CHAPTER: 6

Domestic and Ritual Articles
1. Introduction
Beautiful metal craft in domestic, decorative and ritual articles, is one of the most ancient and developed dexterity of Himachal Pradesh. In this context, the local artisanship is visible in repousse, ornamenting and engraving techniques, which shows greater ability, gracefulness in their art.

It may be recalled that various artistic shapes with geometric/ floral & natural artistic engraved designs on these articles having enormous elegance and aesthetics was known since the Indus- Saraswati civilization which had a great impact in North- West part of India, including Himachal Pradesh. The geometrical designs mainly consisted of various shapes like those of lozenges, triangles, rectangles, circles, parallelograms, hatched, either plain or completely filled, along with simple bands, wavy lines and loops. The flora depicted in painted motifs consists of flowers (mainly lotus) and leaves (of peepal and palm). Most of these motifs are drawn in identifiable stylized fashion. The natural objects included a variety of animals and birds namely peacock, fish, bull, stag, goat, fowl, serpent etc.

The metal- workers with their intricate work and style have not lost their magic touch of this centuries old art & craft which is still one of the most vital traditions of the state. The traditional metal items produced locally have a fine-looking finish. The royal metal wares and the beautiful ornamentations seen in metal sculpture, vases, picture frames, bells, chimes, lamp stands, teapots, wine-cups besides jewelry, have always won the hearts of all. Traditional Jewelry, one of the most artistic domestic metal items, is still a popular product of the goldsmiths in Himachal Pradesh, although the designs are still traditional but attractive.

In general, metal is little expensive, but has a lifelong utility. Aluminum being lighter and cheaper material than other metals is being preferred for domestic articles. In well to do families, the domestic articles made of other metals (brass, bronze and stainless steel) are normally used and in some cases serving items made of silver or gold enameled, are kept. Some of the more affluent homes possess beautifully fashioned teapots, smoking pipes, carved panels, doorknobs and other artistic pieces of novel metals. Metals/ alloys having brilliance are used for decorative and ritual articles.
Concentrating on the domestic and the ritual articles which are used in almost every household and the places of worship in Himachal Pradesh, a clear picture emerges. Accordingly, these may be divided into three groups as given below:

- Domestic Utensils
- Decorative Articles
- Ritual Articles

These have great significance due to their utilization/aesthetic value. The manufacturing of these unique metal articles in elegant designs is undertaken in Himachal Pradesh almost in all the districts of the state, with more concentration in Bilaspur, Chamba, Lahaul & Spiti, Kinnaur (Rikong Peo), Jogindernagar, Kangra (Mangath), Mandi & Kullu, Rohru & Sarahan in Shimla district, for which different methods and techniques are used successfully. The metalwork of Kinnaur depicts a unique synthesis of Buddhism and Hinduism. Brass is often used for trending household utensils and decorative articles.

Likewise, in other parts of India also such domestic, decorative and ritual items are manufactured with a difference in artistic style, as briefly mentioned in Section 3 of Chapter 1. These three categories of artwork of Himachal Pradesh are described one by one as given below.

2. Domestic and Decorative Articles

The domestic items with or without ornamentation are clearly noticeable in the Indian murals and paintings, similar to those found in Himachal Pradesh (Table 1)

