CHAPTER IV

DOORFRAMES OF THE STRUCTURAL STONE TEMPLES IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

The earliest extant structural stone temples in Himachal Pradesh do not date anterior to the 7th century of the Christian era and these too are very few in number. Even for the next three hundred years or so we get rare examples of stone temples in the region that covers the early phase of our study. The Śiva temple at Mangarh, Śiva temples at Sawara and Parahat, the HāteśVarā and the Śiva temples at Hatkoti, Trilokanath temple at Udaipur, Gaurī-Śaṅkara Temple, Jagatsukh (Kullu) and the Viśveśvara (Baseshar) Mahādeva temple, Bajaura may be dated prior to 950 A.D. or in the early phase. By the middle of the tenth century we find the temple building activity in Himachal Pradesh had developed considerably and the nāgara style of the north Indian temples had become popular along with the local wooden temples both of which continued to be constructed side by side. Quite a large number of temples belonging to this phase upto circa A.D. 1250 exist at Chamba, Bharmaur, Shimla, Udaipur, Kangra etc. Still more numerous in number are temples belonging to post 13th century A.D. and they may form an interesting study but fall beyond the scope of the present work. The study of art and architecture of these temples has been done by numerous scholars as discussed above in chapter II of this thesis, and some of them like Laxman Thakur have paid some attention to the doorframes of these temples but a detailed and exclusive study of the doorframes has not been done by anyone so far.
The doorframes of some of these temples are exquisitely carved and have many bands of door-jambs and lintels, whereas those of the others are just plain or have simple foliage and scroll patterns. Some doorframes have classic art of the early period and the others have designs and style of an advanced period of time. The number of elements in these door-frames, the style of carving, iconography, the images on the base of door-jambs or on lalita-bimba each has its own peculiarity and help us determining the date of the monument. A detailed study of these has yielded some fruitful results as are described below:

EARLY PHASE: 

Amongst the earliest temples in Himachal Pradesh Laxman S. Thakur has listed two temples at Dhabas, a small hamlet in Shimla District, located on the right bank of the river Hamalti, a tributary of the Tons. The miniature temples, having plain dvâraśâkhās, have been assigned to the third quarter of the seventh century by him. 

ŚIVA TEMPLES, NIRMAND:

Three small temples assignable to the middle of the seventh century are located at Nirmand, a large picturesque village of Brahmins in Kullu District, known for its historic monuments and numerous artefacts. Located on the northern side of the village the complex known as Śiva temples has three small shrines in early nāgara style. Rather plain in their architecture, the first temple in the complex has a tri-sâkhā doorframe that has simple patralatā designs on it. The second temple is almost identical, with a small portico in front but with no noteworthy
features of the doorframe. The doorframe of the third temple, that has a
doorway measuring 27 cm. by 54 cm., is dvi-sākhā with patralatā
designs carved on them. The second lintel of this frame has a navagraha
panel on it but no image on the lalātabimba. A small two pillared
portico stands in front of the doorway.

THE ŚIVA TEMPLE, MANGARH:

Mangarh (latitude 30°45'N and longitude 70°15'E) is a small hamlet in
Sirmaur district, Himachal Pradesh. Well connected by road from Solan,
Nahan and Kumarhatti. Besides the scenic beauty of the place, that is
surrounded by mountains on all sides, Mangarh attracts the attention of
archaeologists and art historians for one of the earliest Śiva temples in
Himachal Pradesh datable to the first half of 7th century.

The temple was first notices by Lalman in a paper published in 1991⁴
and Laxman S. Thakur in his book published in 1996⁵. Both the scholars
have given a brief account of the temple without going in to details.
Recently O.C. Handa has also given the description of this temple
without adding any new information.⁶ But he adds some details of the
doors. During the course of our field work we examined the temple
afresh and noticed some interesting features that have not been recorded
by the earlier writers.

The temple is ekānga in plan, with plain walls, a square garbhagriha
and rectangular maṇḍapa⁷ (Pl. 4.1). The low plinth, the absence of
vedibandha and bhadra-niches on jaṅghâ, without rathikās and
completely plain outer walls stand clear evidence of its early date. It has
a slanting cemented roof. The curvilinear sikhara did not exist here, which was either flat or wagon shaped.8

Members like āmalakas and two sukanāsas are lying in the compound of the temple, that indicate the existence of some type of sikhara, but it is not possible to reconstruct any clear picture on their basis. Laxman Thakur has called it “nāgara style in experimental phase”.9 However, the structure at present indicates a proto-nāgara or pre-nāgara style, unless we take the āmalakas and bhadaramukhas lying there in to account. We are more inclined to call it the late-Gupta style after some of the central and western Indian temples of the same period.10 The garbhagriha enshrines a stone Śivaliṅga and some stone images are also lying in the sanctum. Three of them – mahishāsuramardinī, Śiva-Pārватī and Gaṇeśa seem to belong to the 7th century A.D. according to their iconographic features.

The most interesting features of the temple is the doorway of the sanctum. The triśōkhā door frame carved in the typical late Gupta idiom measures 80” in heights with an additional 10” plinth, on which it rests and 63.5” wide. The innermost sōkhā is 15.5” wide and 62” high divided in to two bands (Pl. 4.2), the inner one has patralatā design flanked by the outer-one with finely carved rosettes. At the base, on both sides of this band are carved the images of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā riding on their respective mounts makara and kachchhapa on the proper right and left respectively (Pl. 4.3), both the figures are in tribhāṅga posture, wearing the usual jewellery, crown and sari. They carry a pot in one of their hands. There is a female attendant figure is mutilated and gone. The height of each river-goddess image is 23”.

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The middle band which is 68" high is mithuna sākhā. It depicts six amorous couples, three on each side. The couples are shown in various postures like kissing, embracing, dancing and simply standing with hands on each other’s shoulders at the base of this band are figures of two Śaiva door-keepers one on each side. The figure on the right side is four handed, wearing jatājīta with a band of skulls, a dhotī with girdle of snake and jewellery of snakes. He has moustaches and appears to be in raudrarūpa. The image on the left is also four handed but without moustaches and in saumyarūpa. The jewellery of snakes is also missing in this case as is skulls in jatā. The lower portion of the figure is broken. On the top of this sākhā there are two female figures, one on each side, standing in tribhanga posture. They may be identified as apsarās. The one on the right has a mirror in her right hand and the left rests on waist. The figure on the left is depicted likewise.

The outermost band again shows scroll work with two standing male figures at base one on each side. The figure on the right is badly broken and nothing can be made of it. The one on the left has some very interesting and rare features. Two of its lower hands are in katihasta posture while the upper two are shown as supporting a pillar bracket with pūrṇaghaṭa motif.

The inner most band of the doorway lintel corresponds with the bands of doorjambs. Besides foliage design it has two peacocks in the centre, facing each other with long foliated tails.

Above the lintel twelve figures of gaṇas, six on each side of a central seated figure (Pl. 4.4). The third and fourth figure on the left side has faces of animals and human bodies. Each of the gaṇas flanking the
central figure carries garlands in their hands. The central figure is seated on the lotus seat in cross-legged posture. It has been described as carrying either a triśūla or a staff in his hand by Lalman\textsuperscript{11} and Laxman Thakur\textsuperscript{12}. Neither of them has identified this figure. The figure has a low jata worn like a turban on his head. He carries a staff in his left hand, and the right hand which is raised in abhaya has an akshamālā. The figure can clearly be identified as that of lakulīśa generally considered to be a form of Śiva.\textsuperscript{13} The panel above it depicts navagrahas with Śūrya portrayed as the central figure. He is shown seated on a chariot drawn by seven horses and carries a lotus in each of his hands. Rāhu and Ketu are depicted on extreme right as usual. The top most panels has patralatā pattern corresponding to the design on outer band of door jambs. In the centre of this panel a kirtimukha is shown.

The depiction Lakulīśa on the doorway firmly establishes the Śaiva character of the temple as do the figures of dvārapālas on the base of middle band of the door-jamb. The third figure at the base of the door frame, that shows a door-keeper supporting the pillar-bracket with pūranaghaṭa motifs not only makes it interesting but also unusual.

