CHAPTER: 3

Metal Art of Himachal Pradesh
1. Introduction

Since the time immemorial, art has always been a way of expression of inner feelings inherent in human beings, related to nature, culture and the outside world and at the same time various aspects related to various milestones and the concerned elements on the path of inward journey.

The state of Himachal Pradesh in the northern part of the country has been the tapobhumi of numerous saints in the past, who successfully visualized the inner & outside world and dedicated the results of those visualizations to the mankind. These visualizations continued their expression in various forms i.e. performance and visual arts, writings, vocal and physical activity (music/ dance/ drama) and all the other cultural aspects related to the society, the country and the humanity.

Visual art is a part of fine art in the form of painting, sculpture and architecture using various media. Metal has been a very important medium to preserve the art for a very long time. One may have a glimpse of these pieces of visual art/ articles depicting the traditional heritage, in different museums and temples located at various places in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Pradesh has over 2,000 temples and monasteries that are centuries old. Of these, 60 are under the supervision of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), while 31 are under the control of the state’s language, art and culture department.

1.1. A brief Historical Background

The metal art, traditions and techniques of casting in India, have been known since ancient times, which are recorded in earliest Sanskrit religious texts. Mention of metallic images has been made in Ramayana, Mahabharata and Vedic texts. In particular, the art of sculpture was developed in India as a science. The great Indus civilization stands a witness to all this. In the Manu- samhita mention has been made of ‘mining operations’, metal manufacturers, guild of metal craftsman etc. Matsyapurana, in its ten chapters, describes the canons of fabricating metal icons in detail. According to Agni- purana images made of gold and other metals yield the greatest religious merit. In Vishnudharmaottar- purana more details have been given about the metal sculpture. Varahmihir’s Brihatsamhita, Aagam literature, summarized by Gopinath, and Maansar deal with ratio and proportions supplementing the earlier work on the subject of metal art in respect of images which got translated with time in
Vedic and non-Vedic traditions. Jain texts such as the Anuyogadvara Churni and Acharanga-sutra and other numerous texts from the pre-medieval to the medieval period (7th to 12 centuries AD) also furnish useful information on the metal art.

Panini, the great grammarian, of the 4th century BC, has mentioned the names of numerous cities that were coming up in North West India at that time. He was the first to record the life and times of the pre-Mauryan period. His work contains levish descriptions of the metal arts being produced during his times. There is enough evidence through the work of Kautilya (Chanakya) that metal images used to be wrought in the Mauryan period (322-184 BC). The metal images in classical style continued to be wrought through the succeeding centuries. The metal art reached their acme in the Gupta period (4th – 6th c AD) all the way through the Kushan period (1st to 2nd c AD). The art in **Gupta period** flourished during a period of more than 200 years. The important rulers during this era being Chandragupta (319-335 AD) and the last Kumargupta (414-455 AD). During the latter period various schools of science, medicine and Fine Arts & Poetry progressed and attained high reputation.

In the 7th century under the rulers of **Karkota dynasty (in Kashmir)**, it was a period of political unity and cultural stability which was of a considerable significance for rest of India. The leading emperor **Lalitaditya** (720-756 AD) could expand his reign far over to part of Afganistan, during which great religions along with their interpretations came up unfolding independent doctrines of Hinduism like Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Tantric Buddhism. This development got reflected in establishing the schools of art of sculpture (in stone as well as in bronzes) among the Indian arts and later traditions. These traditions became part of history for **Chamba and Himachal Pradesh** in particular and for North-West India in general including Panjab and Rajasthan and part of Uttar Pradesh. In the 10th century (up to half of the eleventh century), the Himalayan states of the North-western region came under the domination of Pratihars, during which various art forms became more elegant, due not so much to the patronage of ruling kings as to the loyalty of simple rural folks which produced a sympathetic responses practiced by the local tribes, like Gurjars, Khasas and Gaddis. The temple art and sculptures/bronzes of Chamba represents the domination of Pratiharas not only in that area but also in Kullu, Sirmaur, Kinnaur and Shimla.
The art of bronze casting attained maturity and perfection in the hands of skilled artisans with a lot of appreciation during the period of Maurya (322-185 BCE), Sunga (185-73 BCE), Gandhara (in far North-west, 1000 BC- 11c AD), Kushana (1st - 2nd c AD), Gupta (4th- mid 8th c AD- the classical period), Pallavas (in South India-Tamil, 571- 630 AD) and Chalukya (6th- 12 c AD) and farther during medieval and Rajputs’ periods. In which various art centers came up mainly under the patronage of rulers in Himachal Pradesh until the recent past (pre-independent India).

Encompasses most of the fascinating and elegant statues of God-Goddess, Devtas/Deities, Mohras, delicate jewelry, ritual & domestic vessels and other articles, made of gold, silver and brass. Metal art in white metal and eight-metal (Ashtadhatu) has also been popular. The Copper plate of the Harshvardhan era, dated (612-13 AD) has been found in Nirmand with inscriptions containing some very significant information regarding his greatness and that of his successor Samudrasen. Himachal Pradesh is very rich in arts in general and metal art in particular. In modern times this metal art has been appreciated widely the world over. Artisans who make this art everlasting, their work rejuvenate our imagination. There are many such copper plates containing inscriptions which depict history of Himachal Pradesh at different times and periods. One such photograph is given here. These pieces are supposed to be very helpful for carrying out research work by scholars, provided they are knowledgeable about the script and the language of that period.
During the ruling period of Akbar, he learned about the legends of Jwalamukhi. In a fit of anger, he tried to douse the flames with a stream of water. The great power of the Goddess, still kept the flames burning. Realizing the power of Jwala Devi, Akbar came with his army to this temple. He brought a Gold umbrella (Chatra) for the Goddess, but on offering, the umbrella turned into an unknown metal suggesting that the Goddess did not accept his offering. There is a golden statue of Emperor Akbar in Malana village of Himachal. Which is also taken out side from the temple with other deities on the birthday celebration of rishi Jamdagni on the day of Maghd Purnima of Phagu? People does salam to each-other There is a legend, a saint got two coins as blessing from Jamlu, who was going to Haridwar, those coins were snatched by army man of Akbar in Delhi. After that Akbar was got ill and dreamt saint was annoyed and told, those coins would be connected with each other. Emperor found joined coins. After, he sent those coins with his golden statue to Malana.

The Indo-Sikh style of architecture of Jwalamukhi temple is simple structural design, but the religious aura makes it undoubtedly divine. The dome and spires of this temple are covered with Gold. The main door of the shrine is plated with silver. In front of the main shrine, the King of Nepal presented a huge brass bell.

The best repousse specimens are seen in the temples of Vajreshvari Devi and Jwalamukhji in Kangra, Bhimakali in Sarahan, its silver doors were built by Maharaja Padam Singh (1914-1927), which has lions on both sides, two door handles emerging from lion mouth, and lord Ganesha, Shiva, Durga Maa, Shri Ram, Hanuman Ji, Radha-Krishna are carved on doors, Chandika Devi in Kothi in Kinnaur and Kaliwari in Shimla. The former was gifted by Kharak Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's son, in the 19th century. Karak Singh presented a pair of folding doors covered with silver plated splendidly embossed. Identical gold or silver plated and reposed doorways and pillars embellish many Buddhist temples and monasteries in Lahaul-Spiti and Pooh tehsil of Kinnaur district.

The culture of the Himalayan region, therefore, is a mixed product of the folk sensibility and the sophisticated genius of the master-craftsmen. Classical style can be seen through the creativity, elaboration of vital forms and reality of these metallic images & articles in Himachal Pradesh. Metal craftsmen work in bronze, copper, brass and iron with highly developed technology.
**Glimpses of Metal Art** can be had in ritual articles used in temples and houses like, chaukis, bells with artistically designed handles, incense burner, lamps, and jars for storing Ganga Jal, kalasha.

1.2. **Museum**, **Temples and Monasteries**

It is well known that most of the metal art viz. metal images, related jewelry, Mohras, musical instruments, ritual items and domestic articles, representing the heritage and culture of the state of Himachal Pradesh can be found in:

Or in either of the three museums in the state of Himachal Pradesh,

- The National Museum, New Delhi
- State Museum, Shimla
- Kangra Museum, Dharamshala
- Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba

The places where the metallic art may be found are temples of Himachal Pradesh. The list of famous temples in the state is presented in the following Table.

