CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

The art of Himachal Pradesh has attracted attention of several scholars over the past one and a half centuries. Early scholars who have worked on the art of this region include Sir Alexander Cunningham\(^1\), H. Hargreaves\(^2\), A. F. P. Harcourt\(^3\), J. Ph Vogel\(^4\), Herman Goetz\(^5\), B.Ch. Chhabra\(^6\) amongst others. These learned scholars have devoted themselves to different aspects of the art of this region, taking sculpture into discussion as an appendage to the larger picture of artistic expression. The scholars, who have produced works on various aspects of the subject in recent years, discussing and bringing to light the architectural heritage, folk art, epigraphical material and other aspects of art and culture of the region, too have failed to do complete justice to the sculptural art of Himachal Pradesh. The attempt by V.C. Ohri\(^7\) to cover the sculptures of the region has remained incomplete because he discusses the stylistic development leaving out numerous important images both from the iconographic and historical point of view. The simple reason that there is an enormous wealth of sculptures in the region, there was a strong need for a work which would focus upon a single aspect of sculptures of Himachal Pradesh. An attempt to cover all the sculptures of Himachal Pradesh would have been too unwieldy to handle so we selected to study the images of Vishṇu along with subsidiary Vaishṇava deities only. Though a scholarly work on the topic was done by T. S. Maxwell\(^8\) a couple of years ago, we felt there was still scope to add and improve upon his study as he took up Vaikunṭha form of Vishṇu alone leaving out other images, which is evident from the discussions in the preceding chapters. In the present study an attempt has been made to thoroughly cover the sculptures of Vishṇu from the hilly region. Works of several authors which cover different aspects of art of Himachal Pradesh and India have been consulted. Besides the works of modern scholars iconographical texts were also consulted and referred to. None of the works based on iconography is known from Himachal Pradesh. These iconographical texts are either from Kashmir or from other parts of the country.
All the chapters have been divided according to different forms and images related to Vishnu. The first chapter is to give a proper backdrop to the study and has been divided into three parts. For a proper understanding of the significance of Vaishnava images we have discussed in detail in its first part the origin and development of Vishnu worship from the earliest time to the end of the period covered by us. There after describing the origin and development of Vishnu images in India in general in the second part we have taken an overview of the Vishnu images in Himachal Pradesh in the third part. This completes the background for the micro study and proper understanding of the subject undertaken by us. The second chapter, devoted to Vaikuṇṭha form of Vishnu, deals with the numerous images of Vaikuṇṭha, discovered almost from every part of the state. We have tried to trace the impact of other regions on Vaikuṇṭha images and also to fathom as to why Vaikuṇṭha images were more popular in certain regions and less popular in other parts of the state. On the basis of their stylistic characteristics they are placed in different time periods. Characteristics and findings of Vaikuṇṭha images have been highlighted in this chapter. In chapter three Viśvarūpa images have been focused upon of which only two examples are known from Himachal Pradesh. Though small in number they are none the less very significant, especially the one from Bajaura. While studying this image it came to our notice that some descriptive omissions have been made by the scholars who had a chance to examine it earlier. The same have been rectified and facts have been put in order. Chapter four deal with Vishnu-Nārāyaṇa images, which are found in large number from the hilly region. Among the Vishnu images, Trivikrama form was found to be most often depicted in the Himachal Pradesh except Kullu region where Śrīdhara form was more popular if we classify them according to the chaturviṁśatimūrtī forms of Vishnu described in the iconographic texts. However, during our research we have also been able to find Vishnu and Achyuta forms of the deity, though other forms remain conspicuous by their complete absence in Himachal Pradesh. The fifth chapter sheds light on Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa images which are most often depicted as seated on their vehicle Garuḍa. However, there are two exceptions where Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa is shown in standing position. One of these images, discovered from Chari Garoh, District Kangra is in