**LAṬṬĀ BĀOLI TEMPLE, NIRMAND:**

A small shrine on the bank of a tank (Bāoli) called Laṭṭā Bāoli at Nirmand has attracted the attention of scholars since the time of A.H. Franke as much because of its size as for the early architectural features. The small rectangular shrine has somewhat sunk and tilted back-wards. It has a low base, bhadra niches with chandraśāla motif and two pillars in front forming a small porch. The śikhara is vault-roofed with a big
śukanāsa in front. The kīrtimukha contains the face of god Śiva in it (Pl. 4.5).

It has a tri-sākhā doorframe, without any image on the lalajabimba. Even the place at the base of the doorjambs is plain, where usually the images of door-keepers and Gaṅgā-Yamunā are made (Pl. 4.6). The innermost band is a patralatā sākhā. The middle band is half lotus motif with scroll work. The outermost band has pūrṇaghaṭa motifs and kīrtimukhas.

Hermann Goetz\textsuperscript{14} assigned this temple to the first half of the seventh century A.D. where as Laxman S. Thakur\textsuperscript{15} puts it in the pre-Pratihāra period of the middle of the eighth century A.D. considering its style and features of the doorframe that is rather simple, we would like to suggest its date before the close of the seventh century A.D. though it may not go to a period as early as that of the copper-Plate grant of Samudrasena from Nirmand datable to the beginning of the seventh century A.D.

**GANEśA TEMPLE, JAGATSUKH:**

Laxman Thakur\textsuperscript{16} has referred to a Gaṇeśa temple at Jagatsukh, Kullu which forms the base of one of the front pillars at the Śandhyā Gāyatrī temple. We examined the miniature shrine in the course of our field-work. It has a small doorway measuring 16 cm. by 20 cm. and houses an image of Gaṇeśa. All the features of the temple as described by Thakur exist in the shrine, yet we do not want to take it as an independent temple because of its present situation. More properly it should be taken only as a part of the Śandhyā Devī temple. No doubt it is assignable to early eighth century A.D., it has a single sākhā doorframe with
padmapatra design throughout without any images either on base or on the lalāṭabimba.

ŚIVA TEMPLE, PARAHAT (HAKOTI):

Located on the outskirts of Hatkoti on the side of the road leading to Rohru at Parahat on the left bank of a rivulet called Bishkalti, which joins the Pabbar nearby is an early dvīnga Śiva temple in ruinous condition. Much of the temple has sunk in the river bed and also badly damaged. The small temple has a beautiful façade with chaitya arch on the top and carved pilasters on both sides (Pl. 4.7). A beautiful image of Śiva Naṭarāja is carved on the centre of the chaitya arch. The image is comparable to the two such images from Morani in Haryana, published by Ashvini Agrawal. The door measures 32" x 60" and has three sākhāsa and lintels (Pl. 4.8). The innermost jambs have patralatā pattern throughout with a kārtimukha in foliated design in the centre of the lintel. The middle band is absolutely plain. The outer jambs again have variegated scroll work throughout, including on the corresponding lintel. Between the middle and the top lintels there is an additional lintel with nine niches in the design of miniature shrines (Pl. 4.9). No images are shown in the niches. The base of the sākhāsa also has no images. The temple may be assigned to the 8th century A.D.

There are two more temples at Parahat on the right bank of the rivulet Bishkalti (Pl. 4.10). The doorframes of both the temples are plain and have no feature worthy of the note. The 9th century temples have been described by Laxman S. Thakur for the other architectural features.

GAURĪ-ŚAṆKARA TEMPLE, JAGATSUKH:
Jagatsukh, a small hamlet in the suburb of the tourist destination Manali, on the Naggar-Manali road in Kullu district is a picturesque place known for its early temples of Sandhyā-Gāyatrī and the Śiva temple called Gaurī-Śaṅkara. The latter temple is a fine example of the early Pratihaāra style of the 8th century A.D. The tri-ratha temple with rathikā-niches (Pl. 4.11), an elaborate Śukanāsā, huge āmalaka topped nāgara style śikhara and a small portico resting on two sixteen faceted pillars with square base and double inverted bell capitals has attracted the attention of several scholars.

It has a tri-sākhā doorframe which is 45" high and 37" wide. The doorway of the shrine measures 18" X 35.5". The inner band of the frame has a patralatā design throughout (Pl. 4.12). The middle band has padmapatra design where as the outer band is plain. A two handed image of Gaṇeśa, very finely carved, seated in lalitāsana is shown on the lalitābimba (Pl. 4.13). He carries modaka in his left hand and a parasu in the right hand. The base of the doorjambs is plain devoid of any images.

HĀṬEŚVARĪ TEMPLE, HATKOTI:

Hatkoti, a small hamlet on the junction of the roads leading to Kotkhai-Shimla, Rohru and Tiuni, is a picturesque spot on the right bank of the river Pabbar. It is famous for its temple complex which houses two temples, one of Śiva and the other of Durgā, called Hāṭeśvari. The temples have been known for a long time and were noted by J.B. Frazer as early as 1816-17. Ever since, almost every writer has remarked on the temple when dealing with the subject. The temple stands on an elevated platform and has been thoroughly renovated over
the ages. Presently it is enclosed by a circumambulation path and a new roof in the pahārī style has been added to it. Inside the walls of the sanctum provide a view of the original shrine which houses a large ashtadhatu image of Mahīśāsuramardini with an elaborate parikara bearing a Śāradā inscription that may be dated to the late 9th century A.D. on palaeographical grounds. The garbhagriha has a door measuring 34.5" by 68" with three jambs and lintels (Pl. 4.14). The two inner sākhās have patralaṇa design throughout with an outer band of padmapatra design. On the lalātabimba an image of four armed seated Ganeśa is made. He carries paraśu and danta in his right hands and padma and modaka in the left hands. Mūshaka is shown under his folded left leg (Pl. 4.15). The outer-most band rounded in section is absolutely plain except for the bhadrānukha on the lintel bearing an image of the face of the deity flanked by two seated worshippers. The temple may be assigned to the 8th century A.D.

TRILOKĀTHA TEMPLE, TRILOKANATH (TUNDE):

One of the most famous temples in Lahul-Spiti, located on the left bank of the river Chandrabhaga at Triloknath or Tunde is that of Trilokanātha, the lord of three worlds, venerated both by the Hindus and the Buddhist. The temple is a curious mixture of Śaivism and Buddhism. The six handed image in the temple at present is worshipped by the Hindus as Śiva and by the Buddhists as Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, known as Trilokanātha. It appears that the original temple was dedicated to Śiva but with the rising popularity of Buddhism, the present marble image was installed sometime around the 12th century A.D.
The tri-āṅga temple with bhadra, pratibhadra and karṇa projections has been given a mukhamāṇḍala at a later date that now includes a circumambulatory path around the temple. The śikhara is topped with two āmalakas and has five bhūmis.

The doorway of the temple measures 35" in width and 70" in height. It has a three band doorframe. The innermost doorjamb is further divided into three bands, the first having a scroll work, the second which is projected and wider has alternate square and round lotus flower design and the third band again has padma and patra design. The lintel corresponds with the jambs in design that covers all the three bands of the doorframe. The second sākha is rūpaśākhā with standing human figures that cannot be identified. The outer-most band is a patralatā sākha. The middle band of the lintel has a garland, eight in number, design with padmaratna design in each garland. The figure on the lalāṭabimba cannot be identified. At the base of the doorjambes are shown the images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, standing on their respective mounts, wearing saris and jewellery as usual. They carry pot in one hand and a lotus flower with long stalk in the other. Beyond them are the figures of dvārapālas on either side. The original temple may be assigned to the eighth century A.D. on the stylistic grounds and iconography.

ŚIVA TEMPLE, SAWADA:

Located on the right bank of the river Pabbar, Sawada or Saura is a tiny village with great antiquity as noted above. There is a small temple of Śiva located in the centre of the village that may assigned to the last quarter of the eighth century A.D. The temple has a small portico with
two pillars and a flat roof in front and plain walls with gavākṣha windows on three sides. A big bhadramukha is there in front. The curvilinear sikhara has fifteen storeys and is topped with an āmalaka.

