CHAPTER ONE

THE CONTEXT

a. Historical

The areas to which the present study relates have not always, or uniformly, been clearly designated as "The Panjab Hill States". We do hear of them referred to occasionally as the "Kohistan-i Panjab" by Mughal chronicles but this is done with such looseness as to give one but a vague idea of the general region which was meant. There was no precise definition of the limits of the area nor any list of states which were covered by it. A more exact description of the region we owe to scholars like Hardyal Singh 1 and Hutchison and Vogel 2 who wrote the first comprehensive histories of these parts. But whatever its accuracy at one time, the term "Panjab Hill States" is in a sense invalid today because these parts no longer form part of the Panjab 3 and the 'Hill States'


2. History of the Panjab Hill States. 2 Vols. Much of the material was published by the authors in the Journal of the Panjab Historical Society in the form of separate papers many years before it appeared in book form. Much of this brief historical account is based upon the work of Hutchison and Vogel and the reconstruction of the history of these parts from additional sources in B.N. Goswamy, The Social Background of Kangra Valley Painting.

3. Even the district of Kangra, which comprised many former states in the eastern hills and which remained a part of the province of Panjab the longest, was separated from it and joined with Himachal Pradesh in 1966.
have all got merged in the larger states of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. And yet, if the description is still retained by and large by historians, it is because they find it useful; it brings together states or units of territory which have had, historically, much in common besides geography and culture. It is perfectly possible, because of this relative unity, to hold, thus, a serious enquiry into a subject like the art of the region, or its history, or again, one of its social institutions, for the good reason that common characteristics seem to bind the area together and distinguish it from areas like the Panjab plains which lie adjacent to it.

From quite early times, it appears that the Hill States in this region have been traditionally deemed to belong to distinct groups. There are many classifications which have been adopted from time to time. Clue of them divides them into three groups: The Western, the Central and the Eastern, headed respectively by the principal states

1. The painting of the hills, as Pahari painting, has received intensive attention in the last quarter of a century. See, thus, studies like W.C. Archer, *Indian Paintings in the Panjab Hills*, Karl Khandalavala, *Pahari Miniature Painting*, M.S. Randhawa, *Kanora Valley Painting* and Basohli Painting; B.R. Goswamy, *The Social Background of Kanora Valley Painting*. 
of Kashmir, Dugar or Jammu and Trigarta or Kangra. It is this classification which adopted by Alexander Cunningham. Hutchison and Vogel, basing themselves on Barnes, gave yet another classification. According to them the twenty-two "Hindu States" of the area are popularly regarded as divided into two groups or circles, each comprising eleven states, one group being to the east and the other to the west of the Ravi. They name them as the Jalandhar circle and the Dugar circle respectively. The 'Jalandhar circle' even though it gives impression of being names after a city and a division clearly following in the area now of the Panjab plains, is not inappropriately designated because at an early time its influence extended far into the neighbouring hills.

1. The origin of this word is somewhat obscure but is generally believed to be Dvigarta referring to the land between two rivers in this case the Ravi and the Chenab. It is also believed by some to have reference to the two sacred lakes of Saroinsar and Mansar, both of which are in the Jammu region. See, Hutchison and Vogel, Vol. II, p. 518.

2. This is the name by which the State of Kangra was at an early time known and it is under this name that it occurs in the Mahabharata. The reference and the name is probably to the three main tributaries of the Beas, which flow through a considerable part of the Kangra district. The area of the kingdom which fell in the plains was, however, generally referred to as Jalandhar.