the collection of Dharamshala Museum while the other is in the Archaeological Survey of India collection of the Vaidyanath temple at Baijnath in District Kangra. During our research we did not find any image of the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa image that may be dated prior to circa 10\textsuperscript{th} century CE. Among the Daśāvatāra images of Vishṇu, discussed in the sixth chapter, independent images of Nṛsiṁha, Varāha and Balarāma are found. Matsya incarnation is most often depicted on stone slabs in diagonal composition. Chamba has yielded most of the independent images pertaining to Daśāvatāra. Other depictions of the ten incarnation of Vishṇu are found as a part of the parikara of Vishṇu images, on the walls of the temples and on their door-frames. The seventh chapter, devoted to composite images has included Harihara images and Ardh-Vishṇu-Lakshmī images as there is no other composite form of Vishṇu which is noticed by us during our extensive field work of Himachal Pradesh. Harihara image housed in the Sun temple at Nirath is a beautiful specimen of early Medieval Pratihara art of Gangetic plains whereas other images of Harihara discovered from Chamba and Kangra are three headed which shows impact of Kashmir. Neighbouring regions of Haryana and Punjab where Pratihāra impact was more prominent, no image of three headed Harihara is known so far. Ardh-Vishṇu-Lakshmī image of which only one example has been found is rare in Indian art. This image is in a rathikā of the outer wall of the Vaidyanath temple, Baijnath. Eighth chapter throws light on Gauruḍa, āyudhapurushas and other related images. Number of independent Gauruḍa images from Himachal Pradesh is little. Most often the bird vehicle of Vishṇu is shown carrying Vishṇu or Vishṇu and Lakshmī together on his back or he is shown as an attendant figure at the base of the images depicting the deity. Āyudhapurushas are invariably shown at the base of Vishṇu images. No independent image of āyudhapuṛusha has come to our notice during our field work. In the images of Vishṇu from Chamba where influence of Kashmir was preponderant, their base never developed into triratha or pañcharatha, therefore the number of personified āyudhas in such images has always remained two except an image of Vishṇu from the Chandrashekhara temple at Saho which shows Pratihāra style. However, in the images bearing Pratihāra style up to six āyudhas and attendant figures have been noticed at the base.
The earliest evidence suggesting the presence of Vaishñavism in Himachal Pradesh is an inscription from Khaniara\(^\text{10}\), a place in the close proximity to Dharamshala in District Kangra. This inscription mentions Kṛishṇa ṛāmasya which suggests the presence of Vaishñavism in Himachal Pradesh at an early date of c 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) century CE. The images of Vishnu however, begin to come from c 5\(^{\text{th}}\)-6\(^{\text{th}}\) century CE. Early Vishnu images in Himachal Pradesh come from village Nirmand and village Dyar in District Kullu. The way chakra and gadā are depicted especially depiction of chakra on the pedestal and modelling of these images suggest local influence mixed with idiom of the Gangetic plains at an early date of 5\(^{\text{th}}\)-6\(^{\text{th}}\) century CE. These images are life size and according to the chaturviṁśatimūrtis of Vishnu as given in the Rūpamaṇḍana\(^\text{11}\) and the Aparājitapṛichchhā, they represent Śrīdhara form. However, the Padma Purāṇa\(^\text{12}\) refers to this form as Hṛṣīkēśa. The under worship images from Dyar have been published for the first time in the present work. Images of Vishnu from all the other parts of Himachal Pradesh shows the popularity of Trivikrama form as per the arrangement of attributes in the hands of the deity, clockwise from the rear right hand is gadā, chakra, śaṅkha and padma. Interestingly, we have discovered for the first time an image of Vishnu and an image of Achyuta on the wooden door frame of the Kamaksha Devi temple, village Kao, District Mandi. These images according to the different textual sources represent form of Vishnu and that of Achyuta, based on the arrangement of āyudhas in the different hands. These images have been published for the first time in the present research.