Table 1: Domestic (Metallic) Items of Himachal Pradesh:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water storing/ cooking</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bucket (Balti)/ banta</td>
<td>brass/ stainless steel</td>
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<tr>
<td>vessels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(SS)/ Aluminum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Gagar</td>
<td>brass/ copper/ SS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Jug, sagar</td>
<td>brass/ copper/ SS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Lota</td>
<td>brass/ copper, used for</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>storing water</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Boiling water tank</td>
<td>SS/ tin sheet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kinnauri tea set</td>
<td>brass</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Boltoi</td>
<td>brass/ aluminum for</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Material/ Use</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Tatwan</td>
<td>cooking rice, pulses for heating water</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Chamru</td>
<td>for heating water</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Bhandu/ Patiulu</td>
<td>to cook vegetables/pulses/curry</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tamshu</td>
<td>to cook vegetables, pulses</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Chalta</td>
<td>for steam cooking</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Sansi/ Chimta</td>
<td>Steel, for holding hot utensils used in kitchen</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Glass/ tumbler</td>
<td>Brass, used for drinking water</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Lotku</td>
<td>ghee container</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Stoop or Chhaj</td>
<td>for cleaning grains</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Paraat</td>
<td>brass/ aluminum/ steel used for kneading flour</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Chapati Storage</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Seedu Maker</td>
<td>for making Seedus</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Thali/ plate</td>
<td>brass/ aluminum plate used for eating food</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Lotku</td>
<td>ghee container</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Tawa</td>
<td>Iron pan used for making Chapati</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Karahi</td>
<td>Iron pan used for deep frying food</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Patila</td>
<td>brass/ aluminum for cooking rice/ pateroo</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Karchhi/ tossing big spoon</td>
<td>Brass/ SS, for cooking meals</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Spoon (serving, slotted, table tea, fork)</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Bela</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Bowl (kauli)</td>
<td>brass/ bronze/ SS/ for serving dishes</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Tobacco pipes, Hukka</td>
<td>Brass, for smoking (water filtered)</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>Locks and intricate locks</td>
<td>Steel, brass</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Bukhari</td>
<td>Heating room and cooking</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Flower pot</td>
<td>brass</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Ash Tray</td>
<td>brass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Hand fan</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Here is a photograph of a typical traditional open air big kitchen or a big hall with stone walls, where preparations are going on for a feast, somewhere in Himachal Pradesh.

Fig. 1: A scene of Dham Kitchen

Out of these Himachal articles, only those will be considered for aesthetic analysis which have some typical artwork/designs engraved on it and rich in aesthetics.

**Aesthetic Analysis of Domestic Articles**

- **Boltoi:**

  a. Boltoi is a water storage domestic vessel. It is also used for cooking purpose. This is constructed with three joints. Mainly designs are divided into three parts, first it has big long stomach or tummy, second neck and last one flat plated mouth.

  Its base is not so much stable which is movable because of serving purposes. All joints have some rounded pointed patterns on three divisions. First joint has less artistic rounded forms. Second portion has three rounded forms in unit which is placed at some
distance with ratio. Points are arranged in single unit in circle at last portion. Second and last divisions with designs are making an impression of two necklaces.

Fig. 2: Boltoi-a

Bottom of narrow necked Boltoi has simple rounded lines. Its neck is plated with flat mouth. Beautiful impression of the Boltoi is reflecting simplicity and magnetism.

b. This Chamba vessel is made of brass, used to prepare rice or pulse for feasts. Its shape is quite interesting. Its neck is smoothly joining the belly of the pot, rather than a sudden change in curvature. On the neck there is one line which looks beautiful aesthetically but at the same time on this line joint is used.

The other joint seems to be on top of the semi spherical belly of the vessel. From a distance it looks like a line. The rim of the mouth is molded to made it easier to hold the vessel. The inner diameter of the neck is narrow so as to allow hands for cleaning purpose or big cooking bowl-spoon during the process of cooking in hot state. The purpose of making the neck narrow is when it is covered with a lid, it acts to seal the steam and therefore acts as a indigenous house-hold pressure cooker. The important
part is that whole of the metal sheet has to be thick enough for this purpose otherwise it may cause some accident during cooking.

Fig.3: Boltoi -b

- Lota brass/ copper pot used for keeping water:
The lota is the spherical ewer, sometimes melon-shaped, flattened from top to bottom and very rarely from side to side, commonly used in ceremonial and other ablutions. It is named as the same word as lotus, the water lily, and comes from the same root as the Latin lotus, means washed. It is found plain, chased, graven and encrusted.

A lota is discovered by Major Hay, in 1857 at Kundlah in Kullu, where a landslip had exposed the ancient Buddhist cell in which this lota had been lying buried for 1,500 years. Now, it is placed in the India Museum, oriental scholars to the date 200-300 AD attribute it. It is exactly of the shape now made, and is encased all round with a representation of Gautana Buddha, as Prince Siddhartha, before his going on some high procession. An officer of state, on an elephant, goes before, the minstrels, two damsels, one playing on Vina, and the other on a flute, follow after, in the midst is the prince Siddhartha, in his chariot drawn by four prancing horses and guarded by two
horseman behind it, all rendered with that gala air of dainty pride, and enjoyment in the fleeting pleasures of the hour.

