

Concentric Rings of Pilgrimage Local, Regional and Subcontinental Linkages*

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The spatial extent and influence of a religious movement may be conveniently discerned from its integrated network generating a circulation mechanism commonly explained by the term – pilgrimage. In fact when we are confronted with the term (pilgrimage), a vivid picture of pilgrims, worshipping at various sacred centres in a fixed (or even haphazard) order, is perceived. This ordered pilgrim movement forms a network which may be extended over the entire country, as in the case of Sakta Pithas (the centres of the goddess), or limited to a narrow region, as in the case of Jalandhara Pitha. The latter was one of the 4, 52, or 108 Sakta Pithas in the country.¹ This network – both in subcontinental and regional terms – is perceived as an arrangement of various pilgrim centres (*tirthas*) and is explained mythologically. It is connected by a well-defined pattern of itinerary and goals or motives and generates a circulation mechanism within a given geographical space. In early Sanskrit religious literature such an arrangement was frozen within an *ashrama* scheme. The journey to various fixed centres, in a rigid fashion, was known as *tirtha yatra*. Such a scheme, however, raises a question especially in the modern-day context. Is the term *tirtha-yatra* used for pilgrimage to an isolated centre or for the complex system? Undertaking a pilgrimage to a centre, e.g. Prayaga or Gaya, is as much a *tirtha yatra* as a journey to a pilgrim network.

The presentday scholarship on pilgrimage has also documented in detail either the subcontinental pilgrim network, or pilgrimage to isolated centres only.² The regional network, or that of a locality, has, however, been ignored. This provides a significant perception and forces us to reconsider our terminologies which are more generic and holistic than functional. In fact a network within a network can be perceived. Here a chain of local networks makes a regional network and this in turn is associated with an even larger subcontinental network. For instance, most of the temple towns (e.g. Jwalamukhi Temple in Kangra) have a local network of sacred places which from a sacred centre. This centre is part of a regional network (e.g. the network of Jalandhara Pitha, discussed later), which is associated with the subcontinental network (e.g. 108 Sakta Pithas). Thus we have fairly well understood linkages which make the process of pilgrimage more dynamic and socially sensitive.

In this paper I have briefly dwelled upon some of these issues and terms, while discussing the pilgrim network within Jalandhara Pitha, in the present district of Kangra in Himachal Pradesh. The information is based exclusively on a Sanskrit manual written on this Pitha in 1864.³ The purpose here is not only to contextualize and introduce the concerns of an area specific manuscript that was limited in usage, but also to suggest that the codification of a pilgrim itinerary in terms of time-space co-ordination succeeded the popular institution of such a dynamic network. Hence, the act of codification, in a way, freezes the dynamism of a network. It pre-empts addition of any other centre which may be created thereafter, though it claims sanctity and historical legitimization of the network. Exclusive reliance is also placed on this local manuscript to emphasize the question of perspective – which is crucial to the understanding of the phenomenon of Indian pilgrimage network.

I

The Local and Subcontinental: Terminological Insights

In Sanskrit literature *tirtha*⁴ is used as a noun for a 'passage' 'way', 'road', 'ford', 'a river', 'bathing-place' and as a 'place of pilgrimage on the banks (*tira*)⁵ of sacred streams' or 'waters'. An object of veneration, or the sacred object, has also been termed as *tirtha*; a term further extended, for instance, to 'certain lines or parts of the hand sacred to the deity'. Similarly, *yatra*⁶ has various meanings as: 'going', 'setting-off' 'journey', 'march', 'expedition', a 'festive train' or 'procession'; or 'going on a pilgrimage'. However, *tirtha yatra* is generally used to describe a journey or a procession or a pilgrimage to the ford or the sacred streams.⁷ This limited reading of the term, therefore, fails to distinguish the visitation or procession to the centres of local or regional importance or the centres not associated with the waters, or rivers. The distinction is important not only from an organizational view point, but also to understand the complex process of pilgrimage.

