

Understanding Kashmir and Kashmiris

By Christopher Snedden

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In 1846, the British created the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) - popularly called "Kashmir" - and then quickly sold this prized region to the wily and powerful Raja, Gulab Singh. Intriguingly, had they retained it, the India-Pakistan dispute over possession of the state may never have arisen, but Britain's concerns lay elsewhere -- expansionist Russia, beguiling Tibet and unstable China "circling" J&K -- and their agents played the 'Great Game' in Afghanistan and 'Turkistan'.

Snedden contextualizes the geo-strategic and historical circumstances surrounding the British decision to relinquish prestigious 'Kashmir', and explains how they and four Dogra maharajas consolidated and controlled J&K subsequently. He details what comprised this diverse princely state with distant borders and disunified peoples and explains the Maharaja of J&K's controversial accession to India on 26 October 1947 - and its unintended consequences.

Snedden weaves a compelling narrative that frames the Kashmir dispute, explains why it continues, and assesses what it means politically and administratively for the divided peoples of J&K and their undecided futures.

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Understanding Kashmir and Kashmiris By Christopher Snedden Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1033588 in eBooks
- Published on: 2015-09-15
- Released on: 2015-09-15
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review

"In his readable explanation of the complexities of Kashmir, Christopher Snedden works on a large canvas while managing to include much well-researched detail. The result is a vivid masterpiece of impartial analysis. This is the best book about Kashmir. Snedden understands Kashmir, and so will his readers." -- Brian Cloughley, former deputy chief of the UN military mission in Kashmir, and author of *A History of the Pakistan Army*

"Snedden's authoritative and highly readable book is the first to supply a comprehensive narrative of the Kashmir dispute for a generalist audience. Deftly handling the dispute's complex political and geo-strategic dimensions, he wisely goes beyond them to examine both Kashmir's lengthy history and the oft-neglected Kashmiris themselves. This is a unique treatment of one of the world's most intractable disputes." -- Robert G. Wirsing, Professor at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, and author of *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute* and *Kashmir in the Shadow of War*

"Christopher Snedden has written a magisterial political history of Kashmir--authoritative, even-handed and hugely well informed. He has also made use of his expertise in and concern for Kashmir to point towards a possible solution to this long-running conflict, one which many Kashmiris will warmly endorse." -- Andrew Whitehead, former BBC India correspondent and author of *A Mission in Kashmir*

"This is an excellent narrative account of Kashmiri identity and the conflict between India and Pakistan over the former Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. It provides a balanced understanding of a subject which continues to evoke conflict and polemical scholarship in South Asia." -- Ian Talbot, Professor of History, University of Southampton and author of *The Partition of India*

"Snedden provides an excellent overview of the history and politics of Kashmir. As well as analysing the complex India-Pakistan dynamics, he substantially delves into Kashmir's internal politics. The uniqueness of this book lies in its analysis of the future of the dispute, which takes into account the changing strategic and geopolitical dynamics. Thought-provoking and absorbing, this is a significant contribution to our understanding of one of the world's most intractable disputes." -- Smruti S. Pattanaik, Research Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Delhi

About the Author

Christopher Snedden is an Australian politico-strategic analyst who has visited J&K often and interviewed

many elder statesmen involved in the Kashmir dispute. He is author of *The Untold Story of the People of Azad Kashmir*.

Users Review

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Jose Goodell:

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