The states which fell into these circles, along with the name of the ruling families are thus given:

**Jalandhar Circle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>Chambial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurpur</td>
<td>Pathania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guler</td>
<td>Guleria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latarour</td>
<td>Dadwal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siba</td>
<td>Sihala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jaswan</td>
<td>Jaswal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>Katoch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutlehr</td>
<td>Kutlehria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>Mandial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suket</td>
<td>Suketia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulu</td>
<td>Kolu</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Banjar Circle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>Chambial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basohli</td>
<td>Basauria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadu</td>
<td>Bhadwal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mankot</td>
<td>Mankotia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandrala</td>
<td>Sandral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Son other states in the group called Central were also originally under Hindu domination but, their ruling families having been converted one by one to Islam, are regarded as forming a separate Muhammadan group. In this group fall the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Jaserota</td>
<td>Jasrotia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Samba</td>
<td>Sambial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Jammu</td>
<td>Jamwal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Chanehni</td>
<td>Hantal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Kashtwar</td>
<td>Kashtwarla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Bhadrawah</td>
<td>Bhadrawaia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some other states in the group called Central

1. These conversions were of the ruling families for the most part and did not assume the same proportion as conversions to Islam did in some of the areas of the Kashmir Valley.

Geographically, if one follows the classification adopted by Cunningham, then the Kashmir group consists of states that lie roughly between the Indus and the Jhelum, the Dugar or Jammu group between the Jhelum and the Ravi, and the Jalandhar, Trigarta or Kangra group of states between the Ravi and the Sutlej. This division, fairly comprehensive as it is, might well have existed at as early a date as the seventh century although it is by no means complete since it ignores the Simla States group which lies between the Sutlej and the Jumna. The names of the states associated with Kashmir have thus been given:

1. Kashmir
2. Gingal
3. Muzaffarabad
4. Khagan
5. Garhi
6. Rash
7. Dhanetwar
8. Gandgarh
9. Darband
10. Tarbela

1. Geswamy, Social Background, p. 28. In this group the major states were Bilaspur, Sirmur, and Hindur. Besides these there were a large number of petty principalities or Thakurias such as Balsan, Jubbal, Theog and Mahloog.
11. Pharswala
12. Sultanpur
13. Khanpur

There is reasonable certainty that the history of the more important of the hill states went really far back into the past. While written records are few, oral tradition points insistently to the antiquity of many of these states. The genealogical tables of many of these families are predictably stretched perhaps in the direction of the past, but even so some of these, Sir Alexander Cunningham thought, had "a much stronger claim on our beliefs than any of the long string of names now known by the more brilliant and more powerful Kashatriya families of Rajputana". The ancient character of the dynasty of Kangra is in fact a favourite theme with historians of these parts and even though they do not list all the 493 kings who occur in the genealogical tables of the Katoch dynasty, they speak of the ancient character of this monarchy with certain enthusiasm. Thus,

"Here (Kangra hills) a peaceful race, with no ambition ..., may have quietly lived for thousands

of years, and their royal dynasties may have been already ancient when Moses was leading the Israelites out of Egypt, and the Greeks were steering their swift ships to Troy."

In the context of the present study, though, this Kashmir group of states is only of limited interest because it fell mostly outside the area commonly designated as the Panjab Hills. But from it, at least at an early date when it was still under Hindu domination, in the period of which Kalhamia treats at such length, we have some extremely interesting evidence on the theme of Sati. During this period, it is also of interest to note, that the state of Kashmir really dominated even larger areas than we now include in the Panjab hills, and a suzerain-vassal relationship obtained between the monarchy of Kashmir and the rulers of many of the states in the lower hills. Of the intimacies, even matrimonial relationships between the royal house of Kashmir and those of Chamba and Kangra, thus, we know with certainty. As such the evidence from this region is of considerable interest.

1. Kalatarandini, ed. by Aurel Stein.
upto the 12th century. It is only with the passing of this region under Muhammedan supremacy, that it ceases to be of much interest for several centuries. Till, of course, once again it sharply claims our attention when, in the middle of the 19th century it comes under Hindu, more specifically, Rajput rule. This is when the region of Kashmir, with large areas of Jammu and other states, becomes a domain of Maharaja Gulab Singh.

