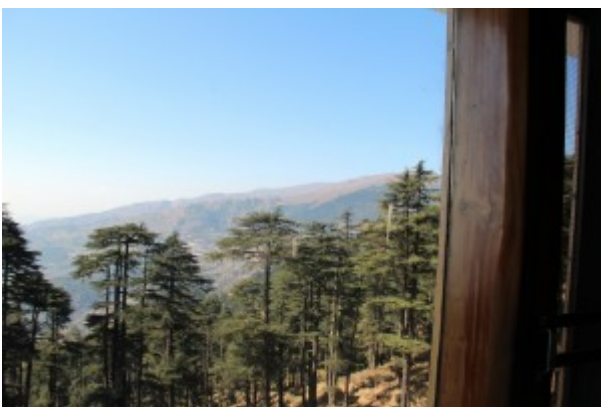


Patnitop : A Reluctant Journey





Patni Top



On several recent visits to Kashmir Valley my friends urged me to visit Patnitop, located in the adjoining province of Jammu, but I would reject the suggestion on the ground that how more beautiful could it be than Kashmir. But in 2013 I gave up resisting my friends and decided to take a chance.

After five hours of car drive from Srinagar I landed in Patnitop, a place I had heard praised lavishly for the last four decades. But because I have trained myself strongly to disregard common people's evaluations on beauty and truth, I entered Patnitop without preformed views on it.

Going gingerly at a snail's pace on the serpentine road leading to Patnitop the scene gradually changed to sublimity. Here was a place at once dreamy and serene, reverberating the images of eternity one had conjured up. The backdrop of the folded mountains, the enigmatic majesty of the blue pine trees, the mystery of the valley below, and the dance of the mountain contours, all wove an experience of beauty, awe, and humility. Truly, the most sublime thing in human life is aura and mystery of nature.

I realized Kashmir Valley does not have a type of beauty that Patnitop has.

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