasaru lake is 24 km from Tisa, the headquarters of Churah tehsil. The Khajiar lake lies at an elevation of 1951 m above sea level between Chamba and Dalhousie. Lama dal lake is 45 km east of Chamba in the inner slopes of Dhauladhar range. This is a group of seven lakes. The Manimahesh lake, 3950 m above sea level, is near the base of a peak known as Manimahesh Kailash (5576 m). Mahapali dal lake is also in Chamba district at an elevation of 3657 m. Dal lake, 11 km from Dharamsala in Kangra district, is picturesque but not as big as its namesake in Kashmir. Karesi is another lake, 35 km from Dharamsala. Kumarwah lake some 40 km from Mandi town is a peculiar place. The Parashar lake, about 30 km from Mandi lies on a 2743 m high bowl-shaped hill-top. Another lake of Mandi is Riwalsar. Kullu district has two lakes—Bhirgu and Dashahr. They are not far from Manali, the famous tourist resort. In Lahaul and Spiti district, the important lakes are Chandratal and Surajtal. Shimla district has only one lake, Chandra Nahan at a height of 4267 m on Chanshal peak in Rohru tehsil. This lake is the source of river Pabar. Renuka lake in Nahan is the biggest natural lake in Himachal Pradesh. To crown all, there is a huge man-made lake known as Govind Sagar in Bilaspur district, formed as a result of world famous Bhakra dam.

The Himalayan region of Garhwal, Kumaon and Himachal which forms part of this study, had their different names in ancient times and they had their own glories and importance, mythologically as well as historically.

The Himachal was known during early times as the *Dev-Bhoomi* (the land of gods). The name Himachal means the 'lap of snow' or 'a place where snow is present all the time'. This is purely a geographical name and it has nothing to do with any myth or legend associated with it.

Panini[11] refers to several hill tracts like Trigarta, Kuluta (Kullu), Mandamati (Mandi) etc. Formerly, the kingdom of 'Jalandhar or Trigarta' (the land of the three rivers—the Satluj, the Ravi and the Beas) comprised all the country between the Satluj and the Ravi

and the 'Jalandhar' doab in the plains. Kangra, then called Bhimkot, was its hill capital.

The Garhwal and Kumaon region was known as Uttarakhand or Kedarkhand in *Puranic* literature. It was one and the only political entity in ancient times. The region of Kumaon had once encompassed the Garhwal region in its fold. The Tons river separated this region from Himachal Pradesh in the west and the Kali from Nepal in the east. Starting from the foothills in the south, the region extends upto the snow-clad peaks of the Himadri, marking the Indo-Tibetan boundary. It can thus, be concluded safely that the ancient Kurmachal (i.e. Kumaon region) comprised the entire belt from the river Kali in the east to the Tons in the west; Niti pass or a little above upto Satluj in the north and Thakurdwara of the present Muradabad district in the south.

'Kumaon', in the present usage signifies only a political division of three well-known districts of Uttar Pradesh. *Skanda-Purana* (*Manus-Khanda*) refers to *Kurmavana* and *Kumaravana*, 'of which the modern Kumaon is supposed to be a later corruption'.[12] Vishnu is stated to have taken incarnation here near Lohaghat as a *Kurma* to support the Mandara mountain, which may very well help us to assume about the origin of the word *Kurmavana*. The view that the word Kumaon was from *Kumuno*, of the local dialect, which means a cultivated land, does not appear to be convincing.[13] Linguistically, the derivation of Kumaon from Kurmachal appears to be correct.

There is no mention of the word *Kumaon* in any of the inscriptions from Kumaon. The Katyuris did not use even Kurmachal or Kurmavana. The Chands have, however, used Kurmachal in their records. It, therefore, appears that the origin of word Kumaon from *Kumuno*, of the local dialect, is not convincing.[14] It came to be used frequently only after the 12th century A.D. The use of the word 'Kumaon' is noted for the first time in the historical description of Yahya bin-Ahmad, in which he narrates an episode between Kharagu—the Katehiri chief and the Sultan Firoz Tughlak.[15]

Besides Kurmachal, there were several names for other parts of

Kumaon, particularly the Garhwal region of recent times i.e., the land of Badrinath and Kedarnath was known by the name of *Kedarkhand*. It was only after 10th century A.D. that this part of the region came to be known as Garhwal. The other name for the whole tract 'embraced by the Ganga to the Kali is Uttarakhand, which may be translated as the cardinal point (of the compass). . . the macrocosm of the Hinduism.'[16]