The Central or Dugar group proper is more of direct interest to us. The history of the principal state in this group, Jammu, is almost certainly very old although there is very little of documentary material on it to which one can refer. The original capital of the state was at Bahu, which is just across the Tawi stream, from the present town of Jammu, and it is only in the 13th century perhaps that the present town of Jammu was founded. References to it are frequent in Muhammedan chronicles, especially from A.D. 1398 when it fell to Timur. The “Lord of Dugara”, did not enjoy complete sovereignty from then on because the paramount authority in the hills soon came to be the Mughals. This authority loosened only in the 19th century in the middle of which

the suzerainty of those parts passed into the hands of the Durain Kings of Kabul. But even more than this, the 18th century is memorable in the history of Jammu because it saw the rise to power there of Ranjit Dev whose period is regarded as the golden age of peace and prosperity in those parts. Of peace one does not remain so sure after going into the history of Jammu under Ranjit Dev in some detail, but of the nobility of the man himself and the mild nature of his rule there is little doubt. It is this Ranjit Dev who, as shall be seen later, made an attempt at setting a personal example to his subjects, in the matter of expressing his disapproval of the custom of sati, by ordaining that no woman should burn herself at his death.

Ranjit Dev himself owed some form of allegiance to the Durain Kings, but power passed soon from the hands of his successors and it was the Sikh Chiefs who became the dominant force in these parts till, of course,


2. For an account of Ranjit Dev, see Ganesh Dass, Kaidarshani.
in the early years of the 19th century authority passed entirely into the hands of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who later conferred the state of Jammu as a jagir upon the eldest of the famous Dogra brothers, Gulab Singh, who also received, the state of Kashmir, with many others, in 1946 from the British.

Jammu was not the only state in this group with an ancient history. If its ruling family claimed a kuthar connection, the Bial family invoked the proud name of the Sisodias of Chittor, for it is descended from them, according to one tradition. The state of Balaur or Basohli has likewise claimed much attention first from its able historians, Thakur Kahan Singh, and later, from the art historians because of its distinguished and brilliant school of painting. Its ruling house traced its descent.

3. The school of painting named after Basohli is among the most brilliant among the schools of Pahari region. It may be mentioned, however, that all the paintings described as of the Basohli school were not actually painted in the state of that name. This is a generic name given to a style that obtained in large areas of the hills.
together with Bhadu and Bhadrawah, from a family in
Hardwar. The ancient state of Chandel, with its capital
at Harimchi, was, likewise, related from an early a
period as the 9th century, with a family that belonged to
another region outside the hills: Chanderi in Bundelkhand.

Many of these states became linked with the
principal state of Jamou in this region, especially in
the middle of the eighteenth century when Ranjit Dev
established his supremacy over these parts by systematic
campaigning, and the histories of many of these, as known
to us, would not fill more than a page or so. But of
quite special interest in this group are the states of
Kashower, Panch, Kotli, Rajauri, Shimbar and Khari.
Khamiyal because the rulers of these states embraced Islam,
some of them in the 17th century under Aurangzeb. This
interest arises because of the strong Hindu or Rajout

2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 47.
3. For all their thoroughness with which they go into
the history of these parts, Hutchison and Vogel do
not devote even a page to a state like Raisaj
Balotpur or Trikut, for instance.
4. From Kashower, one prominent ruler who was converted
to Islam during his residence at the Mughal court
was Kirt Singh (ruled A.D. 1691-1728) who received
the name Linder Khan. His father, Kaja Jai Singh
is also said to have embraced Islam and assumed the
name of Bakhtiar Khan. See, Hutchison and Vogel,
culture of the ruling families of these states. A most fascinating situation prevails in these states because of the virtual inability or unwillingness of the rulers of these states to disown their Hindu associations. We have, thus, rulers with names like Inayat-Ullah-Singh and Muhammad Tegh Singh alias Saif Ullah Khan from Kishwar, and one of them making a grant in favour of his Hindu "purohit". All this recalls to one's mind the similar situation in which a prince like Shah Singh of Surpur who became a convert to Islam under Aurangzeb continued, even after his conversion, to begin his documents with an invocation to "Shri Ram Ji." It is in this context that the continuance of Sati in these ruling families of the Western group comes as no surprise.