![Buddhist copper vase with detail of graven decoration](image)

Fig. 4: Buddhist copper vase with detail of graven decoration

In fact, the common lota (a small globular pot for storing water) itself is available in so many different amazing forms all over the state. Similar things may be used as everyday items at home.

![Himachal Pitcher with Inscription at least a century old](image)

Fig. 5: Himachal Pitcher with Inscription, at least a century old

- **Pitcher:**

  This pitcher is at least century old, made of brass to contain water. It has a beautiful neck with a broad rim so as to engrave some name or design. It seems to be in use for
ritual purpose in a temple or a place of worship that is why probably some mantra has been engraved on it. Below the neck there seems to be an embossed lining within which the joint with the belly may be hidden. However, above the line some symbol is there which may be indicative of signature of the artisan. The inside portion including the broad rim with rounded edges, seems to be enamelled with silver. This enamel allows to retain the material safely without spoiling, for some reasonable time.

Fig. 6: Chamba Surahi

- **Surahi:**
  The artistic surahi from Chamba is also displayed. It contains fine floral work with the inscription in Urdu like script. This Surahi is used is for containing water. The shape is divided into three parts: the belly which is perfectly round, the neck is prepared in three subparts with floral design, into upper conical shape, the middle raised semispherical bangle like portion, the lower portion is smoothly joined with a beautiful ring on it. The lower portion also joins the belly part with a flat ring type structure. Obviously there should be the third part at the bottom for keeping the surahi on a flat surface for stability (hidden). The inner side is enamelled with silver. It is beautiful piece from the area.
Lotku:
This is deeply rooted in Himachal culture, people bring Desi ghee for relatives in their hands. Its relative names are ‘latku’, ‘latki’, ‘Lotku’. Clay lotku can be seen in Renuka fair for selling but riches have brass lotku. If one goes to somebody’s home, it is compulsory to take lotku with. If one is guest it is needed to have Lotku in one’s hand. Lotku is tied with rope. It is used for containing desi ghee for relatives. It is also used at cremation time.

It has a unique shape like small lota with narrow neck and round semispherical base.

Hand fan:
Chamba made metal handle fan crafted with beautiful embroidery on cloth which is placed in the state museum of Shimla. It is about 2nd century old. This brass metal is entwined with silver. Brass and copper wire is decorative with little rounded pieces like mustard seeds. Lower part of the is engraved in relief and ended with rounded ball. Upper part of the handle has some curvature opposite to the fan which is stated with the pointed lotus beautiful bud. Colour combination of the handle is unite with the embroidery of the fan, which creating harmony in the fan. Entwined metal wire giving impression of the thread where two threads are mixed like this. Probably, artisan must be motivated with the impression of the thread.
The imaginative form of both the censer and kettles is very appealing and made of copper and white metal. Artisans of Lahul Spiti make each kettle with distinct form and ornamentation. Their spouts and handles have a highly stylised dragon motif, which is believed to have been imported from Chinese art. (Fig. 9)

Figure 8: Chamba Fan, Courtesy — State Museum, Shimla

- Censer and Kettle:

The imaginative form of both the censer and kettles is very appealing and made of copper and white metal. Artisans of Lahul Spiti make each kettle with distinct form and ornamentation. Their spouts and handles have a highly stylised dragon motif, which is believed to have been imported from Chinese art. (Fig. 9)

Shape of the each article is divided into six parts three of the cencer and three of other. First cencer has reversed cup shaped stand containing holes, which is emerging the form of the cencer with mouth. Main body of the cencer includes two simple beautiful big handles. Kettle is placed in to the mouth of the cencer, its three parts are visible.
Fig. 9: Censer and Kettle in Copper and white Metal

only. First part, body contains striking spout and loin shaped handle. Second and third parts are beautiful neck and cap to cover the kettle respectively, with floral and geometrical designs.

Skilled artistic decoration of spout, handle, neck and cup are unity and harmony with the plain body part of the censer and kettle.