The tri-sakhā doorframe has plain jambs without any figures on their base or design on their shafts. But the lintel of the frame is very interesting. It has an image of seated Gaṇeṣa in the centre on lalāṭabimba. Four more figures, two on each side, are depicted on the lintel. Flanking Gaṇeṣa on each side are the figures of standing dvārapālas. On the extreme ends are the images of the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā. No where else in Himachal Pradesh such an arrangement of depicting the goddesses on the lintel is available, who are generally depicted at the base of the doorjambs. However, the well-known example of such an arrangement is known from the Deogadh temple of the Gupta period. Ashvini Agrawal has drawn our attention to another lintel preserved in the Vidisha Museum in Madhya Pradesh, where the river goddesses are shown on the lintel. Was this arrangement borrowed from or was influenced by these examples from Central India is difficult to say. The door measures 21" by 41.5"

VIŚVEŚVARA MAHĀDEVA TEMPLE, BAJAURA:

Popularity known as Basheshara Mahādeva, a corrupt form of Viśveśvara, the beautiful 9th century25 temple is situated in the village of Bajaura on the right side of the highway leading to Kullu about 15 km to the south of the latter. Standing in its pristine glory amid the fields and orchards the temple presents a rare glimpse of the art and architecture of this region. The temple has attracted the attention of numerous scholars for almost two centuries, who have highlighted its various aspects
through their critical studies. The *sarvatobhadra* temple with projections on all sides faces east. The *rathikās* on the three sides have beautiful images of Mahishāsuramardini, Vishnu and Gaṇeśa. The *bhadramukhas* above the niches have three faces of Śiva and the entire walls are beautifully carved. It has a seven storeyed āyurveda decorated with chaitya dormers on the top (Pl. 4.16).

The doorway of the temple measures 34.5” in width and is 75.5” in height. It has a four band plain doorframe (Pl. 4.17). The inner two jambs are plain flat in surface. The third jamb is rounded in horizontal section. The fourth band is also plain flat but its lintel is rounded in section. There is a long Ṭāka inscription on the two inner right hand jambs. It records the donation of some land by a local ruler Rājā Śyāma Sena in the year 49 equivalent to 1673 A.D.26 it was obviously engraved on the lintel there are five niches in design of miniature shrines. The two side niches are only half in design. The base of the niches is in lotus-petals and the top is in chaitya-window design. In between these shrines, placed alternately, are four sunken shrines, without lotus base but with gavāksha sikharas. The base of the door-jambs has plain stone probably meant for some images, that were never carved. Compared with the rest of the temple, it appears that the door frame is probably a later addition. It might have been replaced with the original one due to wear and tear or some other reason.

Though not a part of the doorframe at the entrance (Pl. 4.18) of the ārdhamandapa on either side above the vedibandha are two beautiful images of the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Gaṅgā is shown standing in *dvibhanga* posture on a full-blown double petalled lotus
placed on the back of a foliated crocodile. She carries a pot in her raised
left hand and a lotus with a long stalk in her right hand. She dons an
elaborate head dress, a sari and an uttariya. She wears jewellery
including necklace, girdle, anklets, armlets, bracelets, pendants and ear­
rings. There is an umbrella above her head. Branches of a flowered tree
are shown above her head. Two female attendant figures on her right
side with the goddess’s right hand resting on the head of the inner
figure. The legs are slightly longer than they should have been, but the
posture is graceful. Overall expression clearly betrays early Pratihāra
idiom of the 9th century A.D. Yamunā is shown likewise (Pl. 4.19),
standing on a lotus placed on the back of a tortoise. She is also in
dvibhaṅga, carries a pot in her right hand. The lotus stalk in her left
hand is very artistic. Emanating from a floral base are two entwined
stalks one held in her hand and the other going straight up. Their stems
cross midway and each has a lotus above. A female attendant carries an
umbrella over her head. Rest of the figure and ornamentation is just like
that of Gaṅgā on opposite side. Above these figures ardha-ratna, ardha­
padma and pāṛṇaṅgaṭa are shown. These figures and decorative panels
appear to be original and add decorum to the otherwise plain doorframe
of the temple.

LAKSHMĪ-NĀRĀYANA TEMPLE, NAGGAR:

Naggar, located between Kullu and Manali on the left bank of the river
Beas is a small picturesque town famous for its castle and Nicholas
Roreich art gallery besides a number of stone and wooden temples,
mostly belonging to the medieval period. It became the capital of Kullu
state in the time of Viśudhapāla, the eleventh ruler of the Kullu dynasty.
who shifted to this place from the earlier capital at Jagatsukh located about 10 km. north of Naggar, near Manali.

Of various temples in the town, one located on a high platform, adjacent to Gauri-Śāṅkara temple below the castle is a small shrine in early nāgara style, presently called Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa temple. Assignable to the early eighth century A.D., the temple that now enshrine an image of Vishnu and Lakshmi was originally a Śiva temple, as indicated by the yonipīṭha inside the sanctum and the pranāla on the side. It has a small sanctum measuring 44" X 53" on the outside. A vedibandha with three mouldings, jaṅghā walls with bhadrikā niches topped with gavāksha jālī design, pūrṇaghaṭa and ardhapadma design on karnabhadras is topped by a three storeyed śikhara having chaitya window design throughout and an āmataka on the top (Pl. 4.20). In front it has a large śukanaśa with a single face of Śiva in bhadramukha. In front of the sanctum is a small porch measuring 24" X 48" resting on two fluted pillars with plain base but finely carved square capital with ghaṭapallava design.

The doorway of the sanctum measures 35" by 16" and the door frame measures 46" in height and 32" in width (Pl. 4.21). It has three sākhās the inner and the outer being plain. The middle band has padmapatra design throughout carved boldly. A Gañēśa image probably once adored the lalītabimba but it is now gone. Above the doorframe is another band of lintel with patralatā design. We have not come across any reference to this, otherwise prominent temple, by scholars.

**SANDHYĀ-GĀYATRĪ TEMPLE, JAGATSUKH:**
Located in the same complex at Jagatsukh, where the Gauri-Śaṅkara temple is situated is the Sandhyā-Gāyatrī temple that attracts the immediate attention of the visitor both because of its size and embellishment. The temple at present is a wooden temple with its elaborate wooden door, sloping roof and the walls made of alternate courses of stone and timber (kāṭha-kūmi). The present structure is not of any great antiquity as it clearly appears to have been rebuilt in the recent past. However, a large number of architectural members and sculptures lying in its courtyard and some used in its lower part stand testimony to the antiquity of the shrine. Hermann Goetz’s remark that the original ruins are completely encased in the present day hill shrine may not be entirely true. The modern shrine has no ruins "encased" in it. But there is no doubt about the reuse of some old material. There has been great controversy about the date of the temple and scholars like Harcourt, Vogel, Hutchison, Laxman Thakur, Handa and others have assigned different dates to the original shrine. A view based on epigraphical evidence that the temple was built in A.D. 1428 by Raja Udrana Pāla does not go well with the testimony of the art remains on the site that clearly belong to the 8th – 9th century of the Christian era. At its best, Udrana Pāla may have rebuilt or only renovated the temple (Pl. 4.22). Not going deep into the controversy we concentrate on the doorframe of the mandapa approached through a flight of steps. The mandapa has an outer gallery around the temple that serves as pradakśināpatha.

The doorway that measures 28” X 54” has a tri-śākhā doorframe. It is 66.5” high and 55” wide. The inner jambs and their corresponding lintel have a patralatā design throughout (Pl. 4.23). The second band which is semi-circular in section has a padmapatra design. The outer jambs and
lintel have foliated scroll work with a plain border on the outside. On the lalātabimba is an image of two handed Gaṇeśa sitting in ardhaparyanka āsana on a lotus pedestal (Pl. 4.24). He carries modaka in his left hand and a danta in the right hand. He wears a crown and snake girdle. Big elephant ears are conspicuous. His mount, the mouse is shown on his right back side. There is an additional band of patralatā design above the lintel. The doorframe may be assigned to the 9th century A.D. on stylistic grounds. Another ruined doorframe, Gaṇeśa carved on the stone lintel (Pl. 4.25), and three sākhās doorframe, two sākhās are decorated with patra and the bāhya sākhā is plain lying in the complex (Sandhiyā-Gayatri, Jagatsukh) (Pl. 4.26).