Because of the popularity of Vaikuṇṭha in Kashmir and its impact on Himachal Pradesh several images of three and four headed Chaturānana are found from Himachal Pradesh. These images are discussed in second chapter. Majority of such images are found from District Chamba. However, District Shimla and District Mandi have also yielded Vaikuṇṭha images but the number of such images is very small because of the popularity of Pratihāra idiom in these regions in which single headed images of Vishnu was more popular. Some of the examples of Vaikuṇṭha images from Himachal Pradesh bearing Pratihāra idiom are beautiful examples of
medieval art. The almost life size *sthānaka* image of Vishṇu-Vaikuṇṭha outside the sanctum of Mamaleshvara temple at village Mamel in Karsog, District Mandi (plate 2.19) is a good example of the same. In beauty this image equals some of the finest examples of Vaikuṇṭha images from Kashmir and Chamba. Mention may also be made of another image housed in the Kamaksha Devi temple at village Kao at a distance of only few kilometres from Mamaleshvara (plate 2.21). Though small in size this image is also a beautiful example of Vaikuṇṭha image in Pratihāra style. The latter image is published for the first time in the present work. The impact of Kashmir on Chamba as already discussed can be gauged from the fact that most of the Vishṇu images barring one or two examples represent Vaikuṇṭha aspect of Vishṇu which was very popular in Kashmir. In the Chamba region four headed Vaikuṇṭha form of Vishṇu is also found. This form was popular in Kashmir. Four headed images of Vaikuṇṭha are very rare outside Kashmir. Chamba region has yielded only two such examples, one example is famous bronze image of four-headed Vaikuṇṭha which is under worship in the Hari Rai temple and the other example is six handed image discovered from village Koh, presently housed in the Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba. However, according to the priest of the Lakshmi-Narayana temple at Chamba, there is a face at the back of the principle deity of the temple which is a marble image. Four headed Vaikuṇṭha images became popular in Kashmir after c. 9th century CE and Hari Rai image of Vaikuṇṭha also belongs to mid-ninth century CE. Therefore, it seems that as soon as it was introduced in Kashmir it did not take too long before it reached Chamba. The impact of Kashmir is so prominent on Chamba that culturally it was almost a part of Kashmir. Some Vaikuṇṭha images from Himachal Pradesh are rare because of their iconographic features. Amongst them the Vaikuṇṭha image on the pediment of the Lakshana Devi temple may be mentioned. This image of Vishṇu is ten handed and is shown holding various attributes in his hands besides the usual mace, disc, conch and lotus. Most of the authors have described this image according to their own observations and interpretation. Scholars like Herman Goetz, Cinzia Pieruccini, Laxman S. Thakur, etc. have described it as a fourteen or twelve handed image holding different attributes. However, a detailed analysis and study of this image was
required. T.S. Maxwell has discussed this image in his Archaeological reports\textsuperscript{17}. He has rightly pointed out that this image is ten handed. However, the identification of the attributes proposed by Maxwell needed reconsideration. During our field-work we were able to examine this \textit{in situ} image in detail. We found this image to be ten handed as pointed out by Maxwell but contrary to his view Vishṇu-Vaikuṇṭha is holding bow and arrow in one of the left hands and right hands respectively. Similarly six handed images of Vishṇu are found from village Holi. Mention of six handed Vishṇu Vaikuṇṭha does not find place in any of the textual sources. We have often talked about the impact of Kashmir style on Himachal Pradesh. This impact is not only in terms of stylistic characteristics but also in the form of three headed Vaikuṇṭha form which entered Bharmaur in Chamba region and in the rock-cut temple at Masrur, from Kashmir at an early date. During our field-work we have found a badly worn out image of three headed Vaikuṇṭha in the annexe of the Mamaleshvara temple at village Mamel in Karsog (plate 2.20). From the stylistic analysis it has been observed that this image shows neither the Kashmir style nor Pratihāra idiom. On close observation especially by looking at the side heads of that of the boar which is upward, the face of the lion, modelling of the image, left arm in akimbo etc. lingering traits of the Gupta style can be gauged, suggesting an early date not later than c. 7\textsuperscript{th} century CE. Therefore it is evident that the earliest image of Vishṇu-Vaikuṇṭha was introduced in Himachal Pradesh not from the Kashmir region but from the Gangetic plains.