An insight into the terminological differentiation, however, is possible if we briefly consider the process at a village level or at the level of a locality. Known as *jatra* (also meaning a theatrical or an entertainment troupe, and *apabhramsha* of *yatra*), this pilgrimage-procession was usually held during the 'special-time'⁸ or at a time when people thanked the deity after their 'wish' was fulfilled. The *jatra*-procession defined the territory of the deity. It also brought back to life the dormant village deities and, in a way, the village social life.⁹ In many villages, owing to the ecological-occupational pressures, the social and religious life took a back seat and an effort was needed to propitiate the gods to invoke their 'protection'. For instance, at the shrine of Madhaun Naga, a village or a locality deity in Bhattiyat *tehsil* of Chamba, 'no daily worship of this deity is done'. People gather only when they require rain or on the occasion of this *jatra*-fair.¹⁰ During the *jatra*, people from adjoining villages collectively sacrifice a goat and a buffalo every year to

invoke the protection (more significantly to escape the wrath of the deity) of the deity as well as to fulfil the mundane and personal wishes/desires.¹¹

Spatially, most of the village shrines were located in the central part of the village and occupied a pivotal position both geographically and metaphorically in the life of the villagers. In a way this centrality gave a feeling of participation in village life, thus making the deity one of 'us' instead of 'others'. This is in contrast to the sacred geography of the Sanskritic shrines, placed, by and large, on hill-tops or on fords; hence being called the *tirthas*.¹² While the hill-top elevation gives a feeling of looking from the top or of regulating, the water gives the feeling of a gap between this life and after-life, or of being on a perpetual journey. But, for the villagers, the term *tirtha* (*teerath*, as they call) also has a special meaning, i.e., of a crematorium. Usually the crematorium is accompanied by a Sanskritic shrine, situated outside the village boundaries and often near a stream. Interestingly, by using the ascriptive term, the villagers subtly integrated the linkages. They, thus, manipulated the cosmologies, in the meaning of a crematorium-*tirtha*, i.e., a place where life gives way to death, a place where one attains liberation (*moksha*), in a worldly sense. In a certain sense the geographical segregation of *jatra* – shrines and *tirthas* as well as *teerath* – also defines their role in the life of the village. The village shrines are functional and fulfil the mundane desires¹³ while the *tirthas* give coherence to the peripheral, abstract emotions, e.g. the soteriological aims. Therefore, in the life of a villager the snake god (Gugga or Zinda-pir), or the forest goddess (Eankhandi) or the local *pir* always had a centrality¹⁴ as against the pan-Indian Sanskritic shrines and deities.

The popular distinction between the *tirtha yatra* and *jatra* (though etymologically the same) can provide us an important terminological as well as an organisational insight. *Tirtha yatra* deals essentially with the future frame of time and with such abstract and complex emotions as merit accumulation, salvation or attainment of heaven for self and ancestors. It can be undertaken individually only and if undertaken with a family it is aimed at 'self' but not the group of companions on the same road. It involves an elaborate ritual structure and carries with it oppositions like purity, pollution, dietary regulation, sexual abstinence, apart from practices like *dana* (donation), *daksina* (gift or the sacrificial fee) and feast to the brahmin priests. Opposed to this, in degree, is *jatra*, (parochial for the procession of goods or of people to the deity), which deals essentially with the present frame of time and with concrete and simple emotions related, for instance, with the fulfilment of a mundane desire, wish, abatement of fear. It is popularly a processional or a group affair aimed at the well-being of an individual, family or a locality. The *jatra* involves simple rituals. It is usually accompanied by a sacrifice that does not involve the intervention of a specialized priest. The participation of a priest, generally of a low-caste, or a co-villager irrespective of the caste status, was sufficient. However, *jatra*, as also *tirtha yatra*, is regulated by 'special-time' (even though this may be not

necessarily specified) as distinct from the daily temple going. But the *tirtha yatra* means a journey undertaken to the pilgrimage-network while *teerath*¹⁵ (same as *tirtha*; usually meaning going on a pilgrimage to an isolated centre) is a visitation to an isolated Sanskrit centre, combining in itself both the mundane and soteriological goals. Such isolated pilgrimage may be described by using a Sanskrit term *tirtha charya*¹⁶ (Lit. a visit to any *tirtha charya* i.e. pilgrimage) as distinct from *tirth yatra* used for a Sanskrit pilgrimage-network.