LATER PHASE

SŪRYA NĀRĀYANĀ TEMPLE, NIRATH:

While travelling from Shimla to Rampur on National Highway no. 22, there is a small village, 114 kms from Shimla, named Nirath. The place is known for its Sūrya-Nārāyana temple, besides some other temples and antiquarian remains for which it has attracted the attention of several scholars. The temple is located on the left side of the highway and is in poor state of preservation. It comprises of a garbhagriha preceded by a small maṇḍapa and is built on dvi-āṅga plan marked by plain moulding of the vedibandha, the walls contain niches with images of Gaṇeśa, Vishṇu, Vaikuṇṭha, Śiva-Pārvatī and other deities. It has a nāgara style curvilinear śikhara of nine storeys topped with an āmalaka and kalaśa (Pl. 4.27). The front, facing east has an elaborate śukanāsa with a four faced image of Sūrya. The temple appears to be of a later date than many of the images persevered in it and can easily be assigned to the
medieval period. As pointed out by Laxman Thakur, it seems that the temple was rebuilt sometime around the 14th century due to some unknown reasons. The sculptures in the temple that have been assigned to the 11th–12th century by Handa have correctly been divided into two categories of the later and earlier period by Thakur. The earlier ones can be easily assigned to the 9th–10th centuries of the Christian era.

The doorframe of the mandapa is rather crude and of a very late period, beyond the scope of our work. The doorframe of the sanctum is dveshakā and belongs to the earlier period of circa 9th century A.D. (Pl. 4.28) it is 69" high and 58" in width. The entire doorframe is richly carved. The inner band of the doorframe has been divided into two parts. Both the bands have patralatā designs with slight variation. The corresponding lintel also has the same design. A rather worn out image of seated Ganeśa is shown on the lalātambimba (Pl. 4.29). At the base of this sakhā the images of the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā are depicted. Standing on their respective mounts makara and kachchhipa both the images are executed in the local Pahari style, wearing a crown and standing samabhanga with one leg slightly bent. They carry pot in one hand and a ribbed mace in the other. The second attribute is rather unusual as according to iconography of the river goddesses, they should be carrying a lotus and not mace. This depiction may be due to the local influence or the artist’s idea to combine dvārāpāla image with those of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. The second band is a rīpa sakhā. At its base on both sides are images of dvārāpālas. The one on the right side is pot-bellied, wearing jatājāta, dhoti and jewellery. He carries a trisūla in his right hand. The Śaiva figure resemble that of Bāṭuka Bhairava. The
figure on the other side is probably Vaishnava. It is slender, wearing dhoti and jewellery, a kirita mukuta and carries a conch and a lotus in the left hands and mace in the upper right hand. The lower right hand is not visible. The figures may be intended for those of Vishnu and Siva though such an arrangement would be unusual as normally they are not shown at the base of the sakhās, where dvārapālas are shown. Above these figures, there are two figures on each side. The lower one on the left side shows a couple standing with one of their hands behind each other. The other hand of the male is on the breast of the female. Above this panel is shown the figure of standing lion. The second panel has a couple in embracing posture. A human figure carved sideways again against normal way of depiction. The right side jamb also has two panels with figures of couples. The lower panel shows a couple standing holding hands and the other arms behind each other. Above this is a small panel with two peacocks facing each other with a pūrnakalasa in the centre. The second panel depicts a couple with female seated on the lap of male in ālingana mudrā. A human figure in sideways posture, like the one on the left is shown above this panel. On the top on each side is a pūrnaghaṭa motif. The lintel has images of the navagrahas, each seated within pillared niches and bearing their attributes. A patralatā band is shown above the navagrahas. Though not of very high artistic merit, the doorframe can be assigned to the 9th – 10th century A.D.

CHAMPĀVATĪ TEMPLE, CHAMBA:

The picturesque town of Chamba, located on the right bank of the river Ravi is said to have been founded by king Sāhilavarman in the first half of the tenth century. Sāhilavarman shifted his capital from Bharmaur to
this place. The city continued to be the capital of the Chamba kings, one of the longest ruling houses in the world, till present times and is now the district headquarters of the same name. The entire town is studded with beautiful temples from the time of its founder to that of the modern times. Even in the surroundings of Chamba, places like Saho, Mindhal, Chatrarhi, Devi-ri-Kothi, Gum, Svaim (Sai), etc. have several temples of great antiquity. No wonder the region has attracted the attentions of several scholars who have devoted to various aspects of antiquarian interest. The earliest and foremost is perhaps the name of J. Ph. Vogel who did pioneering work in region and produced a volume on the Antiquities of Chamba State almost a century back in 1911.36 his work was followed by that of his equally worthy pupils Hermann Goetz37 and B. Ch. Chhabra.38 Thereafter several scholars have written about its temple and art remains in the last quarter of the 20th century.

Sāhilavarman, the founder of Chamba town is generally credited with the construction of three temples in the town, viz. Champāvatī, Chandragupta Mahādeva and Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa temple between c. A.D. 920-940. Their exact date and order is a matter of debate amongst the scholars of the subject. We have taken the Champāvatī temple as the earliest on the stylistic grounds (Pl. 4.30). The temple, as the legend goes, is named after Champāvatī the daughter of Sāhilavarman, who is now worshipped as a goddess. It is also said that the town was also named Champā (Chamba) after the name of this princess/goddess. It has been customary amongst the rulers of Chamba to start and end their pilgrimage and worship of local temples on special occasions from this temple, which may also be an indictor of its being the oldest in the town.
The temple, which is in bad state of decay, has a saptaratha plan of sanctum, with pītha, jaṅghā walls with niches surmounted with miniature nāgara style temple šikharas as elevation. It has a seven storeyed šikhara with an āmalaka and kalaśa on the top. The roof has an umbrella like canopy. The šikhara also has the miniature temple design carved on it. There is a small porch in front of the temple before which a manḍapa has been added at a much later date (Pl. 4.31).

The façade of the ardhamanḍapa is interesting in carvings. There is an image of a goddess seated on lion on the lalāṭabimba. She carries a trident, mace, pot and akṣamālā in her four right and left hands respectively. Above this is a panel depicting nine images seated on their mounts in niches. Figure 2 from the left has a big crack cross and the 5th and 6th figures are completely damaged. The second figure seated on bull seems to be Śiva. The third seated on peacock carries a pot and akṣamālā and should be identified as that of Brahma. The fourth figure is Vishnu seated on Garuḍa. The seventh figure seems to be seated on a goat or ram. The next figure is seated on lotus and the last one is broken. The panel thus is not a navagraha panel but as in the case of rock-cut temples of Masrur, it shows various deities. Below this panel are two sākhās of padmapatra and patralatā. Above this is a panel of miniature nāgara temple designs with pūrṇaratna in the centre. A gaṇasākhā with dancing figures carrying musical instruments like vīṇā, drum, dholaṅka, cymbals, etc.

The doorway of the sanctum measures 36" in width and 75" in height (Pl. 4.32). The frame is thickly coated with like and is in very poor state of preservation. The door frame has five bands. The innermost sākhā is
plain. The next two bands have *patralatā* designs on them. The fourth *sākhā* has lotus flowers within *ratha* motifs. The fifth band is again absolutely plain. At the base of the frame on both sides are images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā carrying pots and lotus flowers. Beyond them are figures of two door keepers, one on each side. The figures are badly mutilated for any detailed description. An image of four handed Gaṇeśa seated in a pillared niche with lotus base is shown on the *lalāṭabimba*. He carries usual *danta* and *parasu* in the right hands and *modaka* in the lower left hand. The upper left hand has an indistinct object. Overall the frame in its present state has no artistic merit or any important features.

