

LE CACHEMIRIEN



Another meeting point

REFLECTIONS 11

K

A dictionary of Le Cachemirien's beloved words

Khatam Sharif

In Kashmir, the Sufi tradition perpetrates a spiritual practice called *Khatam Sharif*. Not only in the *asthans* where the believers gather, but also in the houses as thanksgiving, the *peers*, learned men, conduct prayers during which they chant verses from the Koran and hymns of praise in Persian and in Kashmiri.

The word *khatam* of Persian origin means end.



Weave

Khatamband

Large shawl for men in pure pashmina, which has been hand-spun, and hand-woven in the valley of Kashmir by the few masters left of the *kani* weave; two men seated at the loom, cross numerous bobbins with different colour threads, following the singing of the master who reads the *talim*.

The *talim* is a book containing the code that represents the translation of the drawing. The drawing of this shawl, made by Rosenda Meer in 2007, represents the *khatamband*, a wooden structure made of fitted geometrical motifs, used in Kashmir to decorate the ceilings in wealthy homes.

One of a kind, private collection.

Colour

Kaki

The colour khaki takes its name from the same Persian word, meaning dust, mud.

In India, it was used at first in Urdu to designate the colour of the uniforms of the British army, to be then utilized also in English. Until the twentieth century, it was present in French with the same orthography, but later on it lost its h, becoming homonymous of kaki, the fruit called persimmon in English.



Mythology

Kali

In the dawn of time, goddess Durga and her army of Matrikas,
were at war with Raktabija the demon.
On the battlefield, they attacked him with great means, hoping to destroy him;
but every drop of his blood shed, turned into a clone of himself,
thus multiplying the number of enemies. Durga's victory seemed impossible,
so the goddess in despair, called Kali the fierce,
who sucked up the demon and his clones with her huge mouth.
Celebrating her victory, Kali, the dark mother,
the only one who could destroy the demon of illusion,
started dancing on the corps in the battlefield.



The child with diya, votive candles

Travel

Kashi, ancient name of Varanasi

*“What have I to do with Kashi?
The lotus-feet of Kali are the place of pilgrimage for me.
Deep in my heart’s lily, meditating on them,
I float in an ocean of bliss”*

- Ramprasad Sen



Drawing The silver birch

A music :

“ Invocation, the moth
and the flame ”

by Keith Jarrett.

A book :

“ Ka ”

by Roberto Calasso.

A film :

“ Putty Hill ”

by Matt Porterfield

Photo
Umbria,
autumn 2011

Dress

Karine

A suit composed of jacket and trousers in pure pashmina, a tone over tone cheque weave, with its white shirt made of khadi cotton muslin, hand spun and hand woven. One of a kind. Private collection