- **Kettle:**
  This Kinnaur made kettle of silver/ white metal has beautifully engraved three parts. These are belly with a handle & spout attached, neck and the cover. The background of the belly is simple bas-relief with rhythmic floral design. Its base is having a lotus
flower design. On the front, it contains long diamond type two dimensional shape with dragon in it. The handle is having a skillfully designed loin on it in folk style. The spout is having a rhythmic stripped and lined decoration with a band on the tip of the spout. The upper part of the belly is proficiently connected with the neck, which is having minute geometrical and floral rhythmic form. The same form is visible on the lower part of the cover, the upper part looks like a single peaked crown the bottom of which is having a lotus flower, and the upper part is decorated with simple vertical leaves. A silver chain is connecting the cover with the handle. A simple background of the belly creating unity, harmony and balance with this composition. (Fig. 10)

- **Buddhist Cup:**
  This typical Buddhist cup is made of silver or brass, used for drinking purpose (Fig. 11). This cup has three parts: the base, the main cup and the cover (the lid). The first
and second parts are connected through a lotus flower shaped structure with big petals. The lowest part, truncated conical shape, is having three divisions above the lowest paterned edge. The lowest is containing dragons and a conch shell in between alongwidth some floral design.
The other two divisions have floral rhythmic design. The more conical cup like middle structure is having five divisions, having floral, geometrical design in the lowest two. The middle division is relief of dragons and the conch shell along with the floral pattern, followed by geometrical and floral design respectively. The lid is also having three divisions, the lowest is having the partial floral design, the middle one is having lesser floral pattern and the top division looks like an uppermost temple structure with a blue ball on the top.

Fig. 12: Silver Tray of Chamba
There are three artistic pieces from Chamba. One is a small box of rectangular shape having six sides, made of silver with a marvelous fine engravings on it. It is a typical item retained by royal families to keep some precious items like jewelry, or for keeping beetle leaves along with the related items, or a piece of decoration kept as the royal collection. Sometimes the part of the lid/cover is made of the silver wires.

The other piece is a big silver tray, with the floral art work on the periphery, kept on the stand. The stand is also florally decorated. However, it is a part of the collection in some family or museum but it used to be kept normally in drawing or bed rooms. These typical art pieces are very common in Himachal Pradesh in well to do families. It's another photograph from the top is also given which displays beautiful patterns explicitly.

There is another small container of circular shape with a lid on it. Both the parts are beautifully designed with floral art with an addition of flower with petals fixed on the lid and a nob to hold the lid. It is also used for the same purpose as described above.
• **Bukhari-cum-fire place:**

This is a typical structure in the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh, which on one hand serves the purpose of a fire place (burning wood) keeping the room cosy and warm, the smoke is being ejected from the room through the pipe connected with the Bukhari. Whereas the other lowest part serves the purpose of Angeethi for efficient cooking of rice and pulse, boiling water and steam cooking at the same time. Effectively, it is multifunctional and energy efficient system. The front panel of the Bukhari is decorated with a big floral design looking excellent aesthetically.
Fig. 15: Bukhari cum fire place
- **Tobacco Pipes:**

Tobacco pipe is a very common among rural folks. At the same time such tobacco pipes are also used by persons from well to do/ royal families. Accordingly, the shapes and types may vary depending on the background. There are different categories as follows:

- Simple tobacco pipe (Fig.16a) in which tobacco is burnt with a small spark of fire which gets more and more alive with smoking.

![Fig.16a: Simple tobacco pipe](image)

- Sophisticated tobacco pipe used to smoke cigar / cigarette. (Fig.16b) **Hukka**, a most refined version of tobacco pipe in which smoke has to go through water having a filtering action (Fig. 16c) at the same time, the burning tobacco is always at quite a distance (one meter or more) from the smoker.

- It has mainly three parts: a spout at an angle, a vertical pipe, the main body to contain water and air. In some cases, handles are also provided for safe handling of the device.
Fig. 16b: Tobacco pipe

Fig. 16c: Hukka, the refined form of tobacco pipe
The first two devices are also supposed to have an additional filter in between, just to make the smoking less harmful.

