

discusses the original material available in the form of maps, documents, treaties, official correspondence, and detailed reports prepared by the foreign ministries of China and India. The defining features of the work is a systematic analysis of the nature of the evidence involved, the fundamental geographical factors, and the major historical events that shaped the evolution of the border relation between the two nations. It is foreworded by the eminent historian S Gopal, who headed the Historical Division of the Foreign Ministry, Government of India. There are detailed chapters on topics ranging from 'Nature of the Dispute' and 'Nature of Evidence' to the historical backdrop of 'Tibet and Sinkiang in British and Chinese Policies', which constitutes introductory sections of the book.

The India-China border dispute involves three sectors. The western sector consists of the Ladakh region of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir; the middle sector comprises the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh; and the eastern sector consists of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The author shows how the British were obsessed with Russia, which led them to be predisposed in China's favour and encouraged Chinese occupation of certain areas. Thus, the role of Britishers has to be understood in its correct historical background. The middle section of the book shows the evolution of India-China borders in modern colonial era. Three chapters are detailed studies of the 1864 Ladakh Eastern Boundary, the 1875 Aksai Chin Boundary, and the Kashmir-Sinkiang Boundary before 1947. The next two chapters provide extensive useful information on the eastern sector, the north-east frontier of India before 1914, and the administration of the north-east frontier from 1914 to 1947. It shows how the Chinese had revived their interest in the strategic area of Tibet since the late thirties. The last chapter concludes the discussions on the three sectors mentioned above.

The author asserts that the claims advanced by China in the western sector had no historical basis. As regards the middle sector, there had been no boundary dispute between India and Tibet in the past. In the eastern sector it is recognized that the Chinese claims to the vast areas are without basis. The author further asserts that the objections of

the Chinese to the agreement of 1914 have no validity. The final observation of the author is significant: 'The inevitable conclusion one reaches is that if the India-China border problem is still unresolved it is not because of any lack on the Indian side to settle it on a reasonable basis, but because of deeper and more complex factors underlying Chinese international policies' (103-4). In short, the book gives a good understanding of the evolution of India-China borders in a historical perspective from the beginning of the modern period. As the author was advisor to the Indian delegation that discussed the border issue with Chinese officials in the sixties, he has extensively used all the original sources. It is indeed a commendable research work undertaken by an expert back in the sixties and now republished at a time when the vexed issue is being discussed in the new mechanism of the Joint Working Group and Expert Group. The book should be of invaluable help to all those who are interested in India-China relations in particular and international relations in general.

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**Encyclopedia of Kashmiri  
Pandit Culture and Heritage**

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Ansh Publications and Distributors,  
1253, Sector D, Pocket I, Vasant Kunj,  
New Delhi 110 070. Website: [www.anshpublications.com](http://www.anshpublications.com). 2009. xx + 801 pp.  
₹ 2,100.

'*Agar Firdaus bar ru-e-zamin ast, hami ast o' hami ast o' hami ast*; if there is heaven on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here.' These immortal words of the Persian poet Firdaus give us some idea about the legendary beauty of Kashmir. The poet was so enthralled by the heavenly ambience of the valley that these words spontaneously issued from his lips. This beautiful environment and its equally hoary tradition have been enriched and safeguarded by the various local sects, of whom the Kashmiri pandits are predominant. This book brings out details of the history and traditions of Kashmiri pandits.

Meticulously arranged into various categories, this encyclopaedia provides a glimpse of the history of Kashmiri pandits, the land and the landscape, the characteristics of the community, their traditions, temples, festivals, and rituals. It also enumerates contributions by prominent people of this community to Kashmir in varied fields like arts, education, law, literature, science, spirituality, and politics. Presenting a brief sketch of his life, the author tells us about the inspiration behind his work.

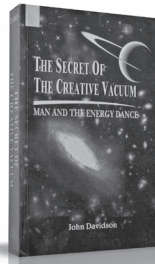
Kashmiri phrases have been given with their meaning at the appropriate places. This enables the reader to get acquainted with popular sayings and words of the language. The author displays a candid style when he dissects the psyche of the Kashmiri pandits and unhesitatingly brings out the follies of their character.

Unlike many similar works, this volume does not stop at a historical description but mentions current persons and places with intricate details. The exhaustive nature of this book is revealed by the section on the identity of the community, where the author thoroughly discusses castes, names, occupations, pastimes, proverbs, folklore, wit and humour, dress, ornaments, cuisine, and more. We are also supplied with a number of recipes to try for ourselves!

Throughout the text adequate references to sourcebooks are given. More than three hundred photographs and illustrations enhance the value of the text matter. Each chapter ends with a quote in Kashmiri and its translation. A key helps us in pronouncing the Kashmiri words. A detailed glossary elucidates vernacular terms. There are separate indexes for different topics. A list of materials required for performing various rituals, a list of selected references, and a key for abbreviations are also provided.

Coming from the pen of an engineer, this work displays exquisite craftsmanship. Printed on excellent paper, it would be a good reference for Kashmiri pandits residing outside the valley for many generations. It could also be of good use to students of Kashmir or anyone interested in knowing about this 'heaven on earth'.

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## **The Secret of the Creative Vacuum**

John Davidson

New Age Books, A-44 Naraina  
Phase-I, New Delhi 110 028. Website:  
[www.newagebooksindia.com](http://www.newagebooksindia.com). 2009.  
426 pp. ₹ 425.

**T**he human quest since the dawn of civilization has been for reality. This quest in the external world became science, in the internal world metaphysics, philosophy, and meditation. These two parallel paths have disregarded each other for long, but the situation changed in the beginning of the last century with two new scientific theories: the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics. The latter especially has shaken scientists with its subatomic wave-particle duality, the uncertainty principle, and the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen paradox. The whole scientific conception of reality is now being questioned. Some scientists even started invoking consciousness to explain theories and thus try to bridge the gap between science and spirituality.

John Davidson proposes another possible linking: the vacuum state. It has been known for some time, due to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, that the vacuum state is not static, passive, and inert. It is a state of intense activity with energy and mass transfers constantly occurring. The author raises the question: could the vacuum state be the missing factor that explains the apparent dichotomies in Nature? Is it by ignoring it that physicists find themselves in knots? The author strongly believes it so and has tried to justify his belief through logical and cogent arguments.

The book has two parts: the first shorter one is 'Magician's Dance', which contains five chapters, the second longer part is 'Unveiling of the Dance' and has ten chapters. The first is an introduction to the principles of the vacuum state and its relation to the human system. The author describes how human psychology can be better understood with the help of the vacuum state. It also introduces the concept of the subtle body. Several related topics like environmental pollution, akashic records, and homeopathy are covered. The author's