**CHANDRAGUPTA MAHĀDEVA TEMPLE, CHAMBA:**

In the famous Lakṣmi-Nārāyaṇa temple complex at Chamba, where six *nāgara* style temples stand side by side, besides several minor shrines of a later period, the central shrine third from the entrance on the right is that of Chandragupta Mahādeva. Termed as one of the earliest* temples at Chamba it belongs to the first half of the tenth century A.D. M. Postel is of the view that this and the other temples of Chamba belong to a much later date than the original tenth century A.D. However, it is difficult to agree with him in totality, as despite of repairs and renovations these temple retain their original character in the main structures.

The temple has a *chaturaṅga* plan with an *ardhaṃṇḍapa* in front of the sanctum (Pl. 4.33). The walls are adorned with niches that contain images of various deities. It has a nine storeyed *śikhara* with an *āmalaka*, *kalaśa*, *bijapūraka* and trident on the top. Below *āmalaka* is a canopy typical of the Chamba temples. The front of the *śikhara* walls
are decorated with various motifs including that of a miniature nāgara temple. On the top is a beautiful sukanāsa with three faces of Śiva.

The ardhamandapa has several beautifully carved images on both sides of the entrance. At the base are images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā or the right and left proper, standing on their respective mounts holding lotus and pot in a graceful manner. An image of Lakulīśa is made in the centre of the lintel in front.

The doorway of the temple measures 36" in width and 79" in height. It has a trisākhā doorframe which is completely covered with copper-foil and nothing of the original can be made out now. At the base of the doorjambs are images of two dvārapālas. The one on the left side wears a dhotī, a crown and carries a long staff. His left leg is bent behind the right one, the posture reminds typical of Kṛishṇa as a cow-herd in miniature paintings. The figure on the right also is that of a door-keeper wearing crown and dhotī and carrying a danda in right hand. Both the images are very late and may assigned to the 19th century. An image of seated Gaṅeśa is on the lalāṭabimba, which too appears to be a late addition. It is possible that the entire doorway was replaced at a later date, when the temple may have been repaired for our purpose, the temple has no significance despite of its antiquity.

LAKSHMI-NĀRĀYANA TEMPLE, CHAMBA:

The most important temple at Chamba at present is Lakshmī Nārāyaṇa temple, in the heart of the city inside the complex named after this temple (Pl. 4.34). The first of the six temples in the complex, it is ascribed to Sāhilavarmā’s time. However, the temple clearly underwent
several repairs and alternations making it difficult to portray its original
details. Like the Chandragupta-Mahâdeva temple, this one is also
chaturaṅga in plan with a mukhamanḍapa in front. A large manḍapa
has been added in its front in recent times. In elevation also it is akin to
other temples, though larger and loftier than other (Pl. 4.35).

The doorway of the sanctum measures 54” in width and almost nine feet
in height. It has an image of Ganeśa on the lalātabimba and the
doorframe has patralatā and phulavallī śākhās (Pl. 4.36). A new iron
shutter has been put in its front, making it very difficult to photograph or
study in detail. The sanctum has a marble image of Vishṇu-Vaikunṭha,
which according to tradition was made of marble brought from the
Vindhyas, especially for the purpose. However, some scholars ascribe it
to a later date and are of the view that it was installed not earlier than the
13th century.

CHANDRAŚEKHARA TEMPLE, SAHO:

A small non descript village at a distance of 14 km. from Chamba town
is located on the bank of a rivulet called Sal. It is known for the
Chandraśekhara temple which is generally attributed to Sāhilavarman,
the founder of Chamba. Vogel thinks that the temple is the same as
mentioned in the Sarahan Praśasti, discovered from a tiny village
Sarahan located just opposite Saho.41 If it is so, the temple was built by
one Sātyaki and not Sāhilavarman. In any case the temple can easily be
assigned to the early 10th century A.D.

The temple, a rather simple structure (Pl. 4.37), comprise of a sanctum
with plain walls having niches on the south, north and west sides. It is
surrounded by a varandah supported on twelve tapering sixteen sided pillars with purnaghata base, which look quite modem in appearance. The varandah also serves as pradaksinapatha. The structure has sloping pyramidal roof of slates above which an āmalaka, kalaśa and trisūla are there on the sikhara. A huge Śivalinga in the sanctum is placed on a high square platform covered with copper plates.

The entrance to the sanctum on the east has no conventional doorframe but is made like that of an ardhamanḍapa (Pl. 4.38). It rests on two pillars with carved square base, plain round shaft, octagonal top above which is pūrnaghāta motifs in squares. The square abacus have flying vidyādhara brackets on both the sides. On the top front side of the left pillar is an image of a goddess seated on lion in lalitāsana. She is four handed and carries two lotus flowers in her upper hands. The lower right hand is in abhaya and carries an akshamālā. The lower left hand is in varada mudrā. Two elephants are shown on the top in gajābhīsheka posture. The image can easily be identified as Gajalakṣmī. On the top front of the right side pillar, is an image of six-handed standing Ganeśa in dvibhāṅga posture. A seated lion is shown on the left and mouse on the right below. He carries the usual attributes, which are not very clear.

The panels on the sides have images of Śiva in his saumya and raudra rūpa on the left and right respectively. The four handed standing image in samabhaṅga posture carries a lotus and akshamālā in his right hands and a trident and pot in his left hands (Pl. 4.39). He wears vanamālā, dhoti, and jewellery. Two attendants carrying fly-whisks are shown on his each side. Branches with flowers are shown on the top. The image is 2’3” high. The image on the right side is also standing samabhaṅga but
has six hands and is standing on Apsamārapurusha. He carries a snake in
his two upper hands above his head. The other two right hands have a
trident and the hilt of a sword in his middle and lower left hands he
carries heads of two demons held by hair. He has jaṭājaṭa on head and
wears a garland of skulls. He has three faces and has a crescent moon in
jaṭā. Dhotī, jewellery etc. are as usual. He wears an entwined snake on
the chest. Two male attendants with fly whisks are shown on each
side.42 A peacock is shown on upper right side. Ardhaapadma and
ghoṭapallava motifs are shown above these images. On front are images
of couples, one on each side, in erotic postures. They may be indicative
of mituna sākhā. The entire doorway presents a fine example of the
10th century art.

NARASIMHA TEMPLE, BHARMAUR:

Standing at the extreme north corner of the Chaurasi at Bharmaur, the
ancient capital of the Chamba state,43 is the stone pañcharatha temple in
nāgara style belonging to the 10th century A.D.44 Above the plinth, the
walls have bhadra niches with images placed in them. A small
mukhamandapa in front has a carved façade with a śukanāsa at the top
depicting three faces of Śiva. A navagraha panel with each graha seated
on his respective mount within niches which are replicas of miniature
nāgara style temples with śikharas. The temple has a nine storeyed
śikara topped with an āmalaka, kalaśa and umbrella (Pl. 4.40).

The canopy on the top is in usual style of the Chamba temples. The
sanctum houses a metallic image of Narasimha. It is difficult to place it
along with the metal images of the time of Meruvarman (7th century
A.D.) in the absence of any inscription on it. But the image is a fine specimen of the metal art of Chamba state.

The doorway of the sanctum measures 33" in width and 58" in height. It has a four band doorframe with an image of Ganeśa on the lalātabimba which is badly smeared with vermillion as is the entire doorframe (Pl. 4.41). At the base of the jambs on each side are images of doorkeepers standing samabhaṅga. The one on the right is four handed and wears a crown. His left hand is akimbo and he carries a mace in his lower right hand. Upper hands have indistinct objects in them. The image on the left is two handed with right hand as kaṭihaṁsa. Two swan like birds are carved on the top sides of each image. The innermost sākhā has lotus flowers throughout. The second, semi-circular in section, is plain band. The third sākhā has pūrṇaratna design in squares and the outermost jamb has padmapatra pattern. The corresponding lintels have the same designs as those of the doorjambs.