The Hukka base is always with decoration at the bottom with triple set of rings near the edge, and at the top with floral design. With beautifully inverted S-shaped, probably of a, snake or a dragon (Fig. 16d). Now a days, such traditional pieces are not being used for smoking purpose rather because of its artistic nature these are being used as table lamps. The other Hukka base is having least design, possibly of leaf shape design near the neck, and no design on the belly and spout but the shape of the over all base is like mango/ beetle leaf and appealing. (Fig. 16e). This type of piece is normally carried by gaddis placed under the woolen gown, which keeps them warm as well as remains readily available as tobacco pipe. It seems from the shape that the artisan must have been inspired by mango that is why the shape is like this. Its simple shape reflects the rhythmic nature of the piece.

This hukka (Fig. 16f), It is made of non-brass metal. It is having a shape of an artistic fish with fins, eyes and tail. The main belly of the fish contains water, less than three fourth full. The mouth is connected with the main vertical pipe where the tobacco, to
Fig. 16e: Simple Gaddi Hukka base

Fig. 16f: Fish Shaped Hukka base, Courtesy Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba
be burnt, is placed on the top in a separate pot. The spout is again connected with a long decorated thinner pipe through which a person smokes. The bottom of the fish is placed on a stand. This is in the precious piece, obviously an antique, in the possession of Bhuri Singh museum, Chamb

Fig. 17a. Tortoise shaped intricate lock

- **Intricate locks:**

Intricate locks are typical in the method of unlocking. Sometimes these are opened with one or two or three keys in combination. Normally it is difficult to be guessed by an onlooker. That is why they were used in houses, temples, monasteries or safes where valuables were being kept in the hope that even thieves are not able to have an access to open these locks. These were made since ancient times its use now a days is limited to old houses or temples or shops. Different shapes of these locks indicate the artistic taste of persons in those times. These pieces are being used as artistic antique items. These are made in the states having the privilege of being the princely state in Himachal Pradesh, namely Chamba, Kullu, Kinnaur etc. Here we have shown four different types of intricate locks (Fig. 17a, 17b, 17c and 17d), made of good steel or brass, of which the shape of the lock, shape of the key and the method of operation are all different. Artistically, appearance wise they look beautiful. This is particularly the case with the last two unconventional locks (in lion shape and scorpion shape). These locks used to be there in old days, now out of fashion but still useful as thief locks.
Fig. 17c: Lion shaped Intricate lock

Fig. 17b. Scorpion Shaped intricate lock
The tortoise shape locks were being used in monasteries indicating riches, which on the front were having the natural look of dry and cracked land, and on the back it has a shape representing ashta-mangal symbol. Fish shaped, loin shaped, or scorpion shaped locks represent an auspicious symbol, made in Kinnaur. The keys of such locks are also artistic and unique in design. Some of the locks were even having an embossed design of deities like that of Tara.

Fig. 17d: Fish shaped intricate lock with keys
**Intricate fish-lock**: An intricate fish-lock along with a pair of keys is shown in the accompanying figure. The lock looks like a perfect smart fish, with natural skin, well developed fins and raised tail, big eye, ready to swallow its food if and when available. On the neck there are three lines. Around but below the eye there seems to be a moustache-like raised curve which may be a lever to control the inner mechanism of the lock and which keeps the mechanism hidden from an onlooker. It is normally made of steel but sometimes the outer cover may be of shining brass also. The keys with beautiful design are made of tough metal, preferably steel. The shape of handle of the keys is normally broad artistically designed for a better grip while opening the lock. Such a shape was quite popular in Chamba as well as in Kinnaur.

![Fig. 18: Metallic old key ring](image)

**Metallic key ring**: This key ring is made of thick flexible steel metal wire, of at least century ago. This key ring has a shape of a snake whose mouth is holding the other end of the ring/chain. This has been in use for opening a temple in Chamba district. However, the key does not seem to that old (Fig. 18).

**Decorative items**
- **Photo-frame**: The artistic photo-frames (Fig.19) are well known and in great demand in India and abroad. The artistic frames are identified with the broad border,
may be multilayer, and the design on the border all around, which appear aesthetically appealing. These frames are also found in various geometrical designs other than the rectangular ones. Which is composed elephants with floral designs. This is revealing beautiful impression of rhythm.