Such terminological distinction is necessary on another ground also. The Sanskrit pilgrimage or *tirtha yatra* had a certain caste-class bias in the sense that only people of the higher or richer classes could afford to visit all the sacred centres spread as they are across the length and breadth of the subcontinent, with elaborate and expensive rituals. Such an expensive practice, moreover, was used by the highcastes as a tool of subjugation. This was a manifestation of power, as is evident in Prem Chand's story *Mukti Marga*.¹⁷ In this story a progressive shepherd becomes the target of an envious high-caste farmer who implicates him in *gau-ghat* or the slaughter of a cow. The shepherd is, consequently, ex-communicated and can interact with the co-villagers only after he undertakes a pilgrimage, besides giving a feast to the brahmins. The estimated cost of pilgrimage is around Rs. 400-500; an amount for which his entire property is sold. He is forced to undertake the *tirtha yatra* to buy peace for his mortal self, the soul and the good name of his ancestors, as well as his own soul after his death. In a similar situation in *Godan*,¹⁸ the implicated protagonist flees as he has no means to accomplish the feat.

For the common man, therefore, the circulation mechanism within the region of his habitation provides a more meaningful and realistic option. What the region provides is a tangible alternative to the complex visitation throughout the subcontinent. This is also important for obtaining an insight into the organisational aspect of pilgrimage at a regional level.

II

Local, regional and subcontinental: The linkages

The pilgrimage-network at a regional level, while trying to establish linkages with the subcontinental phenomenon, would integrate the villages and localities and provide a collective religious identity. This could be done by integrating the *yatra* procession, *teerath* or *tirtha charya* – visitation and the *tirtha yatra* pilgrimage into a well-defined network. This would also mean an integration of people, faiths and practices into a well-knit system. This is a significant perception provided by a pilgrimage manual, *Jalandhara Pitha Deepika*,¹⁹ written in 1864, *Vaisakha, Krishna-navami, samvat 1921* at Jwalamukhi (*Jwal-pithae*) by an ascetic named Prahaladanada, a disciple of Parm-hamsa Parirajacharya Kumarannanda Nath. The manuscript consists of 569 *slokas* divided into 11 chapters (*prakashas*) and 19 *stotras* (eulogizing

hymns). Of these 19 *stotras* nine are *Saiva*, eight are *Sakta*, a *Vaisnava* and one devoted to a river (*Vipasa*). The network itinerary consists of visitations to 141 pilgrim places to be covered in 68 days of foot-journey.

Integrating the local

Many of the pilgrimage centres are of local importance only though Sanskritized and included in the pilgrim itinerary. The itinerary is rigid and controlled, clearly specifying the preceding and succeeding shrines to be visited, the typology of rituals to be conducted and the types of merits to be obtained. It also specifies the distance to be covered in a day, the places of an over night stay and the number of days to be spent at a particular shrine or place. This rigorous organisation can be illustrated by citing a singular itinerary, as below:

Those aspiring salvation should bathe in *Vipasa* (Beas). Follow the right method. Perform a *shradha* (funeral rite in the honour of ancestors) to the patriarchs. *Those who donate a milch cow and gold to the brahmins attain the highest heavens.* The pilgrim should give *daksina* (present or sacrificial fee given to the priest) and food to a maiden girl, a *brahmin* woman, a poor person and to the children. Then he should perpetrate and eulogise the river *Vipasa* (2:13-15).

Then asserting *control over the sensory faculties and eating the left-over of yajna only (havishgashi)* one should undertake the pilgrimage to Kaleshwara and *stay there for three nights (triratrim)*. Kaleshwara should be worshipped with the help of sixteen types of objects of ritual (*samagri*). Kaleshwara should be eulogized after remembering the feet of Guru, and by controlling the speech, mind and body (2:16-17; 18 to 3 are in the *stotra*, the praise of Kaleshwara).

Get up early in the morning and *beg forgiveness* from Kaleshwara (for any sins committed), cross the river *Vipasa*, bathe in it and then visit the temple of Saleshwara. Praying and eulogizing the *Mahadeva*, stay there overnight. *Worship the deity with the available samagri.* Those who give a feast here to the *brahmins*, ascetics, and maiden girls, attain the highest heaven (*Sivaloka*). *Donation and shradha should be performed in the name of ancestors so that they may attain heaven.* The *Mahadeva* unparalleled in taking away the worries (*Chintah-nasham-tatparh*) of those who propitiate him adequately. After begging forgiveness from Saleshwara one should visit Krodeshwara (2:31-34).