Viśvarūpa form of Vishṇu has been rarely depicted in the sculptures of Himachal Pradesh. During our field-trip we have found only two images representing Viśvarūpa aspect of Vishṇu. Both the images are from Vishveshvara Mahadeva temple at Bajaura, District Kullu. One of the images is so badly damaged that it is extremely difficult to ascertain the details while the other Viśvarūpa is in fairly well preserved condition and lying in the courtyard of the temple. The second image represents Viśvarūpa aspect of Vishṇu with the face of Vaikuṇṭha in the centre. Textual sources e.g. the Rūpamaṇḍana\textsuperscript{18}, the Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa\textsuperscript{19} etc. prescribe Viśvarūpa with Vaikuṇṭha aspect of Vishṇu. Above the side heads of
Nṛsiṁha and Varāha the faces of Matsya and Kūrma are depicted upward and in profile. The side heads especially of the Nṛsiṁha and Varāha shows the lingering traits of the Gupta idiom.

Wooden images of Vishṇu are very few in number. These images form part of the wooden façade of the Lakshana Devi temple, Bharmaur, District Chamba; temple dedicated to Shakti Devi, Chatrarhi, District Chamba; Markula Devi temple, Udaipur, District Lahaul Spiti and Kamaksha Devi temple at village Kao, District Mandi. Among them wooden reliefs from Markula Devi temple and from Shakti Devi temple, Chatrarhi are in better preserved condition. Metal images of Vishṇu are also small in numbers. They are found from Chamba, Fatehpur in District Kangra and other places. Amongst them metal images of Vishṇu- Vaikuṇṭha from the Hari Rai temple in Chamba town and image of Nṛsiṁha from Bharmaur are the finest examples of metal craft. These images show considerable impact of Kashmir style. However, some indigenous features are also seen in these images. In technical finesse and beauty they are not behind the bronzes of Kashmir by any measure. An inscribed brass image of Vishṇu from Fatehpur, presently housed in the Chandigarh Museum, is a fine specimen of a sculpture of Vishṇu from the hilly region. This image was first of all published by J. Ph. Vogel in 190520. V.C. Ohri21 and D. C. Bhattacharyya22 have expressed their own views of the inscription on its pedestal. Whereas the latter could make no sense of the epigraph the former reads the words thathiar and bharya or bhariyā in the inscription as a caste engaged in the profession of metalwork. The scholar tries to identify it with Gugga the famous sculptor of Chamba in 8th century23. He too is absolutely off the mark. The correct reading was given by Vogel24 and reedited cogently by Jagannath Agrawal25. Ashvini Agrawal in his detailed article on this image has pointed out that the word is bhāryā meaning wife and not bharrya as supposed by Ohri. It does not denote a craftsman. The reference is to the wife of certain Mahādeva both of whom were probably donors of this image. He assigns this image to 747 CE26. Bhan incorrectly ascribes this image to Kashmir. According to him the whereabouts of the image are not known and he finds this image very much identical to the images at National Museum, New
We have observed that the high pedestal with spout on one side for the outflow of the water and arched posture of āyudhapurushas who are gazing upward at the deity shows impact of Kashmir style but the image was discovered from Fatehpur, District Kangra and there are no means to trace it to Kashmir. There are few other images of Vishṇu some of which are under worship and others are housed in various Museums. Amongst the under worship images mention may be made of a metal image of four handed sthānakamūrti of Vishṇu from Jayali in District Chaupal. This image is a beautiful example of the technical finesse and perfection of the artist. Vishṇu is shown standing on the lotus pedestal and the base of the image is triratha. This image clearly shows Pratihāra style. Images of Vishṇu in stone are numerous from Himachal Pradesh. Many stone images from Nirmand, District Kullu are almost of life size. Most of these images are housed in the State Museum, Shimla. There are two such under worship images of Vishṇu in the Triyugi Narayana temple in village Dyar, District Kullu. Most of these images can be placed between 4th and 8th century CE.

Several images of Vishṇu-Lakshmī have been discovered from Himachal Pradesh. Find spots of these images are almost every part of Himachal Pradesh. Vishṇu-Lakshmī images from District Chamba show Vishṇu in Vaikuṇṭha form. One such image discovered from village Koh near Chamba town is rare amongst the images of Vishṇu-Lakshmī from Himachal Pradesh for it is shown with the fourth head at the back (plate 5.20). Vishṇu is generally shown holding his āyudhas while one of his left hands is thrown in embrace around goddess Lakshmī who is shown seated on the left thigh of Vishṇu. Most of these images represent Garuḍa as their vehicle. Vishṇu and Lakshmī are also shown in standing position in the sculptures of Himachal Pradesh. However, such depiction is very rare. During our extensive field-trip and visits to the various museums we did not find any image of Vishṇu-Lakshmī from the relevant period, in standing position except the two images one of which is discovered from Chari Garoh, District Kangra, presently in the collection of Dharamshala Museum (plate 5.13) and the other is in the collection of the Archaeological Survey of India in Vaidyanath temple (plate 5.14). The entire right
half of the former image representing Vishṇu is missing. Only left hands of the deity have remained while the latter image is extremely worn out. Vishṇu-Lakshmī images also form part of fountain stones discovered from the Chamba region. During the present research we did not find any image prior to the c. 10th century CE. These images are found from the regions where Pratihāra idiom was more popular e.g. Shimla and Mandi region. Vishṇu-Lakshmī from the Śiva temple at Hatkoti and Vishṇu-Lakshmī discovered from Karsog, presently housed in the State museum Shimla are one of the remarkable examples from Himachal Pradesh. These images can be assigned to c. 10th-11th century CE. Vishṇu-Lakshmī from the Śiva temple at Hatkoti is one of the earliest examples of such images. Similar images in composition and modelling are lying in the Sun temple at Nirath (plates 5.3 and 5.4).