In the eastern or the Trigarta group of states, the pride of place belongs, of course, to Kangra. The antiquity of the ruling house of this state, the Katochees, has a strong claim on our belief. For one of the early

1. Hutchison and Vogel, Vol. II, p. 660. This grant is in the form of a copper-plate title-deed and is dated A.D. 1802.


3. One of his grants is in the possession of Pandit Som Nath Chakravan of Haridwar, Purohit of Surpur State. I am grateful to Prof. B.N. Upsamany for drawing my attention to this document.
rulers from it finds mention even in the _Mahabharata_,
where he, Susarmachandra, is said to have fought on
the side of the Kauravas. The Katoches are in fact
taken as the type of Rajput in the hills, "so ancient,
that their very origin and advent to their present abodes
are lost in the past...." "While our ancestors were
un-reclaimed savages and the Empire of Rome was yet in
its infancy" wrote Barnes, "there was a Katoch monarchy
with an organized government at Kangra."

With this state integrally are linked at least
from others, Guler, Jaswan, Sibs and Datpur, all of
which branched off from it at different points of time.
Apart from these, however, there are other states in this
group which form long and proud histories. The area of
Nurpur has yielded many Andumbara coins which are among

3. Cf. Legal Griffin who refers to the Rajput dynasties
   of the Kangra hills having "genealogies more ancient
   and unbroken than can be shown by any other royal
   families in the world." See Hutchison and Vogel,
the earliest numismatic records from these parts and yield fascinating information. There again was the coin of the Kumindas from near Jwalamukhi, and of the Kulutas of the Kulu region, who also find a mention in Higen-Tsang's account, which afford an occasional glimpse into the early history of some of these states. From Chamba we are fortunate in having a quite unique series of early records, the copper-plate and stone inscriptions which were edited with a great ability by Vogel many years ago. There is every evidence that most of the areas of which we are speaking were at an early date under the authority of small local chieftains, the Ranas and Thakurs, whom Hutchison and Vogel describe as the "barons of the hills." They have gathered together many a fascinating legend about these chieftains and those in oral tradition and in occasional inscriptions as from Chamba and... we get a fair idea of the nature of rule as also of the hold of these rulers who were apparently constantly


2. J. Ph. Vogel, Antiquities of Chamba State, Part I. This volume covers only inscriptions of pre-Mohammedan period. The second part of this work relating to later inscriptions was ed. by Dr. B. Ch. Chhabra.

3. Vol. I, pp. 12-40. This is one of the most fascinating of the chapters in their history.
fighting with each other over small slips of territory or petty slights armed at each other.

It is during the ascendancy of those chieftains that we get information about the arrival into the hills, almost in wave after wave of Rajput princes and cadets linked with the better known families of Rajasthan and Central India. There are immigration even from as far as Bengal and even though the number of these immigrants could not have been large, their military prowess had a distinct edge over that of the local rulers of the hills. From about the 7th century onwards one get consistent evidence of the foundation of many a ruling Rajput dynasty in the hills and it is safe to assume that none of these were founded without a struggle. The records are characteristically silent, but the stray glimpse into events that one gets is sufficient to establish this.

With the exception of Kangra, the Katoch dynasty of which was probably established in the hills at indeed a very early date, the hill states came under the rule of dynasties which preserve the memory of having originated

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1. The Sena dynasty of Mandi of which the dynasty of Suket is an offshoot retains even in the family suffix this connection.
from the plains at different periods. From a careful look at the evidence available, thus, Dr. Cosmany concludes:

"There is an amazing uniformity in the traditions obtainable in the hills about the Rajput founders of the various dynasties, having been either pilgrims to the celebrated shrine of Jwalamukhi in the hills, or moving cadets of families in the plains of India. Thus the founders of Chamba are said to have come from Harwar in Rajasthan; of Kulu from Prayag in the Uttar Pradesh; of Basohli (originally Vallapura or Salor), Bhadu and Bhadrarwah from the parentstem of Kulu; of Jammu from Ayuchya in the Uttar Pradesh; of Jasrota, Samba, Mankot, Lohianpur, Trikot, Dalpatpur, Rissi, Akhnoor, Bhan and Bhoti in their turn from the Jammu family; of Bilaspur (Kahaw), Malagarh (Hindor) and Channah from Chanderi in Bundel Khand; of Kutlehar, Bhall and Koti from Poona.