MAṆĪ MAHEŚA TEMPLE, BHARMAUR:

The largest of the group and loftiest by dimensions, the Maṇī Maheśa temple at Bharmaur stands in the centre of the group of temples at Chaurasi (Pl. 4.42). Constructed on a high square platform the temple faces north and has the famous bronze Nandi of the time of Meruvarman in its front in a separate shrine. The nāgāra style temple triratha in plan has a small portico resting on two pillars. The bhadra niches are there on all the projections of the temple that has a nine storeyed sikhara. There is a wooden canopy on the top above which āmalaka, kalaśa and trident are placed. All the sides have a lintel panel with nine figures
seated in miniature nāgara design niches. They may be identified as navagrahas.

The doorway of the sanctum measures 30" X 61" and has a five band doorframe with corresponding lintels (Pl. 4.43). On the lalātabimba is the image of four handed seated Ganeśa. He carries a paraśu and modaka in his left hands and danta and goad in his right hands. A pūrṇaratna design is carved around the image. At the base of the jambs are carved crude images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Gaṅgā carries a pot in her right hand and a lotus in the left. She wears a crown and vanamālā and stands on a swan instead of the usual crocodile. Yamunā, attired likewise, carries a pot in her right hand and has the left in kaṭihasta posture. She too stands on a swan. The iconography of the images is poor and devoid of any artistic merit. The innermost narrow band has rosettes that look like pellets. The second hand is plain round in section. The third band has pūrṇaratna design throughout. The fourth is plain divided into two narrow vertical stripes. The outermost band has padmapatra design throughout. The images and the design of the doorframe indicates towards a late date. There are some late inscriptions on both sides of the porch.

The date of the temple is controversial. Legends ascribe it to Meruvarman and even the inscription on the pedestal of Nandi in front of the temple says that a lofty temple was built by Meruvarman. However, the style and features of the temple certainly do not indicate a date as early as the 7th century A.D. for this shrine. It is possible that the original temple built by Meruvarman was destroyed due to certain reasons and then the present temple was built around the time of
Sahilavarman in the tenth century A.D., a date that stylistically suits the present structure.

GAURĪ-ŚAṆKARA TEMPLE, CHAMBA:

Standing fourth in the row of temples in the Lakshmī Nārāyaṇa temple complex, Gaurī-Śaṅkara temple is navaratha temple with a mukhamanḍapa in front (Pl. 4.44). The plinth and the walls of the temple resemble those of the other early temples of this image of Śiva, Mahishāsuramardini and Gaṇeśa. The nine storeyed śikhara is topped with an āmalaka, kalaśa and trīśūla. The porch has two pillars with square base with two round bands and fluted shafts topped with octagonal decorated bands and ghatapallava capitals. The lintel above shows a navagraha panel.

The sanctum houses the beautiful ashtadhatu images of Śiva and Pārvatī standing in front of Nandi and a toraṇa around them. The images are a very fine specimens of the traditional metal art of the region. A Śivalīṅga with Yonipīṭha is there in the centre of the sanctum (Pl. 4.45).

The porch has finely carved figure of Gaṅgā and Yamunā in the panels on both sides of the pillars (Pl. 4.46). They are shown standing wearing crowns, vanamālā, jewellery, etc. (Pl. 4.47) They carry water pots in one hand and a lotus with long stalk in the other, floral designs are made on the top of the niches. Above the images of the river goddesses, are the images of Harihara standing with Nandi on the right and Garuḍa on the left. Śiva carries trīśūla and Vishnu carries charka a four handed goddess seated on a Skelton, wearing jaṭāmukuta and carrying trīśūla...
and khaṭavanga in her right hands and a khaḍga and khappara in her left hands. The vertical third eye is shown on her forehead.

The doorway of the sanctum measures 35” in width and 68” in height. It has five sākhās, the innermost being a plain narrow band. The second is a patralatā sākhā. The third and fourth are plain bands, the latter being round in section. The outermost band has padmapatra design. Image of four handed seated Gaṇeśa is shown on the kulāṭabimba. At the base of the doorjambs two male doorkeepers are shown, standing cross-legged. The figures are badly damaged and the one on the left is completely gone. Beside these the images of the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā, both carrying pot and lotus, are depicted on each side of the doorway at the base of the jambs.

This temple has been generally ascribed to Yugākaravarman. Stylistically it belongs to the tenth century A.D. but has undergone several changes. It is evident from a comparison of the doorframe with the images in the mukhamandapa. Laxman Thakur has tried to trace a reference to it in the Brahmor copper-plate grant of Yugākaravarman as its invocatory verse refers to Śiva.48 The idea is too far fetched, though otherwise a date in the middle of the tenth century suits this temple.

HARI RAI TEMPLE, CHAMBA:

A beautiful temple located on the northern end of Chaugan and standing on a high platform at Chamba is called Hari Rai temple. Dedicated to Viṣṇu, the temple houses an exquisitely carved bronze image of Viṣṇu-Vaikuṇṭha with image of attendants on both sides. It is another
beautiful example of the bronze images for which Chamba has become famous.

The temple that may be assigned to the 11th century A.D. on stylistic considerations has a navaratha plan with a mukhamandapa in front resting on two fluted pillars with square base and ghatapallva capitals topped with square decorative abacus (Pl. 4.48). On the outer walls of the sanctum bhadra niches contain images of Sūrya and Śiva-Pārvatī. Some erotic couples are also carved on the walls. The śikhara is nine storeyed with āmalaka, and kalaśa on the top. A canopy covers the top of the śikhara below āmalaka. The elaborate śukanāṣa is also covered with sloping canopy. Bhadramukha is shown on the top of śukanāṣa in front (Pl. 4.49).

In the porch behind the pillars are three panels of images on each side. The lowermost on the left has a standing doorkeeper in dvibhaṅga posture carrying a danda in right hand and the left is akimbo. Above him is the image of two handed Gaṅgā carrying a pot and lotus stalk as usual. She is standing on a lotus pedestal placed on the back of a crocodile. On the top is the image of Brahmā seated on lotus with a swan on the side. He is shown three headed (the fourth being hidden behind), bearded and fourhanded. He carries a ladle and akshamālā in right hands the latter being in abhaya mudrā. In his left hands he has a book and pot respectively. On the right side the lowermost panel again shows a standing dvārapāla with danda. Above him is the image of the river goddess Yamunā standing dvibhaṅga on a lotus pedestal on tortoise, the latter being damaged. She also carries a pot and lotus in her hands. Śiva is depicted on the top panel. He is seated on Nandi and
wears a *yajñopavīta* of snake. Of his four hands he carries a *trisula* and *akshamālā* in two right hands and a pot and flower in the left hands. A *purnaghāta* motif is shown on the top on both sides. A *navagraha* panel is shown on the front on lintel.

The doorway measures 35” in width and 69” in height. The frame has five bands but they are badly plastered with coloured lime. The faint traces of *patralatā*, *pārnaratna* and *padmapatra* can be made out but no detailed study is possible in the present state. On the *lalāṭabimba* is the image of Vishṇu and Lakṣmī seated on Gauruḍa (PI. 4.50). Both are four handed and carry their usual attributes. A devotee with folded hands is shown on bottom right of the image. On the right side of the lintel is an image of Brahmā with Sarasvatī they appear to be seated on a swan. Both are four handed. Brahmā carries ladle, *mālā*, pot ad book. The attributes in the hands of Sarasvatī are not clear. On the other end of the lintel is the image of Śiva and Pārvatī seated on Nandi. Both are four handed and carry their respective attributes (Pl. 4.51).

**GAURĪ-ŚAŃKARA TEMPLE, DASHAL:**

Dashal is a small picturesque hamlet almost midway between Naggar and Manali on the left bank of the river Beas. As one treks through lush green apple orchards and fields for about one km. from the main road one reaches the beautiful temple on a raised platform like plain by the side of a water mill. The Śiva temple here assignable to circa 11th century A.D. is a fine example of mature Pratihāra style (Pl. 4.52).