Images pertaining to the ten incarnations of Vishṇu are also found from Himachal Pradesh. Independent images of the incarnations of Vishṇu from this hilly region are not many. Amongst the independent images of Vishṇu most popular were Balarāma, Nṛsiṁha and Varāha. Other incarnations of the deity have found place in the small niches around the temple or on the door jambs. The most notable amongst any individual image from the ten incarnations of Vishṇu is metal image of Nṛsiṁha from Bharmaur, District Chamba. The four handed deity is shown seated in this image. Mace must have been held in the front hands of the deity. This image shows technical finesse achieved by the artists of the Chamba region. There is impact of Kashmir style on this image. However, it also shows some indigenous characteristics. Another four handed stone image of Nṛsiṁha is in the Bhagavati temple at Swain Himgiri. This image is clearly in Kashmir style. There are some stone slabs showing Matsya incarnation. Some of them are housed in the Bhuri Singh Museum and some others in situ. Vaidyanath temple in Baijnath, District Kangra has also yielded images of Matsya incarnation. One of the images of Matsya incarnation is in situ and the other is in the collection of Archaeological Survey of India. This is intriguing that Chamba which was culturally influenced by Kashmir has some good examples of Matsya incarnation whereas from Kashmir no such image is known so far. There are two stone images of four handed Balarāma, housed
in the Bhuri Singh Museum. One image is discovered from village Mugla and the other image is discovered from village Saho. A four handed Balarāma image is in a niche at the back of the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa temple at Kangra fort and the other is in one of the registers of the door frame of the Shakti Devi temple at Chatrarhi. An individual image of Rāma is found from the Baijnath temple. An interesting image of Kṛishṇa lifting mount Govardhana is found from Nirmand in District Kullu. Balarāma is also depicted in this sculpture. There is clear impact of Gupta style on these images. This is the earliest image, depicting one of the incarnations of Vishṇu in Himachal Pradesh. Other Daśavatāra images find place on the fountain stones and on the outer walls of the temples e.g. in the Vaidyanath temple at Baijnath and on the door jambs of the temples e.g. on the door jamb of the Kamaksha Devi temple at village Kao, District Mandi and Markula Devi temple at Udaipur, District Lahaul Spiti. Varāha image from Swain Himgiri is rare example of the depiction of deity in Varāha form from Himachal Pradesh. The other example is in the Baijnath temple. However, here the depiction of the deity is in a small niche which flanks the larger niche. Independent images of Buddha as incarnation of Vishṇu, independent images of Paraśurāma and Kalki are extremely rare in the region. Nṛsiṁha and Varāha images from the Kamaksha Devi temple at village Kao, District Mandi are published for the first time in this work.