This illustrative *tirtha charya* ritually establishes the links with the subcontinental network, as a pilgrimage aimed at salvation or the accumulation of merits. The sanctity of the pilgrim-centres is elevated by adding the time dimension, i.e. the process is not only to secure the future but also to set right the past, as in the case of ancestors, to secure the present and future time framework, though only in a soteriologically-theological sense. Thus, the control over various sense faculties, donation and fee, dietary control (eating only the left-over of *yajna*); using only certain

specified objects of veneration; and bodily cleanliness, are highlighted. Moreover, the personal-mundane dimensions are also attached as in the case of Saleshwara. Such astronomy, in a way, popularized the sacred centres as well as the network.

No network can possibly sustain itself in isolation. Its linkages with the subcontinental network are essential. In this case the first step was to legitimize the region by mythological associations and providing a sacred geography. This legitimization and sanctification of the region was done by using the myth of Jalandhara, the demon king, who was born of the luminescence of Siva's third eye and raised by the sea. He received a boon from Prajapati and being, at the same time, the beloved disciple of Guru Shukracharya, became invincible. His kingdom stretched over an area of 100 x 300 *yojanas* (1 *yojana* = 5.03 miles) and was a synonym of terror. Even the gods were afraid of him as he derived his invincibility also from 'the spotless purity of his wife, Vrinda': the highest attribute to a woman in ancient times (*pativrata*). This made the gods tremble, lest she may imprecate them (*shapa*). Jalandhara's invincibility was, however, overcome by Vishnu impersonating Jalandhara himself, thus causing Vrinda to lose her chastity. This loss of chastity made Jalandhara vulnerable. He was then killed, dismembered and buried by Siva. The body occupied an area of 48 *kos* (64 miles). The circumambulation (*parikrama*) around the body became the pilgrim route called *Jalandhara-tirtha-pitha* and the area came to be known as *Jalandhara Pitha*.²¹

The context of *Pitha*

Literally, a *pitha* would mean a 'seat', e.g. a seat of learning. It has also been used geographically, for a 'district'; a 'province'; as well as for a 'place containing number of temples' or for the places of pilgrimages considered to be the favourite resorts of the *goddesses*.²² Explained by the well known epicopuranic account of Daksa's sacrifice, it offers mythological explanation of the origin of the *pithas*, as well their spread. The earlier versions of Daksa's sacrifice have nothing to do with the creation of *pithas*.²³ It is only in the later Puranas, viz., the *Kalika Purana*,²⁴ *Devi Bhagavata Purana*,²⁵ *Mahabhagavata Purana*,²⁶ *Brhaddharma Purana*²⁷ and the *Tantras*,²⁸ all dated in the earlier part of the medieval period, that a new legend gained currency. According to these Puranas, Siva became inconsolable at the death of his consort Sati and after destroying the sacrifice of Daksa, he wandered over the earth in madness with the corpse of Sati on his shoulders. The petrified gods requested Visnu to help them escape his wrath. Then Visnu followed Siva and cut off the body of Sati by his discus. The places where the pieces of her body fell are denoted by the *pithas*.²⁹ These *pithas* are numbered differently by various Puranas and Tantras. The *Hevajra-Tantra*³⁰ enumerates the following four *pithas*: Jalandhara, Odiyana, Puranagiri and Kamarupa. These are four directional seats of the goddesses, viz. Katyayani, Chandi, Purneshwari, Kamakshi. *The Kalika Purana*³¹ adds three more *pithas*

in Kamarpura, viz. Devi Kuta, Dikaravasini and Lalita Kanta. The number in other sources ranges from 51 (52) to 108(109) as in *Devi Bhagavata Purana*. However, it should be noted that all the Puranas, except *Devi Bhagavata*, use the term *tirtha* and not *Sakta Pitha* or *Sidha Pitha*.³² Thus, Jalandhara Pitha is one of the 18, 52, 64, or 108 *pithas*. In the Indian context pilgrimage to Jalandhara Pitha would be a singular visit to the temple(s): e.g. Jwalamukhi, Vrajeshwari and Naina Devi and not the network at large.³³ The latter two Sakta shrines are, however, not included in all the Sakta pilgrimage sources.³⁴ Thus, the context in which a region stands is important, for Jalandhara Pitha in itself houses an elaborate pilgrimage network while at the same time being one of the centres in the pan-Indian itinerary.