Constructed on *pañcharatha* plan, the temple has a lofty curvilinear *śikhara* of eleven storeys topped with a *āmalaka* and *kalaśa*. Above
various mouldings of the vedibandha, the janglā walls contain finely
carved niches with interesting design of the pillars, especially of the
bhadra niches. Another row of niches with images is carved above at
the level of varandika. The mālaprāśāda is preceded by a small but
profusely carved mukhamāṇḍapa resting on two pillars with round
shafts (Pl. 4.53), square purnaghaṭa capitals and square abacus topped
with brackets depicting the images of Brahmā and Viṣṇu seated with
niches and flying apsarās in the corners (Pl. 4.54). The capitals are
highly ornate as also the other parts of the porch including the pilasters
on the sides of the pillars and the entire façade. The images of the river
goddesses Gāṅgā and Yamunā are shown on the each side of the
entrance exactly as in the Viśveśvara Mahādeva temple at Bajaura. The
image of Śiva-Pārvatī seated on Nandi is shown on the lalāṭabimba in
the centre of the front lintel. Three steps lead to the mukhamāṇḍapa and
another two to the sanctum that houses a Śivalinga and round Yonipīṭha.

Doorway of the sanctum is 82" high and 43" wide whereas the entire
doorframe measures 105" by 86". The fully carved five band doorframe
(Pl. 4.55) has the images of Gāṅgā and Yamunā at the base on proper
right and left respectively. Gāṅgā is shown dvibhaṅga standing on a
lotus placed on the back of a crocodile (Pl. 4.56). She is wearing a long
vanamālā, sari,  utteriya, jewellery including big karnaphūla and a tall
crown. She carries a pot in one hand and a lotus with long stalk in the
other. Yamunā is shown in identical form standing on a tortoise. In her
case the lotus pedestal is missing. Beyond these river goddesses are
shown two doorkeepers, one on each side. The one on proper left stands
cross legged holding a śula, across his body, in his left hand. In his
raised right hand he has probably a khaṭavāṅga. He wears a triple
crown, *vanamālā*, sacred thread, *dhoti* and jewellery. The *dvārapāla* on the right side is identical but holds the śūla in both his hands. Starting from the inner side, the first and the third doorjambs have *patralatā* design. The innermost band has a design of full blown lotuses alternated with rounded foliage designs. The second band is a *gana sākhā*. There are six figures on the left but on the right side the central portion of the first three bands is damaged. As such only three upper figures of this sākhā have survived. They are shown playing on various musical instruments such as drum, cymbals, etc. and dancing or even sitting. The third sākhā is divided into two vertical bands and has *patralatā* design of different types. The corresponding lintels are identical in design. The second band has eight figures of *gaṇas*, four on each side. In the centre on *lalāṭabimba* is carved the image of eight-handed dancing Gāṇeśa. He is shown in a *nāgara* style pillared miniature shrine. On each corner within a niches is the figure of a deity seated in *lalitāsana*. The one on the left is four handed with the front right in *varada* posture. Front left hand is not visible. The two back hands have some indistinct objects. On the right side the deity wearing a crown carries lotus flowers in her back hands and can easily be identified as Lakshmī. The fourth band is also *patralatā sākhā*. This band is cylindrical in section. On lower portion of this band are figures of nāgīś with human body and face with a hood above. They give the appearance of mermaid. The outermost band is *padmapatra sākhā* with identical lintel. Above this another band of lintel has images of the *navagrahas* seated with their respective attributes. Overall the doorframe presents a pleasing ornate look with fine workmanship and is comparable to other such examples of the mature Prauḥāra period in northern India (Pl. 4.57).
GAURĪ-ŚAŃKARA TEMPLE, NAGGAR:

Another late eleventh century temple, known as Gaurī-Śaṅkara, located at Naggar stands in a large courtyard just below the Lakshmi Nārāyaṇa temple. The saptaratha nāgara style temple in plan has a nine storeyed curvilinear śikhara topped with kalaśa (Pl. 4.58). It has a small ardhamandapa in front resting on two pillars, with a square base, plain round shaft, square capital with pārnaghata motif and a square abacus (Pl. 4.59). Behind these pillars on each side are images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. The vedibandha mouldings are the bhadra niches form the outer elevation. The niches have carved pillars on sides. The front of the śikhara has a chaitya dormer with a kārtimukha with three faces of Śiva. Though quite similar to the temple at Dashal, discussed above, it lacks both in carvings and refinement of the latter. Even the porch is not as well decorated as that of Dashal and the doorframe of the sanctum is rather in folk style than anything classic. On the whole it gives the feeling of some degeneration.

The doorway of the garbhagriha measures 28" in width and 71" in height. The complete doorframe is 66" wide and 88" high (Pl. 4.60). The frame contains five bands with the figures of Gaṅgā and Yamunā at the base of the inner three jambs they are shown standing on their respective mounts crocodile and tortoise and wear a Pahari style triple-pointed crown and a vanamālā. They carry a pot and lotus in their two hands. The features are devoid of any artistic merit and the plasticity is rigid. Beyond them are shown two dvārapālas, one on each side. The one on the right wears the crown in Pahari style in jatājūta. He stands cross legged holding a trident in his left hand across his body. In his right
upraised hand he carries an indistinct object. The door keeper on the right side stands in samabhanga posture, wearing a triple crown and carrying trident in his hands. The figures have a folk touch and are work of the local artists. The innermost band is a patralatā śākhā throughout. The second band is gaṇasākhā with eight figures on the right and nine on the left. They show musicians, dancers, acrobats, and worshippers all mixed up and in folk style. Some of them are shown playing drum, dholaka, lute, vīnā or sitāra and other such instruments. The third śākhā is sunken and has rectangular design of four-petalled flowers. A four handed seated Ganeśa is shown on lalātabimba. He carries a paraśu and danta in his right hands and modaka and shield in his left hands. Two pārṇaratna designs are shown on each side of Ganeśa on this band. The fourth band has a scroll leaf pattern. It is cylindrical in section. The outermost band has padmapatra design throughout. Above the doorframe a panel with five niches containing pārṇaratna motif is shown. The overall appearance of the doorway gives a feeling of degeneration. The frame is no comparison to other known examples discussed above.

VAIDYANĀTHA TEMPLE, BAIJNATH:

Baijnath is a small township, located at a distance of 16 km. from Palampur in Kangra District on the highway that leads to Mandi and Kullu from Kangra. The town, famous for several temples and known as Kīragrama in ancient times, lay on the main trade route in mid-Himalayas. As there was a customs post located here in the 13th century A.D. as per epigraphical information, a brisk trade must have been done through this place. When Kīragrama became popular as Baijnath is
difficult to say but there is hardly any doubt to the origin of this name. the town became famous for the Vaidyanātha or Bhaishajyanātha i.e. Baijnath temple located here and dedicated to god Śiva as the Lord of physicians. The temple stands in the centre of the town occupying the place of pride.

The nāgara style temple with an ardhamañḍapa, mañḍapa, antarāla and garbhagriha, in addition to a small Nandi shrine in the front (Pl. 4.61), was constructed as the abode of god Śiva by two brothers Manyuka and Āhuka in A.D. 1204 as attested by the two stone slab inscriptions in the Sarada script affixed in the opposite walls of the mañḍapa. The pañcharatha garbhagriha has bhadrīkā niches adorned with various images of deities. The vedibandhā mouldings consist of khura, kumbha, kalaśa, narapaṭṭī, grāsapaṭṭī, again kalaśa then Kapotāli decorated with Chandrasāla rising to a total height of 52" (Pl. 4.62). It has a curvilinear sikhara of nine storeys topped with an āmalaka, kalaśa, āmalaka and kalaśa again. The sanctum enshrines a svyambhū Śivalīnga in the centre (Pl. 4.63). The antarāla rests on two pillars and is preceded by a square mañḍapa resting on four massive pillars with two high balconies in the north and south. It has a pyramidal roof. The mukhamañḍapa also rests on four pillars with two additional pillars at the entrance of the mañḍapa. It too has a slanting roof.