**Table 1: Famous Temples** of Himachal Pradesh, District wise: (Other source: Temples of Himachal Pradesh, Department of Language and Culture Shimla, 1982)

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<th>SN</th>
<th>Distt</th>
<th>Temple</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>Shiv (Bajjnath), Jwalamukhi, Brijeshwari, Chamunda Devi</td>
<td>1/12 Jyotilinga</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>Chamunda (Bharmaur), Shaktidevi (Chatrari), Chaurasi, Mani-Mahesh (Bharmaur), Lakshmi Narayan, Hari Rai</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Bilaspur</td>
<td>NainaDevi, Baba Balaknath, (Talai)</td>
<td>1/51 Shaktipith</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Solan</td>
<td>Shiv (Dharampur), Shiv (Nalagarh)</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Una</td>
<td>Chintpurni, Bhadrakali (Bhadrakali)</td>
<td>1/51 Shaktipith</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Shimla</td>
<td>Bhimakali (Sarahan), Hateshwari Devi (Hatkoti), Sun (Nirath), Tara Devi, Kaliwari</td>
<td>1/51 Shaktipith</td>
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<td>SN</td>
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<td>1.</td>
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<td>Dhankar</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Guru Ghantal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kanum</td>
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<td>Tayul (Bhaga valley)</td>
<td>17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Nako (La-Tsa-Ba-Iha-Khan)</td>
<td>17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Thang Vug</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Kinnaur</td>
<td>Shasur (Keylong)</td>
<td>17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Tayul</td>
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<td>Kungri dyon-pa-Pin</td>
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Yet another group of temples belong to the Buddhist tradition, the famous Bauddh temples and old monasteries are listed in Table II below.

**Table 2: Famous Monasteries**

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<th>Distt. wise:</th>
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<td>Lahaul &amp; Spiti</td>
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The Vedic concept of interaction of human beings with nature, for each other, in the form of nature worship is like ‘critical mass’ for the sustainability of the human race as well as nature and hence the Globe as a whole.

"Cosmic Nature, Mother of all vibrations, has three phases:
The creativity, Preservative, and Dissolving states,
governed respectively by Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva."

-Paramhansa Yogananda

(In Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita)

However, this concept is said to have survived up to the eight century AD very well.

One can place ancient Indian religions in two categories. One is Vedic and the other is Non-Vedic. The former may be further divided into three as Shaivism, Shakta and Vaishnavism. Among the latter comes Jainism, Buddhism. The two religions played an important role in the current context in the period between the sixth to the 14th centuries.
Shaivism: The first evidence of this sect can be traced on the coins of Audumbaras which indicates that they ruled under their presiding deity Lord Shiva. It was also corroborated by different scholars like R.D. Banerjee, A. Cunningham etc. Further, the coins of Kunindas and Yaudheyas depict Nandipada and snake symbols that also indicated the Shaivite culture.  

The progress of Shaivism in the post-Gupta period is evident from the architectural and sculptural remains. A large number of Shaivite temples were constructed throughout Himachal and dedicated to Siva's different names viz, Gauri-Shankar, Basesara Mahadeva, Vaidyanath, Indreswara, Triyambakeshwar, Chandrashekhar, Mani Mahesh, Triloknath, Kapileshwar, Panchavakra and Nandikeswara, etc.  

The most important centres of Shaiva worship in Himachal were Nirmand, Hat-Koti, Basara, Balag, Bajaura, Naggar, Dashal, Jagatsukh, Triloknath, Bharmaur, Chamba, Baijnath, Kangra, Mandi, Mangarh and Saho.

Shakta: The most popular cult was Shakta (or Shakti), the energetic and powerful female principle, the antiquity of which is associated with Lord Shiva. In the Mahabharata, Yudhishthira sung Durga prayer because she rescues people from durga i.e., difficulty, which appears closer to the original significance of the name and seems to have obvious connotation associated with Himalayas. Probably the hill association gained the upper hand and Uma Haimavati became the wedded wife of Lord Siva. She is also called Maheshwari, Parvati, Mahakali, Ishani and Durga.

There are two types of ‘Shakti’ images: Ugra (Terrific) and Saumya (Placid). In her former aspect, she is represented as destroyer of the buffalo-demon, Mahishasurmardini. The outstanding examples in this form are from Bharmaur, Hat-Koti, Margul and Svaim. The Saumya type of images is the Shakti at Chatarhari, Vajreswari at Chamba, Ambika at Nirmand and Kangra, Parvati at Hat-Koti. The Saptamatrikas include Durga, Lakshmi, Sarasvati and other female divinities in worship. The Harivansa refers to her worship by hill and forest tribes, thus she appears on the Kuninda coinage as Durga- Laksmi.
Vaishnavism: The Gupta monarchs gave unprecedented patronage to Vaishnavism and, thereafter, it must have spread far and wide. It was introduced in Himachal during the seventh century AD.

The Sthanaka images of Visnu from Bajaura, Fatehpur, Nirmand, Hat- Koti, Chamba and Devi- ri- Kothi can be assigned to this period. Among the notable temples of Lord Visnu are Lakshmi- Naraina temple, Hari Rai temple and Lakshmi- Damodara temple at Chamba. The Vaikuntha Vishnu image in the garbhagrha of the Hari- Rai temple is one of the matchless specimen from iconographic point of view. It shows the deity in the sthanaka- mudra, holding a lotus and shankha in his left and right upper hands, while lower hands are placed on Gada and Cakrapurusa. it is a four headed image, Saumya in the canter, Narsimha and Varaha heads to the right and left respectively, and the rear head represents Kapila in his terrific appearance as referred to in the Visnudharmottara purana. The Prithvi emerges from the pedestal along with four ayudhas.

Vishnu was also worshipped in the forms of his ten Incarnations. The cults of Parasurama and Rama were much popular. Parasurama is said to have established five sthanas of Vaishnava faith in the hills respectively at Kao, Mamel, Nirath, Naggar and Nirmand. The Nirmand Mahatmya testifies the fact that Parasurama was worshipped at Nirmand from the very beginning. A large number of Krisna legends have been noticed on various temples, especially those on the Champavati and Laksmi- Narayana temples are the most interesting. The wide popularity of Vaishnavism among the ruling chiefs from the eight to the 13th century was mainly responsible for the Vaishnava painting. In the succeeding centuries, painters under the patronage of rajas have painted various themes from the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Bhagvata Purana.

Besides these principal Gods, the Surya, Ardhnarisvara, Dattatreya, Karttikeya, Ganesa, Bhairava, Brahma, Varuna, Shesh- Naga, and many Rishis were also worshipped. The icons of the Surya outnumber those of other deities/ Rishis.

It may be interesting to note that the Vedic images, recovered in the Himachal but also they are prevalent in different places like Tanjavur district of Tamilnadu in South India, and Kurkihar (Bihar) in North India. Include bronze icons of Durga, Vishnu,
Shiva, Nataraja, Shivkamasundari, Ganesha, Venugopala, deepalakshmi, Chandikeshwara, Kankala, Kullotunga, Aiyanar on elephant, Bodhisattva Avalokiteshwar,

Out of the two non- Vedic religions, the Buddhism became popular in the areas of Himachal Pradesh.

**Buddhism:** The antiquity of Buddhism\(^{31,32}\) in Himachal goes back to the second century AD. Ashoka also sent missionaries to this region to propagate Buddhism. Footprints and Swastic are the favourite signs of Buddhists. The first evidence is a copper vase from Kundlah in which Buddhist scenes have been depicted. The Kunihara inscription which dates back to the first century AD, records the foundation of a Buddhist monastery. Buddhist remains have been found at Chetru where a large stupa measuring 836 feet in circumference and two Buddha images have been discovered. The other Buddhist sites are Charhi in Kangra district, where an inscribed pedestal of 5\(^{th}\)-6\(^{th}\) century AD, indicates the image of Vajravarahi, and Fatehpur & Pathiar wherefrom inscribed Buddha’s statues have been recovered.

