

Understanding Kashmir and Kashmiris

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Résumé ou extrait : 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 contextualises 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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