The *pitha*, as in *Hevajra-Tantra* is classically organised into four directional doors³⁵ (lit. *dvara*). Pilgrimage begins from the south; the limit being the temple of Kaleshwara on the left bank of river Vipasa³⁶ (Beas); thereafter towards the west³⁷ (Karvireshwara temple); followed by the north (Nandikeshwar³⁸; and the east³⁹ (Kunjeswara); and finally leading back to Kaleshwara in the south.⁴⁰ This completes a circle in a clockwise direction (*parikrama*), where the beginning and the ending point is the same. At the heart of the *pithas* is the famous Vrajeshwari temple⁴¹ (which is directionless, but pivotal) and the *pitha* is by the river Beas on the south and east, Shiwalik ranges in the south and Dhauladhar range in the north and west.

The meaning of *pitha* is not only geographical and mythological, but also metaphysical: couched, as it is in the cosmic time-space singularity. The process of circumbulation around the body of Jalandhara, with the pivotal Sakta temple, invokes a graphic image of a temple visitation and a *parikrama* around the sanctum (*garbha-griha*). Hence, *pitha* acquires its classical meaning, i.e., a temple and a region, even though the face of this pilgrimage temple does not face the east but is towards the south. This imagery was furthered by making it obligatory to undertake the *yatra* pilgrimage thrice, which was considered auspicious.⁴³ (*virititriyena pithasya kramanam shubham bhaveta*).

In a certain sense this formulation pre-empts the formation of a network. Sanctity of the region is furthered by associating historically singular personalities as well as mythical personalities with the region. Thus the sages Vasishtha, Vyasa, Prajapati, Daksa, Siva and his consort Sati, along with other hallowed *Risis* and gods, supposedly, worshipped (*tapas*) in this *pitha* and attained supernatural attributes.⁴⁴

Jalandhara Pitha is the foremost among the 64 *pithas*; and is shaped like a bow, spread, as it is, over 12 yojanas (64 miles). The *pitha* is dotted all over with luminous goddesses. Those who undertake pilgrimage to the *tirthas* of various gods/goddesses in their *pitha* are liberated from the fetters of re-birth and death and attain highest heaven. Thus has been said by Siva also. Those who die within the 64 miles of *pitha*, even the lowest of the mortals, attain the highest heaven (*Vishnu lokah*) (1:22-25).

Popularising the network

The formation of a network also incorporated, in the process, a horde of local faiths and practices into a pattern defining structure. Hence balim or sacrifice at the centre of Chandi,⁴⁵ usage of a specific diet in order to attain a particular desire, as the usage of a local-spinach (*bathu*, *chenopodium album*,⁴⁶) for domestic gains,⁴⁷ or propitiating to beget a male child or children for childless as at *Triloknath*,⁴⁸ for defeating the enemies as at *Vakluamukhi*,⁴⁹ for a cure from the bite of a rabid-dog at *Sva-kunda*,⁵⁰ cure from small-pox at *Sita's shrine*⁵¹ or attaining *mahasiddhis* (supernatural powers) by invoking the *pipal* tree near Bainjath,⁵² etc., find conspicuous mention in the manuscript.

These popular associations emotionally integrated people while also popularizing the network. Hence it involves an integration of both the *jatra* and *tirtha charya* or *teerath* aspects of a *tirtha yatra*. In the process the local deities are Sanskritized and universalized. For instance, the *Sva-kunda* gets associated with *Mahakala* and *Kali-kunda*⁵³ and *Vastuvisham* (lit. the lord of the household) becomes an incarnation of Vishnu (*Visnurupina*) as well as Siva⁵⁴ (*vastuvisham sankaram*). In order to Sanskritize, the past is also manipulated by using a historically undetermined, though accepted agency, i.e. of renunciators⁵⁵ (*tantra munibhih parikirittam*). The following pilgrimage illustrates the process:

Those who desire mundane goals should (then) undertake a pilgrimage to the shrine of Vastuvisham (Vishvakarma? or the regulator of household?) – who is Vishnu incarnate and should be rightfully propitiated with Vaisanava rites. The ascetics have termed this pilgrimage as upholding all the mundane desires. With full control over the senses, *stay there for a night and eat only the leaves of bathu* (a local variety of spinach *vastuka-shaka-bhoji: Chenopodium album. L.*) (3:20-21).