![Metallic Photo Frame](image)

Fig. 19: Metallic Photo Frame

- **Door handles**: Beautiful door handles made of metal from Kinnaur are really eye catching, through their design and colour (of metal) combination. Here we present three different designs of handles (Fig. 20a, 20b). The design of first one is simple with profuse floral design, but the other shape is quite unconventional, a combination of flying female bust with appealing gesture and the rest of a fish with nice colour combination.
Fig. 20a: Door Handle from Kinnaur
• Wall hangings:
In the modern society, mostly the metallic decorative items in each household have become a very common feature in the form of wall hangings. The other places where these can be positioned are show-cases in the drawing rooms. It may be the decorative tray with beautiful patterns of floral design (Fig. 21a), or striking metallic or semi-
- **Decorated Tray:**

Fig. 21a: Metal Decorated Tray

- **Wooden Mask with Brass Decoration:**

Fig. 21b: Metal Decorated Mask
3. Ritual Items

Metal Ritual items are used in the temples as well as in the Indian homes. Which make worship more elaborated, peaceful and devotees involved. Dev Bhumi of Himachal Pradesh where worship and Devatwa is imbibed in the soul of every body. People of every culture perform rituals with ritualistic items. And involvement with these ritualistic items take them more close to God or self. Mostly these ritualistic items are made of metal with beautifully designed and shaped. Some items are elaborately described below.

- Ritual thal/ tray:

Thal as it is known by the name, it is like a big plate which is used during the rituals for keeping all the necessary items related to the occasion during worship of Deities. These items may be sweets, fruits, roli, rice, mauli, paan etc. which are offered to the Deities for making them happy to get their blessings and grace.

The unique, beautiful and artistic Thals are made from Chamb. Mostly art lovers prefer to have these Thals/ trays as a decoration piece in their homes.
Here we present two gorgeous Thals which contains beautiful designs and figure of Deities. Both thals are surrounded with border of inter-twinned wavy pattern. First one contains figure of side faced Lord Ganesh in miniature style with grained background showing impression of water which is making this composition more beautiful and balanced. He is seatted in the Sukhasana on the lotus. He has four hands with all his attributes, laddu sweets taking with His trunk, pash, book and garland. His is wearing dhoti (in north Indian style) with beautiful rhythmic lines and small patka coming to both shoulder which lines creating unity with all different forms.

He is ornamented conical mukut with peacock feather, plain simple bangles, upper hand bands, lined waist belt, and two garlands ones of them made of beads. Lotus seated asana is with three divisions folk style stem and two lotus leaves on both sided of the stem.

There are smaller version in the form of tray used in rituals in vedic traditions.

Fig. 22a: Lord Ganesha on Thaal (Chamba)
Second Thal/ tray is artistically designed as ‘Dashavatar’, ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, namely Matsya, Kachhap, Varaah, Narasimha, Vaaman, Parashuram, Rama, Krishna, Budhha, all encircled, with intertwined wavy pattern on the border. Between the two encircled figures there is a six petalled flower towards the outer ring. The central figure is of Lord Vishnu with all the attributes seated on the lotus flower, just at the centre and the other nine incarnations are surrounding the Lord.

Third simple centred floral based designed copper plat is traditional patterned Thaal, which is very beautiful.

Fig. 22b: Dhashavatar tray
Fig. 22c: Floral designed Thaal

Fig. 23: Ritual Lota
• **Ritual lota (small kalash):**

Ritual small Lota is from Chamba district. It is made of brass which has a beautiful ribbed surface. Below the neck two lines of lotus petals are engraved beautifully which is giving the impression of the necklace. However, the neck is simplified with two pairs of lines. (Fig. 23). This lota is delightfully composed with simplicity. It is giving the impression of holiness. It is used for offering water to deity.

• **Ritual Kalash or Bhumba (Spouted pot):**

It is a type of a spouted pitcher usually found in temples and houses throughout India. Usually made of bell metal, the Kalash is richly decorated with precious stones, metals peacock feathers; it is known as Bhumba in Buddhism.