According to various sources, one monk Madhyantika was deputed by the third Buddhist Council held under the auspices of Emperor Ashoka (3\(^{rd}\) Century), to bring the Buddhist doctrine to Kashmir. Buddhism also received the patronage of illustrious monarchs like Greek Menander (1\(^{st}\) century BC) and Kushana’s Kaniska (1-2 century AD) who had adopted Buddhism. After that, Buddhism flourished in Kashmir until 7th century AD during which Kashmir’s leadership in Buddhist learning, particularly in Tantric school and a centre of excellence in Sanskrit literature, remained undisputed as a religious force well into the 12\(^{th}\) century. Hsuan-Tsang, the Chinese monk & scholar spent two years in Kashmir in the predominant school of Sarvastivada.

King Lalitaditya and his Chief Minister, Chankuna- a devout Buddhist, got erected a large number of Buddhist temples/ monasteries along with many gold and silver images of various gods and goddesses. This tradition followed even often the king, for another century.
Various Buddhist bronzes revealed that the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, was the most important figure in 3 distinct images. The first was Buddha seated on lotus, the second Buddha is seated upon an elaborate throne supported by lions with a yaksha, and the third was Buddha 'Bapadasana' (seated with extended legs). All were crowned images proclaiming his spiritual majesty. Some of the bronzes were even larger and more majestic versions which adorned the temples built by Lalitaditya, now preserved in Cleveland museum.

Among the Bodhisatvas, the most popular images were of Avalokiteswara as an ascetic or a princely figure holding a lotus, in contemplative mood. The second most important figure is Maitreya, the future Buddha, with the vase of Immortality. Among the other important Bodhisatwas are Manjushri (God of love providing protection) and Vajrapani. Tara (the Saviouress), with feminine anatomy, has been considered as the consort of Avalokiteswara, who may be regarded as a fertile source of both spiritual and material abundance.

Many Siddhas, Shaiva or Shakta, played a vital role in the popularization of tantric Buddhism. Among the Buddhist tantric deities represented in Kashmir Bronzes are Vajrasattva, Vajrapani, Manjushri, Yamanlaka, Samvara, and Kalacakra. However, these icons did not provide us as rich and varied pantheon as that of east India.

Metal sculpture of Buddhist deities and Vedic deities have been a great source of inspiration for different schools on Metal Art studies. Before starting study on 'The Metal Art of Himachal Pradesh', it is indispensable to acknowledge the concept of magnetic attraction towards metal art with an interesting question why is one mesmerized and filled with internal bliss?

This answer can be obtained after being acquainted with 'Aesthetics in Metal Art'. After knowing the Indian concepts of Aesthetics, one can easily appreciate metal Art elaborately in one's own words. Appreciation is an art in itself according to 'Kamasutra' of Vatsayayn. Craftsmanship of artisan, his/ her style & technique, and piece of art all are parts of '64 arts'. Thus, these form the components of appreciation of 'Metal Work' which can be seen in the context of Himachal Pradesh. The aesthetic concepts are given below.
2. Aesthetic Concepts in Metal Art

“Look only for the good in everything, that you absorb the quality of beauty.”

--- Swamy Paramhansa Yogananda

Metal has been a very important medium to preserve the culture through visual art (creative fine art) for a very long time. Here we mean that skill is being used to express the artist’s creativity, or to engage the audience’s aesthetic sensibilities, or to draw the audience towards consideration of the ‘finer’ things. Thus, art usually implies function to convey an idea.

Sensory appeal: Arts are usually classified by their appeal to the senses of sight or hearing. Because painting, sculpture, and architecture depend for their aesthetic appreciation on eyesight, they are all visual arts, but a sculpture might also involve the sense of touch. Literature can be both visual and auditory. When an individual reads a novel, the words are conveyed through visual impressions. Talking books provide an auditory experience of the same art.

According to V.R. Amberkar, “Art is an activity of human mind indulging for its own sake under certain aesthetic principles.”

2.1. Art and Artistic Thinking- Western View: True art is always inspired by human truth it is ideologically saturated and biased. Presentation of reality in art is imbued with philosophical meaning and moral message. As Hegel once said, art is often the only key to understanding the wisdom of people.

The artistic truth is not only a reproduction of objective reality in terms of imaged—it is a richer and more complex phenomenon containing an expression of the truth, of feelings and tastes, of thoughts and convictions.

Albert Einstein remarked once the man’s historical privilege was his ability to construct a picture of reality and reality itself. Artistic thought constructs (or models) reality on the basis of a definite world—view. Each work of art is a fact of artistic thinking.
Artistic thinking is 'objective' in the sense that it contains thoughts about some objects; nature, society, or man. The process of artistic thinking is absolutely linked with cognition of life. The artist strives to penetrate the essence of phenomena and hidden determinants of facts, to express his attitude to them, and to forecast the tendencies of changes. These elements form the work's ideological content, the principle of realism reducing the possibility of subjective idealization, of importing unjustified evaluations, and of fantasy soaring too far away from life. In its very essence, artistic creativity is based on the unity of cognition and thinking. Artistic thinking has certain specific features that must not be underestimated. It may be taken that historically characteristic of art are philosophical and moral ideas, reflections on the fate of man and the meaning of life, on the struggle for happiness and beauty against ugliness, evil, violence, and war. Artistic thinking is emotional and biased, it interacts with the artist's imagination and his fantasy, and it is enriched by aesthetic view.

Aesthetics is the study, or science, of the beautiful. The word is derived from the Greek *atoantikos*, meaning 'perception of senses'. The term aesthetics was coined by a German philosopher, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in his 'Aesthetica Acroamatica', published during 1750-1758. By this time, the fine arts had taken hold of the imagination of Europe. For Baumgarten, aesthetics had two emphases. First, it was a study of the theory of beauty; second, it was a theory of art. Since the late 18th century aesthetics has become a fairly large and diversified field of study. The study of aesthetics also tries to describe the forms and styles of the various arts.

Aesthetics is used by some as a synonym for the philosophy of art since Hegel, while others insist on a distinction between these closely related fields. In practice, aesthetic judgment refers to the sensory contemplation or appreciation of an object (not necessarily an art object), while artistic judgment refers to the recognition, appreciation or criticism of art or an art work.

The philosophical aesthetics has not only to speak about art and to produce judgments about the art works, but has also to give a definition of what art is. Art is an autonomous entity for the philosophy, because art deals with the senses (i.e. the etymology of aesthetics) and art is as such free of any moral or political purpose.
Hence, there are two different conceptions of art in the aesthetics: art as knowledge or art as action, but aesthetics is neither epistemology nor ethics.

Thus aesthetic judgments might be seen to be based on the senses, emotions, intellectual opinions, will, desires, culture, preferences, values, subconscious behavior, conscious decision, training, instinct, sociological institutions, or some complex combination of these, depending on exactly which theory one employs.

Aesthetics can be universal beyond barriers of culture, custom, nationality, education and training, wealth and poverty, religion, and other human differences. Either coming from God in creation, or arising by the process of naturalistic evolution some universal characteristics seem to share by all humans.

Beauty, unlike aesthetics, which was not used as a term until after the 1750s, has been a matter of thoughtful discussion for many centuries. According to Ancient Greek philosophers, Plato felt that beautiful objects incorporated proportion, harmony, and unity among their parts and also emphasis on morality, usefulness which shows Indian concept of beauty ‘Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram’. “True beauty was an ideal beyond human perception; like truth and goodness, it was eternal. Beauty that was visible could not be absolutely beautiful, because it was subject to change, growth, and decay.”

Similarly, in his Metaphysics, Aristotle found that the universal elements of beauty were order, symmetry, and definiteness.

German and British thinkers emphasized beauty as the key component of art and of the aesthetic experience.