This type of pilgrimage, where the local deity is first raised to a Sanskrit level and then given importance by a night's halt, using the local products only, becomes significant when contrasted with elaborate rituals followed at the Sanskrit shrine, for instance, at the shrine of Chandi:

This place is also called *Chandi* by the country people. Pilgrims should worship and stay there for a night. *During the day the devi should be propitiated by five types of samagri and by sixteen during the night*. Early next morning maiden-girls, *brahmins*, and children should be feasted and sacrificial fee or presents (*daksina*) paid. Donation (*dana*) and sacrifice (*balim*) should also be performed to beget the desired reward (3:45-47).

Significantly, at such centres the intervening agency of a priest, between the deity and the devotee, is always singled out. Apart from specifying the fixed number of objects of veneration, *dana* and *daksina*, and a feast to

brahmins, women and children forms an important part of the ritual. Ostensibly, these rites are to secure a safe passage to heaven, for self and ancestors; but it is also a subtle intervention whereby the priestly-brahmanic rights are protected.

Perceiving alternatives to the subcontinental *tirthas*

Pilgrimage, as *tirtha yatra*, was a costly affair in which the majority of the population could not participate. This, on the one hand, gave an added significance to the *yatra-jatra* procession-pilgrimage. On the other it necessitated the creation of alternative centres. The creation of such alternatives did not necessarily mean the creation or the replacement of the Sanskritic centre but was an attempt to establish a link with the wider cosmologies, through the elevation of the local centres to those of subcontinental status. On the one hand, the process attempts to legitimize the tradition, functioning in a subtle way, as it does, as the sub-centres (or associated centres); on the other hand, providing an opening to the people whereby they could have the satisfaction of a subcontinental *tirtha yatra* – a mental journey, reflected in a limited physical and geographical space, so that they could attain heaven in their after life – an emotional reflection of the collective desire and response of life.

Oral tradition in the hills, hence, speaks of immersion of ashes of the dear-departed in the streams near crematoriums, also called *tirtha*, as they could ill-afford a journey to Hardwar (a rough estimate of 20 days on foot from Kangra town). In some cases a group of people gathered to choose their representative who would immerse the ashes in the Ganges and share the costs collectively. Clearly the dimensions of *tirtha* pilgrimage alter altogether. However, impoverishment also necessitated the perception of a number of 'Ganges' in this area – all these Gangetic-associated or named *tirthas* being as sacred as the Ganges.⁵⁶ Thus, about a dozen 'Ganges' with various prefixes and mythical associations are mentioned in the manual, like Vana-Ganga,⁵⁷ Kshir-Ganga,⁵⁸ Vanu-Ganga,⁵⁹ Vani-Ganga⁶⁰ etc.; or the confluences (after *Prayaga-sangam*) as that of Savitri and Vana-Ganga and Vanu-Ganga,⁶¹ of Patal-Ganga and Venu-Ganga⁶² etc.

The perception of alternative pilgrim centres was not restricted to the Ganges only, but also to prominent centres like Varanasi, Gaya, etc. These were also compared and raised to the same elevated status. For instance, the local sacred complex of Baijnath was compared to Varanasi,⁶³ a place which could be 'attained with difficulty alike by the gods and mortals'. Similarly, Gaya *tirtha* had a parallel in the Gaya of Jalandhara Pitha. In order to give sanctity to such linkages, sometimes these parallel centres were provided more efficacy than the original. For instance:

Then pilgrimage to Gaya *tirtha* should be taken to attain salvation. Those who do not attain salvation by numerous *pinda-dana* (presentation of the rice balls to the manes) at Gaya (in the present state of Bihar), do so by

performing a single pinda-dana at Gaya in Jalandhara Pitha (9:47-4).

In the same vein a parallel of Kurukshetra was created as a geographical area, defined as:

Then the pilgrims should stay-put at Kurukshetra for three days. *Srada* should be conducted and *dana* given at this centre in order to attain salvation. *Area between the shrines Virabhadra and Vridha-kadara is Kurukshetra. Vridha-kadara should be propitiated here (9:53-54).*

The perception of alternative centres made it a comprehensive pilgrimage network comparable to the classical network. However, there is still one departure in its institutionalisation: the contrast between vague or abstract and specific or particular, i.e. between *darshana* (seeing the deity) or holy-bathing and the first haircut, or thanksgiving for fulfilling a certain wish. This parochial incorporation into this network made it popular, even if in fragments. It gave a certain sanctity to the centres concerned. However, in a subtle way it also gave an impetus to the Sanskritization of many local shrines over the years – as well as creating a distinct religious territory and a collective identity.