During our field-trips only small number of composite images of Vishṇu i.e. Harihara and Ardh-Vishṇu-Kamalajā have come to our notice. Ardh-Vishṇu-Kamalajā a combined form of Vishṇu and Lakshmī is very rare in India other than Kashmir. In Himachal Pradesh there is only one image of Ardh-Vishṇu-Kamalajā, represented in a rathīkā of the Vaidyanath temple, Baijnath, District Kangra. The Baijnath Vishṇu-Kamalajā image belongs to the late 12th century CE and shows Kashmir style fused with the local idiom. However, Ardh-Vishṇu-Kamalajā from Baijnath is the most beautiful example among the similar images, known so far. This is surprising that there is not even a single image which has come to light from the Chamba region despite its proximity to Kashmir where this form was better known. There are no references to Vishṇu-Kamalajā images prior to c 8th century
Much like Ardhanarīśavara form of Śiva and Pārvatī such forms are divided into two halves. The right half represents Vishnu and the left Lakshmī. Invariably this form is depicted eight handed with attributes of Vishnu and Lakshmī on the right and left respectively. Most of the Vishnu-Kamalajā images are shown with Garuḍa as their vehicle except in one rare example from Kashmir where this composite form is shown standing. Harihara images from Himachal Pradesh are also little in number. Harihara is combined aspect of Vishnu and Śiva. Harihara images are found in Sun temple at Nirath, District Shimla, Village Holi, District Chamba; and Vaidyanath temple at Baijnath, rock-cut temple at Masrur both in District Kangra. All the composite images are in situ. Among all the Harihara images Harihara image from Vaidyanath temple, Baijnath is most enigmatic. This image has impact of Kashmir on it as it is represented as three headed. There are several other features which shows the impact of Kashmir mixed with local idiom. This image is called as Harihara-Vaikuṇṭha. Another feature which is completely unusual is the single attribute held in the front hands of the deity. It is difficult to ascertain that the attribute is Vaishnavite, Śaivite or cleverly depicted as fusion of both by the artist. We tried to find a parallel to this image in one of the metal images from Kashmir. There is a beautiful image of Harihara-Vaikuṇṭha from Chamba. On the proper right and proper left of this image Pārvatī and Lakshmī can be seen seated on Nandī and Garuḍa respectively. Harihara image from Sun temple at Nirath is a beautiful example in Pratihāra style. This is the only image Harihara image from Himachal Pradesh which is single headed. This image is not published by any scholar prior to its mention in the present work. An in situ image of Harihara from the Rock-cut temple at Masur is also an interesting example. This image has been already published by Michael W. Meister. However, he does not mention face on the right as Aghora aspect of Śiva. Invariably Harihara images from Kashmir are depicted as three or four headed. All the Harihara images from Himachal Pradesh, except the one from Vaidyanath temple, Baijnath, District Kangra are in standing position.

Several images of Garuḍa have come to our notice during the course of the present research. In most of the images Garuḍa is shown either as a vehicle of Vishnu or
Vishṇu-Lakshmī together. However, some independent images of Garuḍa has also been noticed. Such images form very little number of the entire Vaishṇava images in Himachal Pradesh. An addorsed image discovered from the Vishveshvara temple in Bajaura, District Kullu is identified as Garuḍa in the present work. Its identification as Garuḍa is based on the analysis of certain features and characteristics which are discussed in detail in the relevant chapter. Garuḍa is generally depicted two handed or four handed. However, eight handed images of Garuḍa are also found though such images are very rare e.g. Garuḍa image carrying Ardh-Vishṇu-Kamalajā is an eight handed example. Garuḍa is shown holding attributes such as parasol, snake, pot of ambrosia, etc. When the celestial bird is depicted carrying Vishṇu or Vishṇu and Lakshmī on his back he is shown supporting the feet of the deity with his rear hands and front hands are either joined in reverence or he is shown carrying kalaśa. Garuḍa is also shown though in Pratihāra images as an attendant figure flanking the deity. Most often Garuḍa is depicted as a vehicle of the deity and also as an attendant figure at the base in Pratihāra images. He is depicted in anthropomorphic or having partial human and partial avian form. Sometimes, he is depicted with wings at his back. Semi-anthropomorphic form of Garuḍa is mostly observed in Kashmir idiom whereas both anthropomorphic and semi-anthropomorphic Garuḍa images have been noticed in the Pratihāra style. Garuḍa images from Chamba are shown in frontal position, sometimes with leaf like upturned and downward wings and they are depicted as having short and thick physical constitution. Their front hands are joined together in reverence and legs are very short. Garuḍa is shown having large and round face with expression of anger especially in the eyes which are shown in round form. On the other hand Garuḍa images in Pratihāra style are mostly shown seated in vīrāsana and they are often depicted in their profile view. We have observed that Garuḍa is shown in anthropomorphic form and sometimes in semi-anthropomorphic form having wings at the back in the images from District Shimla and District Mandi only. In some images Garuḍa is shown seated in vīrāsana e.g. Garuḍa at the base of the Harihara image housed in the Nirath temple, District Shimla, Garuḍa atop the Latta Baoli temple in Nirmand, District Kullu and Garuḍa in one of the rathīka in the outer wall of the Vaidyanath temple in Baijnath, District
Kangra etc. Garuḍa atop the Latta Baoli temple is one of the finest depictions of Garuḍa bearing Pratihāra idiom. Two images have come to our notice during the course of the present research, where Garuḍa is shown carrying Lakshmī on his back. Both the images are representations of Harihara. One is from Holi in Bharmaur region and the other is in a rathikā on the outer wall of the Vaidyanath temple at Baijnath.