According to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten aesthetics is the science of the sense experiences, a younger sister of logic, and beauty is thus the most perfect kind of knowledge that sense experience can have. For Immanuel Kant the aesthetic experience of beauty is a judgment of a subjective but universal truth, since all people should agree that ‘this rose is beautiful’ if, in fact, it is. However, beauty cannot be reduced to any more basic set of features. For Friedrich Schiller aesthetic
appreciation of beauty is the most perfect settlement of the sensual and rational parts of human nature.\textsuperscript{47}

According to \textit{Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel} all culture is a matter of ‘absolute spirit’ coming to be manifest to itself, stage by stage. Art is the first stage in which the absolute spirit is manifest immediately to sense-perception, and is thus an objective rather than subjective revelation of beauty.\textsuperscript{48}

\textit{Arthur Schopenhauer} considered aesthetic contemplation of beauty is the most free that the pure intellect can be from the dictates of will; here we contemplate perfection of form without any kind of worldly agenda, and thus any intrusion of utility or politics would ruin the point of the beauty\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Earl of Shaftesbury}’s view this was identical to the moral sense, beauty just is the sensory version of moral goodness\textsuperscript{50}. "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder," is the most common way of saying that what is beautiful depends on the viewer.

\textbf{2.2. Indian Vision}\textsuperscript{51, 52, 53, 54, 55}

On the subject of ‘Indian Artistic analysis Avnindra Nath Tagore’s\textsuperscript{56, 57, 58}, views are more pragmatic. “Let us not forget that it is the artist and his creations that come first and then the lawgiver and his code of art. Aesthetics is not for the justification of the Shilpashastra, but the Shastra is for the elucidation of art. It is the concrete form which is evolved first and then comes its analysis and its commentaries, its standards and its proportions codified in the form of Shastras.”

According to \textit{Ravindra Nath Tagore}\textsuperscript{59}, “An artistic creation reflects divine Bliss representing Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram”.

Finally, \textit{E.B. Hawell}, an Englishman, played an important role\textsuperscript{60} from 1884 as a professor in Arts College, Madras and later, 1896, in Calcutta. He tried his best to echo, in close collaboration with famous artist Avnindranath Tagore, the Indian spiritualism and Indian aesthetics traditions. According to Hawell, European art is concerned with the physical part only whereas Indian art encompasses physical, mental and spiritual aspects in totality reflecting aesthetic traditions of the country.
Indian art progressed with an emphasis on inducing special spiritual or philosophical states in the audience, or with representing them symbolically. According to Kapila Vatsyayan, Classical Indian architecture, Indian sculpture, Indian painting, Indian literature, Indian music, and Indian dance "evolved their own rules conditioned by their respective media, but they shared with one another not only the underlying spiritual beliefs of the Indian religio-philosophic mind, but also the procedures by which the relationships of the symbol and the spiritual states were worked out in detail."^61

The eastern vision on aesthetics is mainly based on an Indian classical Sanskrit text, Bharat's Natyashastra. This text was composed during the 4-5th century AD and regarded divinely inspired. It contains fundamental principles for the dance, the drama and the actors. It further explains how the sculpturing techniques function the sculptures that are based on aesthetic approach are found at many places. Rasa theory is given by the Acharya Bharat Muni. That is appropriate way to appreciate the beauty art/ metal art through Rasa.

**The Rasa**

The central idea of the text is that various elements of arts are mainly directed towards arousing the audience in the state of consciousness. The concept of rasa is aimed to mean the concrete, intuitive level juice or flavour, mainly for indicating the intermediary intention of the artist's at the time of its presentation on the stage. The other concept used to show the condition called Harsha that means joy or exaltation arising as a response among the spectators to the rasa. Later on, during the synthesis of Bharata's text with his commentators composed by the great Kashmiri Shaiva theologian Abhinavagupta, in the eleventh century AD, the original concepts of rasa and harsha were mixed with each other to form a new blending named as Rasa.

This universal Rasa means a special condition of the consciousness that is distinct in itself. It mainly depends upon a series of a well known 'Permanent Emotional Modes' called as Sthayibhavas. These modes are in the form of a series of graded emotional states that jointly encompasses an every possible shade of human emotion. All such Permanent Emotional Modes said as exist in each human being in the form of latent traces. Therefore, each Sthayibhava is there in every human being as a latent form that is a consequence of his life experiences. Every Permanent Emotional Modes
corresponds to an appropriate rasa that can be summarized within the scope of that state.

The theory is particularly important as it recognized this new Rasa as a universal and self-transcendental concept. In this Rasa, it was not merely an intensified specific feeling but analogous to the supreme bliss of ultimate release from birth and death.

The first name is usually treated as of the highest value as in it rest closely the bliss of religious enlightenment. The last means the ninth was not there in Bharatas’s original list but it was included later on formed the list. The various rasas are seen to be closely related with certain musical ragas due to their specific emotional qualities and each rasa has its corresponding Devta and colour. Rasa with their Permanent Emotional Modes are listed in the following table:

**Table 3: Rasa & Permanent Emotional Modes with its corresponding deity and colour:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Rasa</th>
<th>Sthayibhava</th>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Shringara (the erotic)</td>
<td>Rati, (Delight)</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Hasya (the comic)</td>
<td>Hasya</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Laughter)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Karuna (the pathetic)</td>
<td>Shoka (Sorrow)</td>
<td>Moon</td>
<td>Golden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Raudr (the furious)</td>
<td>Krodha (Anger)</td>
<td>Rudra</td>
<td>Lemon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Vira (the heroic)</td>
<td>Utsaha</td>
<td>Mahendra</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Heroism)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Bhayanaka (the terrible)</td>
<td>Bhaya (Fear)</td>
<td>Yama</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Vibhatsa (the odious)</td>
<td>Jugupsa</td>
<td>Shiva</td>
<td>Pale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Disgust)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Adbhuta (the sublime)</td>
<td>Vismaya</td>
<td>Brahma</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Astonishment)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Nirved (the peaceful)</td>
<td>Shanta (Peace)</td>
<td>Shiva</td>
<td>Sky Blue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This point may not be agreed completely that this scale of emotions is of no account of altruistic feelings. However, these may be interpreted in a best way as sympathetic
emotions, shared experience of the emotions of others, shared sorrow etc. Similarly, religious emotions related with ‘adoration’ or ‘devotion’ must be reduced till their pure subjective elements such as the modes of fear, delight and the sublime are achieved.

One thing must be remembered that between the Permanent Emotional Mode and the rasa the art intervenes nearly at all times & this mechanism of intervention is of greater importance to us.

When normal life is considered, every Permanent Emotional Mode is awoken with the help of various causes. May be even more important than these actual ‘causes’, considering the artistic point of concern are two further classes of concomitants to the Permanent Emotional Modes are made from ordinary life. They are called as the ‘effects’. The first group of ‘effects’ consist of the eight involuntary states, generally known as the bodily reactions such a paralysis, fainting, sweating, change of colour, trembling, weeping and change of voice etc. Other specific actions generated in these states would also be included in this such as laughing, running away and so on. And, total of the transitory mental states is thirty-three. This includes discouragement, weakness, apprehension, weariness, contentment, stupor, joy, depression, cruelty, anxiety, fright, envy, indignation, arrogance, recollection, death, intoxication, dreaming, sleeping, awakening, shame, epilepsy, distraction, assurance, indolence, agitation, deliberation, dissimulation, sickness, insanity, despair, impatience and inconstancy. The variety in the above listed categories can also be seen.

All these concomitants exist as our immediate links with the states of emotions. Mainly the mental state that is provoked by any cause becomes evident to others in the forms of our manifestation of the concomitants by all sorts of identified & recognized signs. Now these belong to the realm of ordinary life. It is thus true that when art intervenes it mainly offers images of the concomitants of that period to the audience and the role of cause vis-à-vis rasas are assumed in it. If the mind is not absorbed in the particular emotions, it does not fulfill the purpose of art.