![Fig. 24: Bhumba (Kinnaur)](image)

Water is the most essential item both in Vedic or Buddhist rituals, which is always kept on the alter preferably in a pot of noble metal (gold, Silver, copper) or some of its alloys.
like bronze. The kalash is commonly used during Puja to dispense holy water. Nevertheless, Kalash is also used to keep water at the entrance of the house, so that visitors can wash their feet with this water, and to wash hands after meals.

The Kalash (Bhumba) may be analyzed in four parts. First part is the base of truncated conical shape. The lowest edge is plain which is connected with the upper part by vertical lines in a rhythmic manner.

Second part is a simple belly with relief between two lines. The belly consists of two sub parts, one broad at the lower end and narrower at the upper side which is connecting to the neck, the third part that is covered with the fourth part of the Bhumba. Its cover is like reverse form of the deep bowl with a crown, giving an impression of table lamp. The crown is having two triangular shaped metallic pieces connected to the neck. Beautiful flowers (with four petals) patterns are engraved on the crown of the Bhumba. Its boundary is beautified with bead in a line. This ritual article is very simple and sober with eye-catching crown.

• Ritual Incensories:
The Incense offering should be done in the morning on a clean and elevated outdoor site, free of insects; either on a hill or the top of a house and inhabited by many local gods and nagas. Incense offering can thus be performed as an elaborate religious ritual, an offering of a fragrant purified of its ordinary qualities and appearance to lamas, meditational deities, religious protectors, nagas and local gods. The offering is intended to please the deities, who rejoice at the merit of those making the offering. However, incense offering can also be performed simply because it is an ancient custom, and a traditional means of purifying the atmosphere. This customs is followed by all religion. Incense offering is also done to mark the passing away of important people, lamas or officials.
Fig. 25a. Simple ancient incensory, Mandi

Fig. 25b: Decorative incensory, Courtesy State Museum Shimla
Fig. 26a: Simple covered lamp, Courtesy State Museum, Shimla
Fig. 26b: decorative lamp
Ritual lamps:

Artistic ritual lamps are shown in Fig. 26 (a,b,c) from Chamba, which may be identified as simple, decorative and artistic respectively. The last one is with four Deepak with a bird perched above, along with a central chatra balanced on an elephant on four wheels. This fantasy in brass of a lamp stands for a temple anticipating emperors’style.
• **Ritual Chamvar:**
Chamaru or Chauri is called in Himachal Pradesh, fly-whisk, symbolizes tantric manifestations in Buddhist. It is often held by supporting Hindu deities and semi divine beings and attendants one of the eight symbols of good luck.

It is made of yak tail and some where peacock wings attached with silver handle, it is used during ritual recitation and fanning the deities on an auspicious religious ceremony like fair of Kullu *Dassera* and *Shivratri* in Mandi. Usually Devotees carry it for each deity. This is one of the eight auspicious symbols of Buddhism usually displayed during the performance of *vrata* (fast) ceremonies.

Mandi *chamvar* is with torch like silver handle with small rounded ball or with thick flat cap like at the end. Front design part is divided into three parts, first one is with lotus petals with double lines, second part is with pointed leaves at end, and last one is the combination of petals and leaves. When peacock feather *chamvar* has similar look with a difference in designs, which contains beautiful floral design in four parts. Divider design is made of silver entwined wire. Both are used as ritual items during worship of a deity.

• **Ritual Stick of Devatas:**
These sticks are made of silver or steel depending on the Devtas, for example it is silver stick for Mahu Naag. These sticks also assume the status of devtas due to its proximity with the Deity.

The two pieces are representing the same stick. The first one is the enlargement of the second one near the handle. The whole stick below the handle is having a rectangular cross section on its one face the beautiful design contains two entwined long snakes and on the face perpendicular to it is a single snake in it full form at the points of crossing there are two small circles on either side just for balancing the structure.

The handle is joined with this lower part with a raised round structure with the three lines and in between there are two pairs of triangular lines and small circular relieves on the lower side. Further, there are some metallic threads hanging out off the upper part of the stick giving an impression of multiple hands acting like the one Chamvar described above.
Fig. 27a, b: Simple and peacock feather Chamvar
Fig. 28: Ritual Stick of Devtas
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