III

The perception of a hierarchical pilgrim network (*tirtha yatra*) addresses the theoretical question at two levels. At a terminological level, it differentiates between *jatra*, *teerath* or *tirtha charya* and *tirtha yatra*, or the local procession-pilgrimage, regional pilgrim-visitation to a temple and the subcontinental pilgrimage, *per se*, to a network – all in contrast and distinct from the daily temple going. All these processes emphasise and explain the perception and contextuality of a network. Yet at another level it also tries to explain the concept of *pitha* (as a regional phenomenon) as a geographical-religious territory which in itself houses an independent complex network. Therefore, it raises a question of perspective in which a region is viewed. Jalandhara Pitha in Sakta-pilgrimage tradition is one of the many centres in the itinerary. Nevertheless, it also eschews an entire pilgrimage tradition by housing an independent, integrated, and a complete network within its territorial extent. However, its linkages with the Sakta Pitha tradition provides the pilgrims an association with the subcontinental circulation mechanism and, therefore, legitimises the local pilgrim tradition. But, in the process, a dimension is added to the term *pitha* – viewed only as the 'centres of the goddesses', in terms of isolated temples. In this sense, Jwalamukhi is a *pitha* where the tongue of the Goddess fell, but also a singular visitation in the entire Jalandhara Pitha network. Thus, the term *pitha* is analogous to the hierarchalised concentric rings, where the perspective in which it is viewed acquires an added importance.

Significantly, the perception is extended to the social level also. The pilgrim process not only integrates the functional and dynamic popular culture and religion of the area, but also imparts meaning by limiting it in a time-space framework. It also appropriates the tradition historically while Sanskritizing it; as well as providing a collective identity linked to the religious, ritual and social identity of the people of the subcontinent. This is done subtly by appropriating the wider cosmologies in term of ritual status; emotional involvements like post-life abstraction; creating cultural linkages with the subcontinental pilgrim centres like Hardwar, Varanasi, etc.; and by going on a mental pilgrimage by visiting the physical parallels of Sanskritic *tirthas*. Hence, the perception of a pilgrimage network is not an isolated religious phenomenon but a journey to the variegated though hierarchalised, cultural mosaic covering a wide spectrum of social formations and landscapes, resulting in fashioning the collective response and the collective identity of the pilgrim population.

NOTES AND REFERENCE

*An earlier version of this paper was presented at the seminar on 'Organisational and Institutional Aspects of Religious Movements' organised by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, in October 1994.

1. For variation in number see Pushpendra Kumar, *Sakti Cult in Ancient India* (Varanasi, 1974), pp. 267-76; D.C. Sircar, *Sakta Pithas*. (Calcutta, 1948).
2. For empirical and paradigmatic positions, see S.M. Bhardwaj, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India* (Berkeley, 1973); E.A. Morinis, *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition: A Case Study of West Bengal* (Delhi, 1984); Swami Agehananda Bharati, 'Pilgrimage in the Indian Tradition', in *History of Religions*, 3, no. 1., 1963. Also essays in Makhan Jha, (ed.), *Dimension of Pilgrimage: An Anthropological Appraisal* (Delhi, 1985), and *Social Anthropology of Pilgrimage* (Delhi, 1990).
3. Prithu Ram, Shastri, (ed); *Jalandhara Pitha-Deepika*, 1864. tr (Hindi) (Kangra, 1983).
4. The term is described as used in Vedic, Brahmanic and Puranic literature, in Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 1899 (Delhi, 1993 [Rep.]), p. 449 a.b.; also, in, Suryakanta, *Sanskrit-Hindi-English Dictionary* (Delhi, 1975; 1986 [Rep.]) p. 245a.
5. Suryakanta. *Ibid.*, p. 244b.
6. Monier Williams, *op. cit.*, 849; Suryakanta, *Ibid.*, p. 475.
7. Morinis, *op. cit.*, I Karve, 'On the Road: A Maharashtrian Pilgrimage' *Jr. of Asian Studies*, 22, 1962; Swami, Pavitnandi, 'Pilgrimages and fairs: Their Bearing on Indian Life', In *The Cultural Heritage of India* Vol. IV. (Calcutta, 1956); D.L.I. Eck, 'India's Tirthas: "Crossings" in Sacred Geography', in *History of Religions*, 20, 41 1980; A.G. Gold, *Fruitful Journey: Way of Rajasthani Pilgrims* (Delhi, 1989).
8. The term as used by J. De Bernardi, 'Space and Time in Chinese Religious Culture', in *History of Religions*, 31, 3, 1992.