The spectators usually have the experience of each Permanent Emotional Mode within himself. Some selected from these are aroused and made recognized as the corresponding rasa by means of the artist’s skill. Nirved rasa can be seen the form of
Lord Buddha, Bhayanak in the Bhairv and Raudra rasa in the form of Mahishasura Mardini and lord Narshingh which permanent Emotional Modes are respectively Shant, Bhaya, Krodh. Himachal Metal icons of Buddhist and some Vedic icons are classical so they show exact expressions of rasas, but Vedic folk icons represent the Rasa in the body language but not accurate in facial expressions. Folk icon of Mahisasura Mardini has Raudra ruparepresented in Raudra rasa with striking pose, one of the image which is placed is one of the most terrific aspect of Shakti. This shows annoyance in terrific body language but facial expressions are blunted. Four-armed image of devi is shown holding conch, thunderbolt, and lifting the buffalo-demon by one of the heels and thrusting the trident into his body with one of the right hand. Other items elaborate the beauty of this image. This is casted during 17th c A.D. and belongs to Sarahan and placed at state Museum of Shimla

There are mainly two aspects with the help of which the technique of sculpture can be understood. They are the physical and the intellectual aspects respectively. The physical aspect is more concerned with the methods of working with sculptural materials and the purely physical aspects of the technique used in Indian sculpture is dealing with fairly brief approach, rooted in methods that are common to the arts of the world. But, that basically works in serving of the intellectual aspect.

Pt. Yashodhara is explained six limbs (The code of Art) of art, in form of composed tika of Vatsayayan's Kamasura, It is named as Jai Mangala. Excluding last one limb, and all five are supportive for the aesthetical judgment of the ‘Metal work’. These are:

'Rupabhedah pramanani bhav- lavanya- yojanam,
Sadrisham varnabhangam iti chitram shadangakam.'

The same six limbs (Form, Pramanani- anatomical perspective, bhava- feelings or passion, Lavanya plan- infusion of grace and artistic quality Sadrishyam- similitude and Varnika- bhanga indicating delineation) in iconography can also be appreciated verbatim. Interestingly, this Indian Shadanga art along with the Rasa (Taste) and
Fig.2: Folk style of Mahisasuramardini, Courtesy State Museum, Shimla
Chhanda (Rhythm- the dynamic spirit) became the philosophy of their Art Canons in the Far East for China and Japan.

However, our art traditions recognize five different classes of images and five different scales. Nevertheless, in the current Indian iconography the whole image is divided into nine equal parts. A figure to the perfection is one of the rarest things in the world. Our intimate acquaintance with the human race and our habit of paying close attention to the details of man's feature makes us so acutely conscious of minute differences of the physiognomy the choice of the aesthetically ideal figure becomes a matter of serious difficulty for the artist. But, in the case of lower species like animals, birds or plant organism the resemblances are much closer and certain well defined fixity of forms are there. It is for this reason probably that our great teachers have described the shapes of human limbs and organs not by comparison with those of human beings but always in terms of flowers/ birds/ plant/ animal features. I addition Indian images are given different poses (four bhongas- samabhanga, abhanga, tribhanga and atibhanga) and attitudes.

3. Metal Art

3.1. Sculpture: The Sculptures are of great strength and inspiration to the people and the society, reflecting a definite physical and visual perception. Sculptures are made of different metal such as copper, brass, bronze, gold and silver, in Himachal Pradesh.

Sculpture is the branch of visual arts that is specifically concerned with expressive three-dimensional form. A person who creates sculptures is called a sculptor.

There are various forms of sculptures as follows:

Round sculpture: It is a free standing solid piece and surrounded on all four sides by empty space.

Reliefs Sculpture: A form projects out from or is mounted on a vertical surface. Including bas- relief, haut- relief, and sunken- relief.

Assemblage Sculpture: It is a freestanding figure like that in the round, but made of different objects put together.
A **statue** is a sculpture in the round representing a person or persons, an animal, or an event, normally full-length, as opposed to a bust, and at least close to life-size, or larger. Its primary concern is representational.\(^7\)

A **bust** is a sculpted representation of the upper part of the human figure, depicting a person's head and neck, as well as a variable portion of the chest and shoulders in summary. **Mohra** is a smaller version of bust including only the head and neck. The piece is normally supported by a plinth. These forms recreate the likeness of an individual.\(^3\)

**Icon and Iconography:** An icon can be a symbol, a logo, picture, name, face, person, building or other image that is readily recognized. A cultural icon generally represents an object or concept with great cultural significance to a wide cultural group having a special status, loved by a particular group of people, a place, or a period in history. Cultural icons may be regional, national. In addition, they can be symbols evoking particular values of the state. In the media, many well-known manifestations of popular culture have been described as iconic.\(^4,5\)

The **importance** and function of **icons/ bronzes/ statues** is to serve as an aid in **meditation**. A practitioner will be able to understand the meaning and significance of such an image to the extent that his level of perception about meditation allows. During meditation, the practitioner will perform mudras, repeat mantras, and visualize a particular deity to bring about a meditative state in order to achieve a desired state of consciousness. It is one goal of the artist to create a sacred statue that should convey a meditational experience to a level that those who observe the statue can share in the same experience.

The **iconographic forms** were symbolic and represented **philosophical ideas** Artists were bound by faith, tradition and religion, and needed to concentrate and form a mental picture of the god before create the figure, which had to inspire a devotee to worship the deity. The sculptor was instructed to adhere rigidly to the canons of **iconography** laid down in the sacred texts. The religious procedure, precise measurements, and artistic curves were indications leading to the creation of metal images in a natural pose with exquisite balance. It was ordained that in addition to
being well proportioned the divine images should also be beautiful to look at. Among the various postures are *samabhanga*, which has no bends, expressing tranquility and repose; *abhanga*, an elegant and delicate posture with the body weight resting on one leg and the other slightly bent; *tribhanga*, or ‘thrice-bent’, used for Taras and female bodhisattvas; and *atibhanga*, greatly bent, seen among images of Devi, dance poses of Shiva and Buddhist protector deities. The stylized position of arms, hands and fingers also plays a very important part in giving the metal images an aesthetic excellence. Thus, the bronze Sculptures proved to be an important milestone in the history of metal sculpture of India. These are long lasting eternal objects, more durable from the point of view of preservation and easy portability from one place to another.

The sculpture of Bronzes immensely radiates a sense of immortality and powerfully reflects the fascination and mystery leading to spiritual enlightenment in the ancient cultures of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Therefore, historically, they should not be treated as only some pieces of art, but evident of our spiritual journey. In a land where religion rules in daily life, worship is bound to be an elaborate process. Temples are replete with pretty icons and objects needed for worship, all fine specimens of metalwork. Today though they may be somewhat isolated from their original surroundings, these images of God were placed in any location of sacred place, as it is believed that in it the divinity was manifested after consecration. With the glimpse on these, perhaps the true devotees visit temples and have feelings of closeness, gaining wisdom and vision.

A great number of Indian texts written over a period of last 2000 years, though largely philosophical and religious, they contain numerous references to metal objects. With various forms of religions spreading from India to all over Asia, many of their metal casting techniques were also adopted by the cultures coming under these influences. These techniques had set the standards for making the temple sculpture. However, the similarities/differences can be marked on the basis of geographical location as follows which will help us to understand the metal art of Himachal in the context of aesthetics.

The eastern Indian school of art guided the metallic art in India from the third century BC to about 7th century, which thrived only on the prosperous and motivated
individuals & religious cults and their integrated experiences rather than the patronage of the court/ kingdom. This spirit gave the eastern Indian school of bronze/ metal sculpture a living tradition with special dignity, where their skill and craftsmanship translated their collective experiences into reality in metallic world. Of course, whenever a favourable regime came, this art got further boost, amelioration and sophisticated aesthetics into it without deviating from the well established iconographic norms in respect of precision of proportion, symmetry and balance.

It is well known that in very ancient times Hindu priests used to practice the fine arts. Such a tradition was kept alive by Buddhist Lamas of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet, Ladakh also, who still practice the art of painting, bronze casting and ivory carving. They paint Thankas and make metal images of Bodhisatva in order to fulfill their religious obligation. In making these they strictly observe the tenets of the Hindu shilpa-shastras. On close observation, one finds that these Himachal images have close stylistic affinities with the bronzes of Nalanda and Bihar may be due to the migration of artisans from east to N- W Himalayas. The tradition of folk bronzes in N-W Himalayas continued due to treading along its silent path unhindered and untouched by socio-political upheavals in this region, seeking neither patronage nor compensation.