The region of Kumaon, according to the above tradition, was divided into two parts to indicate its two geographical tracts. Kedarkhand was adopted after the holy Kedarnath, while Kurmachal, after Kurmavana in the eastern Kumaon. But, it appears that both Kurmachal and Kedarakhand were not politically and culturally divided. Even during the Katyuri rule, both the tracts were united. It was only in the beginning of 11th century that Kumaon and Garhwal were separated from each other. The Kumaon, after this division was ruled by the Chands, and the Garhwal, by the rajas of Garhwal. Nevertheless, the two tracts did not separate even afterwards in the cultural and social set-up.

Thus, Kumaon, Garhwal and Himachal region of the Himalaya are geographically and culturally affiliated to one another. Though the ancient Kumaon, having different names of the different areas, was a one whole political and cultural entity. Himachal, on the other hand, had been divided politically and had more variation at cultural level.

Linguistic Characteristics

The major dialects spoken in the Himalayan region are collectively known as Pahari dialect because of the reason that these are spoken in the hilly areas of the country. Pahari is spoken in the area from the northwest of Bhadarwaha in Jammu & Kashmir to the eastern part of Nepal. Pahari dialect is subdivided into three types: Western Pahari; Central Pahari and Eastern Pahari. And further there are some different dialects within these broad types of Pahari e.g., *Nepali, Kumaoni, Garhwali* etc. Though, there is some literature available in Pahari yet, the bulk of it is in the form of folk-literature and folklore.

The script commonly used for Pahari is the Nagari but, the other scripts, used in minority, are Takari, Persian, Kochi and Sirmauri.[17] But now the influence of Persian script is diminishing.

Suniti Kumar Chatterjee is of the opinion that Pahari originated from Paishachi, Darad or Khasha *apbhransha*. According to him, these dialects later on, in the medieval period, came under the influence of Nagar or Saurashtra *apbhransha*. But Bholanath Tiwari asserts that Pahari is more closely related to Sauraseni *apbhransha*.[18] Thus, the origin of Pahari can be traced from Sauraseni *apbhransa*. It is known as Central Pahari because it is spoken in the central part of the Pahari-dominated area. The two major dialects of this area are Kumaoni and Garhwali. The Central Pahari, because of political reasons, is much influenced by Rajasthani.[19] Kumaoni is spoken in Kumaon, and Garhwali is spoken in all over Garhwal and the area around the hill station of Mussoorie. These dialects vary from place to place, each *pargana* having a distinct form of speech, each with a local name of its own. Neither of these main dialects have any literary history.

Western Pahari

Western Pahari is the name for the large number of connected dialects spoken in the western *Sapadlaksha* i.e., in the hill country of which Himachal Pradesh is a part. These dialects have no standard form, and beyond a few folk-epics, no literature. The area, over which they are spoken, extends from the Jaunsar-Bawar tract of Uttar Pradesh and thence to Himachal Pradesh, over Sirmaur, Shimla, Kullu, Mandi and Chamba districts. The language has numerous dialects, all differing considerably among themselves, but, nevertheless, possessing many common features. On that basis, we may group them as: the Chamba and Bhadarwah group etc. Of these, Jaunsari is the dialect spoken in the Jaunsar-Bawar tract of the district Dehradun in Uttar Pradesh, wedded in Garhwal and Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh.[20]

Western Pahari is written in the *Takari* alphabet similar to alphabet used for Dogri dialect of Punjabi. It has most of the

disadvantages of *lahanda*, being very imperfectly supplied with signs for the vowels. Medial short vowels are usually altogether omitted, and medial long vowels are represented by characters which are also used for initial vowels, whether long or short.

Inhabitants and their Settlements

Himalayan belt of Uttarakhand had been inhabited by various communities in ancient times. Those inhabitants belonged to the different groups and had their own cultural affiliations. The main groups which had been forming a bulk of the population of the area were: Kiratas, Khasas, Rajaya-Kiratas, Darads, Sakas, Bhotiyas, Kinnars, Kunets, Katyuris etc. As far as the distribution of those communities is concerned, we have a detailed study in the following chapter. These groups inhabited the area of study from ancient times and lost their identity by mixing up with other communities even before one thousand A.D.

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