We have seen that the āyudhapurushas also reflect the stylistic influences and regional developments of Vishṇu images from Himachal Pradesh. We have mentioned above that how in Kashmir images only two āyudhas were depicted and in the Pratihāra images there were more images. On the base of the images which show Kashmir impact, invariably depiction of Gadādevī and Chakrapurusha has been found with an exception of Vishṇu image from Vishveshvara Mahadeva temple in Bajaura, District Kullu where Padmapurusha is depicted on the proper right of the deity. However, in the Vishṇu images bearing Pratihāra style all the personified āyudhas can be seen some time simultaneously in a single image and unlike Chamba and Kashmir, position of the āyudhas where they would be shown standing, was not fixed. Also unlike Chamba and Kashmir āyudhas with Pratihāra style are shown standing in tribhaṅga posture, facing front. In Chamba āyudhas are depicted in arched posture while they are looking upward at the deity in reverence. This characteristic of depicting āyudha in arched posture was very much popular in the 9th century CE Kashmir. However, it has also been noticed in a 5th-6th century bronze image of Vishṇu-Vaikuṇṭha from Kashmir. In Himachal Pradesh āyudhapurushas in the Vishṇu and Vishṇu-Vaikuṇṭha image from Rock-Cut temple at Masrur and in the Vishṇu-Vaikuṇṭha image on the pediment of the Lakshana Devi temple at Bharmaur similar arched posture of āyudhapurūṣhas has been observed bringing these images closer to the Kashmir style.

The region of Himachal Pradesh can be divided on the basis of the stylistic influences. District Mandi and District Shimla largely show the impact of Pratihāra style and District Chamba, District Kangra some portion of Kullu shows the impact of Kashmir. However, in Kangra region Kashmir and Pratihāra idioms fused with
local impact is seen after c 10\textsuperscript{th} century CE. Impact of Kashmir is particularly very strong in Chamba region because of its close proximity to Kashmir. Early images prior to 8\textsuperscript{th}-9\textsuperscript{th} century CE from Nirmand in District Kullu show the impact of plains. Vishṇu images from Dyar are also fashioned in similar manner. However, local impact ca be seen in these images. Two under worship images from Triyugi Narayana temple and another shrine in the same premises, village Dyar, District Kullu are published for the first time in the present work. There are several other images from Sun temple at Nirath, District Shimla; Mamaleshvara temple village Mamel, District Mandi and Kamaksha Devi temple, village Kao, District Mandi, which we have published for the first time in the present work. Overall the study brings to fore an exhaustive discussion on various aspects of Vaishṇava images from Himachal Pradesh that includes bringing to light several unpublished images and giving fresh interpretation to the known sculptures both in art-historical and iconographical perspective.
Notes & References:

1 CASR, Vol. V.


3 The Himalayan Districts of Kooloo, Lahoul and Spiti, London, 1871.


7 Sculpture of the Western Himalayas, Delhi, 1991.


9 For details of the twenty four forms of Vishṇu, see supra, Chapter I, Appendix I.


11 Supra, Chapter I, Appendix-I.

12 Ibid.

13 This is personal information from the temple priest during our field-work. Since the image is under worship as the principal deity of the temple its close examination is not permitted.


18 RM, 3, 55-57.

19 VDP, III, 83, 2-4.


27 Bhan J.L. Kashmir Sculptures, New Delhi 2010, p. 351, Fig. 260.

28 Our attention to this image was first drawn by Prof. Ashvini Agrawal who explained its significance to us. He kindly gave access to his unpublished paper on this image, which was presented by him in a national seminar on The Worshipping Goddess: Mythology, Form and Ritual in Chandigarh in 2002. The image was earlier discussed by him in his report of the UGC Project in 1998.

29 Handa, Devendra, Sculptures from Haryana, New Delhi 2006, p. 197, plate 264.

30 Pal, Pratapaditya, Bronzes of Kashmir, New Delhi 1975, p. 56, plate 4 a,b.