A careful study of their motifs, designs and craftsmanship and a comparison with the highly developed art, one can easily trace their historic antiquity and also to a certain extent get an inkling of the evolution of human thought. There are undeniable links between the super classical Nalanda and Kashmir bronzes of Kushan, Gupta and Chola period. It represented their super-skilled craftsmanship as a superior tradition of iconography.

The Western Himachal i.e. Chamba and Bharmaur, was strongly influenced by Swat, Kashmir and even Central Asia which were closely related geographically, economically and politically. Similarly, eastern part showed influence in style mainly from Utter Pradesh and sporadically from Bihar and Nepal.

Iconological elements and their influences were the consequence of events and circumstances of trade routes linking most India to central Asia. These routes crossed the Western Himalayan ranges going upstream the Sutlej to Western Tibet,
the Beas to Ladakh and Yarkund, or the Indus to Gilgit and Khotan. It may be reasonably assumed and the **classical phase must have lasted the early 13th Century**, which resulted into a sizable and final import of small metal Hindu icons, as was the case with North-East Indian Buddhist Bronzes Imported into South-Tibet.

**Metal art reached their acme in Gupta period 4th-5th century AD (319-455 AD).** Doctrine of Hinduism/ Vaishnavism and Tantric Buddhism was established in Kashmir at the time of Lalitaditya in 8th century (720-756 AD). Bronze casting reached maturity and perfection during Maurya, Sunga, Gandhara, Kushana, Gupta, Pallava, Chalukya, Medieval and Rajput period. In the Shivalik and the snow ranges, we find the most numerous vestiges of ancient and of later Hindu civilization, from Kushan and Gupta times up to the flourishing of ‘Kangra art’ in the late 18th and early 19th century.

In 10th century AD, Himalayan state of North-Western region came under the domination of Pratihars, during which art forms became more elegant mainly due to rural people. Art forms produced a sympathetic response in the folk arts practiced by the local tribes such as the Gurjaras, Khashas, and Gaddis etc. After 12th century, the progress was hampered in a big way when art fabrication had to suffer a big shock in speed and inspiration.

**Rural folks** and priests, assisted by artisans, **continued creating the bronze objects** both out of their love of making these objects and their sense of religious obligation, which needed an image of their worshipped deity for themselves. For this, they sought no rewards. They continued to create bronzes in their own unique way, irrespective of their patronage from rulers. Their main driving force was religious necessity and not simply an academic but a means of expressing powerful beliefs, hopes and fears. These artisans in Kullu, Kangra, Chamba, Mahasu are known as ‘Chiteras’, Kasera (Thathiaras) who were conversant in the art of the bronze/metal casting, carving and were used to work on jewelry. That is why it has been said that the culture of Himalayan region is the mixed product off the folk sensibility and sophisticated generous of the master craftsmen from the Rajput courts.

It is important to make it clear that the **craftsmanship of classical bronzes is different from Himachal folk bronzes.** Since the folk tradition had, its own
independent source of existence and followed its own silent course. Among these folk bronzes, there are some moulded type figures also which are used as votive offerings. The purpose of creating these bronze was to invoke the magic of primitive consciousness. A rather prominent and pointed nose, large round eyes, the head normally bigger than the rest of the body, and usually a strange grotesque expression on the face are the salient characteristics of folk bronzes. "The male and female figures can be distinguished only through clothing or suggestion of it. Otherwise, the breasts shown with a circular embossed shape on the chest, the stress on jewellery, in which necklaces and girdles are prominent, the bangles (Kara) on the wrists and around ankles etc. are common to almost all bronze images of male and female deities alike. Over the ears were worn conical ornaments, and around the neck a complex arrangement of beads, in the more elaborate form this begins with a 'Chokar' of large beads beneath the chin and is followed by three rows of necklets hanging from it which seem likely to be cowries shells. Below these again hang long strings of beads reaching to the waist, each with a central pendant." In respect of folk style, Jain sculptures are known for their remarkable finish, semi-classical and semi folk dating back to 14th century. In the words of British sculptor Henry Moore, 'Folk art is the mother of all the arts'. Folk bronzes and folk art with their keen aesthetic awareness have valuable contribution to this great tradition. Folk bronzes of N- W India, H.P., Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and contiguous areas, which to a well informed and charged with awareness of modern aesthetics are eminently appealing.

However, the worship of Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Krishna, Rama, Bhairava, Garuda, Surya, Mother Goddess or the Great Goddess in the form of Mahakali or Durga and some minor Hindu Deities has been prevalent in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, and other states of India since very ancient times. The bronze images of these gods and goddesses are to be found in large numbers in these regions.

Apart from the bronze images of Hindu gods and goddesses, there are a number of images representing a man riding a horse. While searching the meaning and use of these equestrian figurines, especially in connection with the worshipped deities, they have a lot of religious significance. These bronze images depict rural Spirit Riders or the community/village heroes, who fought against foreign or alien invaders and laid down their lives for the defense of their communities or villages, and thus came to be
worshipped as gods. In Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan the local cult of Gugga Chauhan or mundalikha, valiant Rajput hero warrior who fought many battles with the alien invaders, Mohammedans and in the last battle, went on fighting even when his body was headless. after the head having was severed off in the fight. Such heroes were honoured and revered as much as god, inspired many a rural folk to make horse- rider images in bronze. Nevertheless, the ancient Sanskrit texts, the Vedas and other mythological and legendary stories abound in references to horse- riders who seemed to have occupied a distinctive, significant and sacred place in ancient Hindu society. Legend has it that Indra, the God of rain, was the first to ride a horse. The hymns of the Rig Veda refer to a group of horse riders which is endowed with sacredness. Surya, the Sun- god, is also conceived as riding a vehicle (Rath) of seven horses. Further, in some places, there are shrines dedicated to a class of saints known as Siddhas.

3.2. Mohras: Mohras, (metal plaques) represent respective deities and this is quite common in Kullu and Chamba and other places. Each village has its own mohra. People of Mandi, Kullu, Rampur and Shimla region adopted mask worship solely due to economic reasons. These may be seen as economical icons. There is no historical instance of mask worship in Chamba region of Himachal Pradesh.

- Such mohras worship extends far beyond the frontiers of Himachal to Nepal, Rajasthan and Maharastra.
- The most of the mohras represent male deities. However, the mohras of the mother goddess are not uncommon.
- The Mohras, in strict sense, are not Masks. The head is sculpted in bold relief, while the neck and shoulders are more summarily treated covered with appropriate cloths.
- Raised trapezoid structure with a third eye or tilak in the center. However, the moon crescent (Ardhachandra) on the forehead of Lord Shiva is conspicuous by its absence, as is generally associated on the head of Shiva and shakti.
- These plaques are usually made of bronze, brass or silver and consecrated by a pujari (priest) before being installed in a temple.
History of mohras worship is older than the worship of full icons. Mohras have been made in Himachal for at least 1,400 years now. They are taken out of the temples on a palanquin in processions during religious festivals like the grand Kullu Dussehra, Shivratri fair etc.

**Mohras may be categorized as:***
- The ‘Main’ mohra
- The ‘Subsidiary’ mohra and of sheet work of different metals.
- The ‘Decorative’ mohras.
- The main mohras are made of gold, silver, copper, eight metals alloy (ashtdhatu), bronze or brass. Now, all the principal deities possess mohras made of gold.
- The Mohras in four-sided rath are either four in single row or eight in double rows or in multiple of four in the respective number of rows. The most predominant part of the rath is representing the facial part of the devata.
- Generally the mohras have forehead with the third eye (or tilak) on it and with a diadem (mukut) decorating the mohra.
- Mohras of subsidiary devtas are made of silver or gold, all exactly similar and symmetrical. They are generally carried with rath, but now a fashion of decorative mohras has taken a stride.
- The one sided devtas like Adipurukh, have seven mohras.
- The casting of mohras are older than the sheet embossed masks and strikingly the latter are of costly metal and the former are mostly that of brass and rarely of copper.
- A good number of masks emit the aroma of the classical art, the semi classical art and the folk art. The classical masks are sober, sublime and handsome relief. They show the blend of Pratihara facial configuration (with elongated faces of Pala cults) having crowns of Kashmiri origin with 3-4 spokes upward.
- Devta is a friend, philosopher and guide for all the practical purposes, helper, the hope and the ‘god’. People talk with these devatas, dance with them, feel annoyed and then try to pacify them, participate in all the areas on happy and unhappy moments.
- Mohras of great rishis or savior hero of the area are a common feature. Sometimes, mohra of one’s ancestor of a big family is also made for the family worship.
Fig. 3: Himachal Moharas
On the whole the mohra, whether classical or folks, possesses a soothingly modeled face in a naturalistic style with heavy to thin cheek, a thick protruding under lip, a well defined chin, and almond shaped eyes with upper eyelids projecting from under the soft, rounded eyebrows. Light engravings delineate the lips, earrings consist of thick beads, and the necklace is also made of heavy beads with some cylindrical or rectangular pattern in the centre. The head is covered invariably with a crown having three to five spokes.