The entire temple is studded with numerous sculptures belonging to various periods as the temple has been repaired and renovated more than once in the eight centuries of its existence. The sanctum has an impressive sapta-sākhā doorway measuring 41" in width and 81.5" in height. The innermost sākhā has patralāṭī design throughout. The
second band has the design of entwining creepers with a floral motif in between each entwined branch. The third band is rūpaśākhā. It has twelve figures of dancing musician on each side in various postures. They carry various musical instruments and are shown as playing on them. The fifth figure on the right side is shown standing facing with folded hands in the posture of a worshipper. Most of the images are shown with vanamālā but other details are not very clear. The panel on right side has a broken upper portion in which the ninth, tenth and eleventh figures are damaged. The corresponding band of the lintel is very interesting and rather unusual. It has four figures on each side of the lalāṭabimba showing images of apsarās lying with their legs bent or raised in amorous postures. The narrow fourth band is also a rupaśākhā with identical figures but most of them are not well proportioned due to the narrow width of the bands. There are thirteen figures on each side. They alternate in design between the standing apsarās in various postures and the dancing gana. The fifth band has purṇaratna, and a circle with pellet in square designs in alternate order. An image of four handed Gaṇeśa seated in lalitāsana is shown on the lalāṭabimba. He has elephant ears, wears a crown and carries danta and parasu in his right hands and modaka and an unidentifiable attribute in the left hands. He is shown seated in a pillared decorated niche. Two standing female figures carrying some unidentifiable objects in their hands are shown, one on each side of the deity. Whether they are Riddhi and Siddhi, the consorts of Gaṇeśa or simply female attendants is difficult to say. Another flying figure with legs bent upwards is shown on the lotus base of the niche. At the base of these bands are shown the figures of the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā standing on their respective mounts crocodile and
tortoise. Both of them are two handed, wear sari, crown, jewellery and are in tribhanga posture. They carry lotus flower with long stalk in one hand and a pot in the other. They are shown standing in pillared niches with a replica of nāgara style temple on the left and right and circular designed top between the pillars. Beyond the river goddesses are figures of standing doorkeepers standing samabhaṅga and carrying long spears across their bodies. They wear triple crowns, dhoti, jewellery and vanamālā. The sixth śākhā is foliated scroll work in design. The outermost bands have padmapatra design throughout. The corresponding lintels have the same designs on them. Above these is another panel of lintel depicting the navagrahas seated with their attributes in niches. The entire decorative style and iconography of images in typical of the 12th century A.D. art idiom but there are no signs of any degeneration. The artist has taken liberty in depiction of various images of apsarās and surasundarīs.

At the close of this survey of the stone temples and their doorframes in Himachal Pradesh, we would like to point out that some of the temples especially those of Mandi district and Lakshmī-Dāmodara, Rādhā-Krishṇa, Trayambkeśvara Mahādeva and Vajreśvarī Devī at Chamba have been left out of the discussion. Most of them are late and hence outside the purview of this work but in certain cases the temples have undergone repeated repairs and renovations making it impossible to judge their original character or shape. It would serve no useful purpose to include them in the ancient temples prior to A.D. 1250.
Notes & References:

1 For details see supra, chapter II.


3 Laxman Thakur has placed there temples as the earliest *nāgara* temples in Himachal Pradesh. He has discussed the Śiva temple at Mangarh in an appendix, pp. 152-154, of his work, which probably came to his notice after the his work was completed. We think the Mangarh temple belongs to the first half of the 7th century A.D. see infra.


7 For dimensions of the temple see Laxman S. Thakur, *op.cit*.

8 The small dome like *sikhara* above the centre of the sanctum is a very recent addition.


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Krishna Deva, *Temples of India*, Vol.I, Sutrapada Sun Temple, pp. 48 & 51, Sirpur Lakshman Temple, pp. 38-39, etc. It may be noted that in broader sense its architectural features resemble the Gupta temples at Nachna, Tigwa, etc.


This identification was done by Prof. Ashvini Agrawal.

Wooden Temples of Chamba

*OP.cit.*, p. 47.

*op.cit.*, pp. 45-46.

Strictly speaking the spot does not fall in Parahat.


*op.cit.*, pp. 50-53.

We have already referred to the Gaṇeṣa temple at the base of a pillar of Sandhyā-Devī temple at Jagatsukh. *Supra*. Another lintel of some doorframe lies in the courtyard of this temple. It has an image of fourhanded seated Ganeṣa, within a niche supported by two pillars, on the *lalatabimba* and beautifully carved inner and outer *patralatā* bands, with a *pūrṇarātana* band in the middle. A *padmapatra* design is shown on both sides of the outer band. It is not possible to say as to which temple this lintel originally
belonged to. It may be dated to the 9th – 10th century A.D. The left-side door-jamb of this lintel is also persevered in the same courtyard. It has the same design as on corresponding lintel with two images at its base. The one on the right side is ganga standing samabhāṅga, wearing a crown saṅī, jewellery and vanumāla. She carries a lotus with a long stalk in her right hand and a pot in the left. The other male figure is that of a Śaiva dvārapāla wearing jaṭājūta with skulls, dhotī, jewellery, sarpa-yājīnopavita and standing cross-legged. He carries a śīla in the right hand across his body and a snake in the left hand. He has fierce eyes, with a third eye on the forehead and a fierce expression.


22 *Journey of a Tour through part of the Snowy Ranges of the Himala*, London, 1820.

23 For details of the image see Laxman S. Thakur, who has assigned the inscription to the early 10th century A.D. *op.cit.*, p. 61 and note 71 on p. 85-86.


25 The date of the temple is highly controversial. Various scholars have dated it between the 8th and the 17th century of the Christian era. However, the views of Krishna Deva, *Temples of India*, 8. 219; Laxman S. Thakur, *op.cit.*, p. 56; M. Postel, et.al.,
Antiquities of Himachal, p. 40 and others who have assigned it to the 9th century appears to be correct on stylistic grounds, that we studied during our field work trip to the place.

26 Cf. ASIAR., 1907-08, P. 269.

27 Laxman Thakur has referred to a small shrine in a grove of deodars, assignable to the first decade of the 8th century A.D. op.cit., p.46. During our field-work we failed to locate this shrine but came across the one under discussion here, which closely but not completely resemble the one mentioned by the learned scholar. Is it possible that both are same? However, neither the location nor the description fully resemble.

28 Early wooden Temples of Chamba, pp. 68-69.


31 Also see O.C. Handa, Panorama of Himalayan Architecture, p. 151.

32 Ibid.


34 There is a heavy sculpture placed in its front that prevented us from examining it in detail.
35 This is not a very artistic way of depicting human figs. in which his legs go to the left and he appears in horizontal position.

36 He has also written other books on the region such as Catalogue of Antiquities in the Bhuri Singh Museum, History of Punjab Hill States, 2 Vols, (Jointly with Hutchison) etc.

37 The early Wooden Temples of Chamba, Leiden, 955.

38 Antiquities of Chamba State, Vol.II.

39 Laxman S. thakur thinks that this is the earliest temple at Chamba belonging to the time of King Sāhilavarman, c. 920-940 A.D., op.cit., p.63.


42 Cf. ibid.

43 For more details see chapter VI below.

44 The legend based on the Vamśāvalī ascribes this temple and the image of Narasirtha to Meruvarman, which is difficult to accept. However, J. Ph. Vogel has drawn attention to the Brahmor C.P. inscription of Yugākaravarman that refers to the erection of the image of god Narasirtha by queen Tribhuvanarekhā at Bharmaur.

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Evidently it is the same image and the temple may be safely placed in the middle of the 10th century A.D. *op.cit.*, p. 161.

45 Laxman Thakur has identified these images as those of the river goddesses *ganga* and *Yamunā*. *op.cit.*, pp. 69-70.

46 Laxman Thakur has described one *śākhā* as having *patralatā* design and has omitted the pellets or rosettes *śākhā*. *op.cit.*, p. 67.

47 Laxman Thakur is of the view that this destruction was due to the Kīra invasion of Chamba. *Ibid.*


49 Thakur mentions it as having three bands, *ibid.*, p. 71.

50 The description of the doorframe given by Laxman Thakur appears to be confused. He describes *Vishnu-Lakṣmi* and *Śiva-Parvatī* on the sides of lintel. He omits *Brahmā-Sarasvatī* and the image on *lalāṭabimba*. *Ibid.*