9. See, J.G. Campbell, *Saint and Householders: A study of Hindu ritual and myth among the Kangra Rajputs* (Kathmandu, 1976).
10. C. Pal Singh (ed.), *Census of India 1961: Himachal Pradesh, Fairs and Festivals*, XX, Part VII-B. p. 63.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
12. For sacred geography see, Bhardwaj, *op. cit.*, p. 80-94.
13. W. Crook, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, 1896 (Delhi, 1968 [Rep.]), Vol. I, pp. 123-174; Vol. II, pp. 1-200; 287-236.
14. Mahesh Sharma, 'Popular Religion: Local Tradition in the Hill of Himachal Pradesh', In *Prof. Mohd. Habib Felicitation Vol.*, A.J. Qaisar and S.P. Verma (eds.) (Forthcoming).
15. For a similar usage, though unintentional and in a different manner, J. Singh, and J.C. Das, 'Concept of Teerth and Tradition of Teerth-Yatra in the Himalaya', Makhani Jha, (ed.), *Social Anthropology of Pilgrimage* (Delhi, 1990.), pp. 247-265.
16. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 449 b.; Suryakanta, *op. cit.*, p. 245 a. For the limited usage, M.M. Sharma, *Yatra Pilgrimages in the Western Himalayas* (Noida, 1992), pp. 38-59.
17. Prem Chand, 'Mukti-Marga', in *Shatranja ke Khiladi* (Delhi, 1993 [Rep.]), pp. 76-86.
18. Prem Chand, *Godan* (Delhi, 1993 [Rep.]), pp. 17-116.
19. Prithu Ram, Shastri (ed.), *Jalandhara Pitha-Deepika*, tr. (Hindi) (Kangra, 1993). All the translations in this paper are by the present author as English translations do not exist. (Hereafter JPD.)
20. J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States* (Lahore, 1933; Simla, 1982 [Rep.]), pp. 100-101.
21. JPD., 'Introduction' pp. 10-11. The Author quotes *Jalandhara Mahatma, Uttra-Khanda* and *Meru Tantra*. However, the author is not methodical in his citations and the edition is not critical and is without a bibliography – perhaps being less useful than it could have been.
22. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 62ga.
23. D.C. Sickar, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
24. Sri Venkateswara Press, *Kalika Purana* (Bombay., 1964), see also K.R. Van-Kooij, *Worship of the Goddess according to the Kalika Purana* (Leiden, 1972).
25. R.T. Pandeya, (ed.), *Devi Bhagavata Purana*, 2 Vols. (Calcutta, 1960).
26. *Mahabagavata Purana* (Bombay, 1913).
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29. *Devi Bhagavata VII*, 30: *Kalika Purana*, ch. 18, *Brhaddharma Purana*, II, 40, 10-38.
30. P.C. Bagchi, *Study of Tantras* (Calcutta, 1943), I, p. 38.
31. *Kalika Purana*, 18.42-52.
32. Pushpendra Kumar, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-70.
33. M.M. Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-59.
34. Bhardwaj, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 103, 1-4, 118-122, 132, 138, 156, 159, 171-72, 180, 181, 189, 191, 200 fr. empirical and textual references to Naina Devi, Chintpurni, Jwalaji and Kangra.
35. Bagchi, *op. cit.*, I., p. 38.

36. JPD. II: 1 I:30-31.
37. JPD. III: 1 I.
38. JPD. IV: I.
39. JPD. V: I.
40. JPD. XI: 23.
41. JPD. X: 21-46, I. 29.
42. JPD. I: 18-19.
43. JPD. I: 30.
44. Written, as it is, in imitation of Puranic literature, the first chapter deals with Vasishtha and Vyasa – the former narrating the significance of this region.
45. JPD. III: 47.
46. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 948c. 'Vastukashaka'.
47. JPD. III: 21.
48. PD. III: 32.
49. JPD. VII: 20.
50. JPD. IV: 82.
51. PD. IV: 63-64.
52. JPD. IV: 38-41.
53. JPD. IV: 65-82.