- The facial expression of a male deity and female goddess are inseparable but for the respective attributes like globular character of breast. Sometimes, the mohras of goddesses are more feminine in appearance carrying all the respective attributes.

Economic backwardness has been attributed to this region for adopting the mask as an icon in metal. However, the Brampura state of 7th century produced marvelous statues in brass which are still the object of worship in Bharmour and Chhatrahari temples and no metal icon of their contemporary status is available in Mandi areas.

The oldest known statue of Goddess Sheetla in Purani Mandi can be of the period 12th of 13th century AD when it was the seat of power of the Sen Dynasty. Later, Suraj Sen (1637-64) had commissioned a figure in silver of Radha- Krishna being adorned as Madho Rai. The brass icon of devi Bhuvaneshwari got installed in the temple by Raja Bhawane Sen (1903-1912). On the whole, icon casting in Mandi region is just a tip of iceberg in the vast ocean of brass mohras which have wide distribution in the length and breadth of the state.

The classical prototype of a mohra representing a devi in entire Himachal Pradesh, happens to be from Nirmand. Its facial expression, anatomy and hair style are similar to the face of Parvati in the Gauri- Shankar temple and in the Luxmi- Narain temple complex. The date inscribed on the mohra corresponds to Tuesday, 12th July 1026 AD. It may be mentioned that King Yogakara Verman, during his reign of 940 to 960 AD, ordered for the casting of Gauri- Shankar image. Thereafter, the mask making activity started and spread in all the areas of Himachal including the Mandi state. M. Postel has claimed to have a Shiva brass mohra of eighth century and another of sixth century. However, the latter looks more like that of Buddha with long ear, head, and possessing no attributes of Shiva.
Fig. 4: Mohara of Jwala Maa, Mandi
3.3. Jewelry: \(^91\), \(^92\)

Man, when recognized expensive metals and realized the worth of the metals as money then that understood the protected way to hold them, was to keep them as close as possible. Converting them into artificial objects of adornment, and wearing them on his body, was the safest and most convenient way out. Those metallic and precious objects of adornment are what we call as the ornaments.

![Fig. 5: Lady with ornaments](image)

Chunky bead-and-metal jewelry of the hill people is usually in great demand. As with most tribal communities, the traditional attire includes ornaments for almost all parts of the body. Markets abound with stalls selling amulets and all. Fine jewelry is crafted out of silver and gold. The jewelers of the once- Rajput kingdoms of Kangra, Chamba, Mandi and Kullu were famous for their enameling skills.
They mainly worked with silver and were partial to deep blue and green enameling. They created exquisite pieces like elliptical anklets, solid iron-headed bangles, hair. There is given a list of Himachal traditional Jewelry of different parts of body\(^9\), which Jewelry element plays a significant role in the metal art of Himachal Pradesh. You could check it out in museums like the Kangra Art Museum in Dharamsala, the State Museum in Shimla and the Bhuri Singh Museum in Chamba of the jewelry that is made now, coin necklaces are extremely popular with pahari women. So much so that every pahari woman dreams of owning one.

In Kangra, kullu, Shimla Hills, Bilaspur and Nahan, jewelry is prepared by Sunars whose hereditary traditions. These Sunars have various local names such as Dogmangs of Kinnaur work in brass, copper, silver and gold; Gareng or blacksmith of Lahul work with iron, brass, silver and gold; Garh or Zo of Spiti.

![Fig.6: Anklets, Courtesy Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba](image)

- Anklets above the feet. It is made of silver, also contains smaller bellets (smaller than ghunghru), that create musical sound while walking. It is artistically made and sometimes small shapes like that of flower, heart, leaves etc, are superimposed on the design. May be in the earlier times people used to recognise who is walking alongside even witout seeing the walker. This payal is extremely popular not only in Himachal but throughout India. It is put on the anklet and tied through a interlocking screw made of the same metal that is silver.
• Chokers called kach (made of silver beads and triangular plaques) and the collar-like hansali are also common. Heavy anklets, bangles and silver bracelets (kare) – solid or filled with shellac – with clasps in the shape of crocodile or lions heads are worn by all women. In the Tibetan influenced Lahaul-Spiti, ornaments are studded with semi precious stones like coral, turquoise, amber and mother-of-pearl.

• Head ornaments commonly worn all over Himachal Pradesh are the ‘Chak’ or ‘Chaunk’ as it is called in Chamba. This is a dome-like ornament worn on the top of the head and is generally engraved with intricate motifs. Sometimes it is even enameled. On the sides are two smaller ‘Chaunkphul’ connected with a chain and plaited into the hair. Sometimes the two smaller hair ornaments are made in the form of lotus flowers, these are known as ‘Shishuphul’ (Fig. 7).

![Fig. 7: Hair Ornaments of the Kinnauri lady](image)

• The ornaments for the forehead are the ‘Shringarpatti’ also known as ‘Chiri’ or Dora and Teeka. The Shingarpatti has a central pendant either in the form of a half moon, a full moon, or a lotus flower with Ghungroos, or Pipal leaves suspended from it. This rests on the centre of the forehead. Two linked chains enclose linked geometrical pieces known as Chandaka. One side of the chain is decorated with pipal leaves suspended from it. The Patti falls on both sides, framing the face.
These either end in hooks which are fixed to the hair on the side or in a Karan Phul, Jhumka worn in the lobe of the ear (Fig. 8).

- The Mantika is a circular pendent suspended from a chain and worn in the centre of the fore head with the chain hooked into the hair (Fig. 8).

- Jutti or Junti is a hair ornament of silver with hollow cylindrical forms ending in pendants decorated with Ghungroos which is worn at the end of the plaits. This is most popular in Kinnaur, Mahasu and Sirmur area (Fig. 9).

- Balu, Bulak, Karolu, Nath are common nose ornaments. Balu is a large nose ring of gold, quite often six inches in diameter, decorated with floral forms made up by studding them with stones. It also has a pendent. The heavy Bulak is kept in place with a chain hooked into the hair. This is commonly used by the women in Mandi, Kalu, Mahasu and Kinnaur (Fig. 8). Murki is a beautiful gold nose ring suspended from the Central wall of the nose. It is built up with the use of granulating method. The Laung worn by Gaddi women is circular half sphere with decoration worked with granulating method and a red stone in the Centre.

- Amongst the ear ornaments, beside the Karanphul Jumka there are the Bale, Bragarm, Bunde, Dandi, Darotu, Gol, Mungrí, Murki and dhilli. The Karanphul Jhumka is worn all over India and is a full-blown flower with a half-open bud with Ghungroos suspended from it.

- The Bale or Phair is a crescent-shaped earring with Ghngroos suspended from it which is worn on the top of the ear, when made in a small size or at the lobe of the ear by Gujjar women. Bragar is another interesting ear-ring, circular in shape with turquoise and pearls. This is used generally in Chamba and Mahasu. Darotu is an interesting form of earring built up by a spiral of a single wire. It is worn at the lobe of the ear and is used only in Mahasu.

- The design for the Champakali necklace is popularly worn by mature women. The star-shaped earrings and the bigger star for the overhead go with the champakali necklace. The silver buttons for the tunic are uniform wear (Fig. 9).