1. Social Background, pp. 29-30.
of Sirmur from Jaisalmere of Suket,
of Juhkal, Balsan, Taroch, Baghal and
Bija from Ujjain of Darkoti from
Warwar, of Baghat from the Deccan; of
Rashahr from Banaras and of Nurpur from
Delhi”.

Even after the establishment of the power of
Rajput rajas in these states, however, the conflict
between the Ranas and Thakurs and their Rajput over-
lords, to whom they submitted their allegiance, was
not entirely over. And we have accounts of armed
conflicts between the Rajput chiefs and their feudal-
atory
barons which come right up to the 16th century. Super-
imposed upon this almost continuous conflict, must have
been another kind of conflicts that between the Rajput
rulers and Muslim invaders of whom one begins to hear
in the hills from the 11th century onwards. There are
the celebrated attacks upon the fort of Nagarkot or
Kangra by Mahmud of Ghazni and Firoz Tughlak, but there

We hear of coalitions of Ranas and Thakurs, thus,
against the Rajput Rajas of Khastivar and Bhadrawah
and Kulu. In Kulu it was as late as the 16th
century that Raja Bahadur Singh finally put down
these powerful barons.

2. For an evaluation of the evidence about these
campaigns, see Goswamy. Social Background. pp.
35-36.
are other incursions besides. Every now and then one reads of sporadic campaigns like those of the Khokhars and Khawas Khan.

The systematic subjugation of the hills begins however under the Mughals. There is some doubt about whether the emperor Akbar subjugated the proud fort of Kangra or not, but there is no uncertainty about his armies having marched deep into the eastern hills. The Mughals now became the paramount power in the hills and the rajas had to acknowledge this fact one by one. With the conquest of the Kangra fort by Jahangir in 1619-20 this hold of Mughal authority tightened even further and if Todar Mal under Akbar, by converting into an Imperial demesne the most fertile part of the Kangra valley, had "cut off the meat, and left only the bone", the governors of the Kangra fort that now came in succession had larger areas under their control. As in Kangra so in

2. Waliat-ul-Mushtaki, in Elliot and Dowson, History of India as Told by Its Own Historians, Vol. IV, pp. 544-45.
3. Hutchison and Vogel quote very extensively from Mughal chronicles in reconstructing the history of the hill states under the Mughals and this is the period from which we have the most detailed evidence.
the other parts of the hills Mughal governors were now stationed and the hills under the name of the 'Kohistan-1-Panjab' begin to figure fairly consistently in Mughal chronicles.

Throughout this period there is some tension because of the defiance of Mughal authority by one prince or the other, e.g. Jagat Singh of Nurpur, a Chander of Kangra, a Chhatar Singh of Chamba, but by and large the situation that obtains is that the Mughal authorities do not much interfere in the affairs of the hill rulers. They continued to wield almost unfettered power within their own kingdoms. The note on the nature of Mughal paramountcy by Barnes is very eloquent:

"During the period of Muhammadan ascendancy, the Hill Princes appear, on the whole, to have been liberally treated. They still enjoyed a considerable sheaf of power, and ruled unmolested over the extensive tracts which yet remained to them. They built forts,"

1. The hills were divided into different faujdaris each under a faujdar.

2. See Goswamy, Social Background, pp. 42-43, 59.

made war upon each other, and
wielded the functions of petty
sovereigns. On the demise of a
chief, his successor paid the fees
of investiture, and received a
confirmation of his title, with an
honorary dress, from Agra or Delhi.
Indeed, the simple loyalty of the
Hill Rajas appears to have won the
favour and confidence of their Moslem
superiors, ...."