- The ring circles, which make the Bazubandh, trace their ancestry to more than a thousand year ago, while the Knuckle-duster heavy Bazubandh derives from a weapon worn by women against invaders in the feudal period.

- The bangles of horse hair are a specialty manufactured in the hills. Only one of craftsman remains in Chamba, who is a master of this style of bangle making
today. The two pieces made of cowries and shells are museum pieces not popularly worn any longer. Ornaments for upper arms are rare; they are *Anant*, *Jantar* and *Saptami*, which are generally associated with religious observations. Kangnu or Dhaglu are thick heavy round bracelets that generally end with the stylized heads of tigers confronting each other.
Fig. 9: Himachal Gaddi with earring
Fig. 10: Himachal Ornaments: Jutti, Karn Phul Jhumka, Necklace
Gajroo is a hollow bracelet which along with Ghari Churi which is a flat engraved bangle, that is the lightest bangles Weighing approximately 25 to 35 grams per pair as against the other heavy bracelets, which generally vary from 80 to even 400 grams. Gajru (Set of Bangles), adding charm to the movements of hands with smaller bells (same as in Ghunghru) attached on the periphery of one side. These bellets makes sweet musical sound, reflecting the musical taste of the owner or the area, in every walk of life. In between there is loop design which makes it aesthetically beautiful. There is lining alonwhich it gets opened up by unscrewing the interlocking mechanism, so that it fits on the wrist of the arm. This is made of silver and very popular among the women from royal families and tribal areas as well.

The five - layer silver bead necklace is modeled on the ancient beads worn in the nomadic society. The same bead motif is carried out in the earrings and the head piece (Fig.13). Most women have series of necklaces, starting from a collar of beads or silver plaques held together by cotton threads and worn close to the neck. In Kinnaur, it is known as Pat Kachong and in the other areas as Kach or Kachong. Hamel is another necklace made up of coins strung on a thread and having a heavy central pendent. This is Dhod Mal, hollow beads shaped like a pumpkin are popular in place of the hamel. The Chandra Har or Satlara Har is a seven-stringed necklace of chains made up of circular flower-like forms. Sometimes these chains are combined with large enameled work pendent carrying
the delineation of Devi on the tiger on the central pendent with floral motifs on the two side pendent. The Hansli is used but mostly by the Gujjars and also by the lower caste people.

Fig. 12: Himachal Ornament Guj-roo, Courtesy Bhuri Sigh Museum, Chamba
Fig. 13: Himachal five-layer Silver Beaded Necklace
Fig. 14: Elderly Gujjar lady with traditional Ornaments
3.4. Coins:
The earliest coins found in the Pradesh belong to the ancient tribal kingdoms of Trigarta, Dudumbara, Kulutas and Kunindas covering the period from the 2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. The Bhuri Singh Museum of Chamba and State Museum at Shimla contain a large collection of these coins. The two museums get a share of 12 and 25 coins respectively from a hoard discovered from Arki in Solan district in 1973. They bear five symbols on one side weighing 54 grains.

Some discovered coins show influence of Greco-Bactrian penetration into Hamirpur and Chamba regions. During 1st century coins of Kullu were issued by Verayash king, punch-marked coins of Kangra and Shimla regions were also found in 1st and 2nd century with inscriptions, which mention the local chief Lakshmana Chandra of kiragrama (Kangara), and his overlord, king Jayachandra of Trigarta (Jalandhara).
3.5. Ritual and Domestic Items

Vedic Ritual items
There are several essential ritual items which are common to those in Buddhism including Rosery (Mala) of Rudraksh/ Tulsi / sandalwood / coral or any other one. Some Icons/ Vigrah form part of the rituals including Aum, Swastic or Ganesh. There are a few puja items mainly of copper, like copper plate, bowl, spoon (Aachamani).

Some musical instruments are essentially used in rituals.

There are some items used in Havan ritual, like Copper Havankunda, of suitable shape. However, square shape is preferred in general. Kalash & other pots/ dispensers/ tumblers for offering water and ghee are also required. There are some other Rls like Rath, Chhatra, Damaru, Trishul.

There are some Rls for a mendicant, like Kamandal, wooden slippers, rosary and Aasan.
Buddhist Ritual items
The Fundamental Water Offering (Kalash), Tsa Tsas (Votive Tablets), Thangkas (A Buddhist Artform), Stupas (The Enlightened Mind), Singing Bowls (Sound Therapy), Serkym (Clearing Obstacles), Prayer Wheels (Exponential Blessings), Mandalas (Offering The Universe), Kapala (The Skull Cup), Jewels (Accumulating Merit), Ghaus (Portable Shrines), Butterlamps (Dispelling Ignorance), Bell & Vajra (Wisdom & Compassion), Phurpa- kila (trishul), manjusha, Incense burner, Twadeva (metallic oil lamp), Ting (a set of seven metallic bowls for puja), Mane (prayer wheel) consisting of six syllable mantra ‘Om Mane Padme Hung’, Pair of golden fish. Shankh (both left and right curled Conch), Dung-chhen (Trhi) and Gya- ling (Shahnai), Vuk- chhal (Jhap- tal), Silayan, Ting- shagas, Damru, Dundubhi and smallTabla are main musical instruments. Rosary (of red sandal – wood/ rudraksh seeds or corals), Chhod- pa, Storna and Chhogus are other ritual items in this tradition.

Fig. 17: Buddhist Articles
Thus, there are more than two dozen ritual articles available almost in every monastery. More than 15 metallic musical instruments are used in worship rituals.

- White umbrella (representing head, protects one from evil desires.)
- Golden fish (representing eyes, symbolizing beings rescued from the ocean of misery of earth existence).
- Lotus (symbolizing tongue, symbolizes of purity).
- Conch (indicating teeth, symbolizes the blessedness of turning to the right and proclaim the glory of the saints by its humming sound).
- Shrivatsa or endless knot or mystic diagram (representing waist, symbolizing the endless cycle of rebirth).
- Chakra (for Dharma).
- Flag or dhvaja (for feet, signifies the victory of Buddhism).
- Kalash or vase (representing neck, treasury of all spiritual wealth and it also contains amrita the water elixir immortality).

They have six lucky items namely old man, long lived bird, long-lived deer, long-lived mountain, long-lived water fall and long-lived tree.

**Domestic items**
Himachal people has been using many kitchen utensils made of metals i.e. copper, brass, bronze, aluminium, iron and stainless steel. Metal other traditional domestic items, which are have being still utilized in the Himachal homes with artistic appearance, those are hukkas, locks, photo frames etc. There is an attractive tortoise shaped lock which has a key hole on the back.

Many of the decorative items including icons/ mohras and, musical instruments and others are metallic. Here, elephants are shown with hanging wall plate which is decorative with wire and studded stones.

![Fig. 19: Kinnaur traditional lock in the Tortoise shape](image)
3.6. Musical Instruments

Himachal Pradesh is the land with eternal beauty. The snow kissed mountains, the alpine green look, the breath taking landscapes and the rejuvenating climate is well supported by soulful folk music, which gives a pleasure package.

Music shows are an inevitable part of every festival of Himachal Pradesh. Bearing the imprints of the past cultural heritage, the tribal population of the state engage themselves in various kinds of musical extravaganza, from traditional local songs to exciting dances. The heartwarming folk songs are enriched by the wonderful traditional Musical Instruments. Instrumental music has universal appeal due to its opulence in soothing tones and can be appreciated irrespective of language and regional barriers. Almost, every Indian God is associated with a musical instrument, and musical instrument is played to make Gods happy. Metallic musical instruments
are manufactured by the metalworkers, which require a great skill, combined with some basic knowledge of music & acoustical principles.

The most popular musical instruments are **Ransinga, Karnal & Bam, the Dhol & Nagara, Tamak etc.** These form an essential part of any and every ceremony. Ransingha is a large 'S' shaped trumpet whose loud gay notes resounds over the valley. Karnal is a long pipe, which starts from a small opening for the mouth and ends in a flower like trumpet. Very delicate relief work is done all over the surface. Dhol, Nagara & drums are some of the percussion instruments. They are used for different purposes like in Pujas, weddings, announcements etc.

Fig. 21: Devotees playing — metal Himachal Instrument
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