Whatever the truth of this 'simple loyalty' or
the course of it where it existed the Mughal authorities
apparently did not take it upon themselves to interfere
with the customs and beliefs of the large Hindu popula-
tion of these parts. There must have been causes for
tension and isolated cases of interference, but by and
large they probably exercised a formal supervision over
many matters as would be evidenced by the favourable
recommendation of the Mughal governor of Kangra upon the
petition of some of the priests of the temple of the Devi
in that town that they be allowed to continue to collect
a cess from each pilgrim for the maintenance of the temple.

1. This document forms the subject of a paper, yet to
be published by Prof. H.R. Goenka and Mr. R.I.
This situation is generally of interest because it appears that no attempt was made by the Mughal overlords to interfere with a custom such as Sati. Of even a mild attempt at discouraging the practice such as Akbar made in his empire elsewhere, we do not hear in the hills. The situation, one might record however, was different in Kashmir where it appears the emperor Aurangzeb issued a firman relating to jaziya and the burning of women. This is the firman bearing the date A.H. 1030, to which Sneercroft drew the attention of George Swinton by enclosing a copy of it in his letter dated April 26, 1829.

The political situation in the hills underwent a sharp change in the 18th century when the hold of Mughal authority became much less firm and defiance of it increased considerably. This power was virtually supplanted by that of the Durrani who established authority, at least nominally over much of the Panjab hills. But this was also the time of the irruption of Sikh chieftains everywhere.

1. India Office Library, Ms. SUR.F.264. This entire letter nearly is devoted to the subject of Sati. I am grateful to Prof. B.N. Goswamy for kindly bringing it to my notice.

2. The Durrani chiefs appear to have had especially close relations with powerful rulers like Chamand Chand of Kangra and Ranjit Dev of Jammu.
in the Panjab and their incursions into the hills. The period was much troubled and the political map much confused. In the Jammu region, as we have seen, there was a period of relative stability under Ranjit Dev. This was followed, in the eastern parts, by the rise to power of Sansar Chand who for nearly thirty years became the most powerful chief in the hill east of the Ravi. But all this was again not to last. The rise in the Panjab of Ranjit Singh had inevitable effect upon the history of the hill kingdom for the Sikh chief was both ambitious and powerful. Systematically from the early years of the 19th century he humbled or brought down nearly every ruler in the hills and established an authority which was ultimately perhaps far more firm than that of the Mughals.

The events of the 19th century after this are only too well known. While the drama of the decline of the Sikh kingdom of the Panjub unfolds itself, the British gradually move in. The Silda Hill States are the first, in the hills to come under their domination. The district of Kangra is annexed in 1846 and by the middle of the 19th century they are, in the hills, as in the plains the

1. For more details of this period, please see Cosway, Social Background, pp. 47-56.
paramount power from whom the rulers of princely states derive their authority and whose directives they carry out. Among these directives is, of course, the banning of sati which becomes effective in most of the hills only from 1846 onwards while the ban had become effective in the British dominions in India from 1829 and was gradually being extended, by persuasion and example, to the states under Indian rulers.

Throughout the period that we have been speaking of, there were active contacts between the hill areas and the world outside, contrary to the general belief that the hill states were isolated and distant. "The contacts with the outside world appear, in fact, as Dr. Cosmamy 2 says, "To have been many, and consistent. It was not merely the presence of the outside in the hills which served as a channel for the cross-fertilization of ideas and influences. It was also the visits by the princes and people of the hills to the farthest parts of India which became the carriers of the culture of the plains.

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1. The ban on sati, as has been seen above, was made a pre-condition of the confirmation of new rulers of states such as Mandi, Chamba and Suket which continued to be under the Indian rulers.

2. Social Background, pp. 60-67. There is a great deal of material brought in here not noticed in detail before.
The hills had been cut off from the plains in the political sense, but continued sensitively to record the impulses sent from the seats of culture and power. In the context of the practice of sati, it is the contacts of the hill states especially of the members of the ruling family, with Rajasthan which was the stronghold of the practice, which are of deep interest. It was not only the rulers and princes from the hills who went on imperial campaigns into Rajasthan occasionally, but also the chiefs of Rajasthan who came from time to time into the hills on pilgrimage. Apart from this, the presence of the chiefs from the hills and the chiefs of Rajasthan together at the imperial court which must have provided additional grounds of contacts which went, after all back into the past considering the origins of many of the ruling families in the hills. One can visualize in this situation exchanges on many things that were common to the Rajputs of these two regions. One thing that quite clearly was common between them was the prevalence of the practice of sati.

1. With the priests at the famous Pahari temples of Kangra and Jwalamukhi there are several maitres given by the chiefs of Rajasthan at the time of their pilgrimages to these parts.
Of interest also to this study is the general nature of the relationship which prevailed between the hill rulers themselves. The history of these parts is full of instances of feuds and warfare, but running like an undercurrent throughout this is the fact that there was much respect for each other's customs and observances. There apparently was a great deal of general consideration for each other's rights. Much of this undoubtedly came from the fact that these rulers came from the same race and faith and had a great deal in common including institutions and practices which were firmly a part of their life and beliefs. Among these beliefs must surely have been the sacredness of their sati.

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1. For a discussion of this point see Goswamy, *Social Background*, pp. 70-72.
b. Social and Cultural

Caste and Class

The Panjab Hills are overwhelmingly a Hindu area, in remarkable contrast to the areas in their neighbour
hood. In the other parts of India where the Hindus predominated, the Muslims still formed a substantial part of the population and only in very few areas of India were the Hindus in as exclusively large numbers as they were in the hills. Exact figures are not available about the earlier periods but some indications of this can be had from the figures available in the first Indian Census of 1881. One of the tables therein gives us the details of the numbers in Kangra district only, but this distribution may be taken as a fair index to the general situation in these parts. The figures of population in the Kangra district according to religion in this table are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Persons</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>697,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jains</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhists</td>
<td>2,860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parsees</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>39,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>737,845</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is unfortunate that relating to other parts in the hills, outside of Kangra district, comparable tables are not available, but the position in these could not have been materially different. When this is said the Kashmir area, as distinct from Jammu, is, of course, excluded from this statement because that was in 1881, as it is now, a Muslim majority area.

Castewise, again, the most complete information is available only from the Kangra area because it is here that the earliest regular and detailed census was conducted in 1891. The Western group of states like Chamba etc. in the eastern group, did not have similar operations in the same detail. Even so the figures from the Kangra district are of interest. The castes and tribes were

1. Of these there was a concentration in the town of Nurpur where a large number of Kashmiri shawl-weavers worked.

2. It was only later that the kind of operations of which Survey Reports and Census were a part, were undertaken in other parts of the hills, such as Chamba, Mandi and Jammu etc.
distribution of the district there was as follows in 1891:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste or Tribe</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Proportion per 1,000 of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>730,845</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jat</td>
<td>11,118</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajput</td>
<td>92,836</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thakar</td>
<td>19,122</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rath</td>
<td>50,767</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujar</td>
<td>8,460</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanet</td>
<td>61,141</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chirth</td>
<td>108,716</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahman</td>
<td>109,881</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sai</td>
<td>7,838</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyi</td>
<td>3,043</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sud</td>
<td>5,775</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatri</td>
<td>7,760</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamar</td>
<td>51,679</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julaha</td>
<td>28,129</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhinwar</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lohar</td>
<td>19,655</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarkhan</td>
<td>16,286</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumhar</td>
<td>7,897</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Gazetteer of the Kanpur District, Vol. 1 1883-84, Stat. Tab. IX.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste or Tribe</th>
<th>Nos.</th>
<th>Proportion per 1,000 of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banj</td>
<td>3,682</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll</td>
<td>6,495</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batwal</td>
<td>3,630</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumna</td>
<td>11,095</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parara</td>
<td>5,222</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koll</td>
<td>11,301</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagi</td>
<td>19,742</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout the Panjab hills, whatever their numbers, the predominant fact, as far as caste relationships go, was the pre-eminence of the Rajputs as a group. This came not from any superiority of numbers that they enjoyed but from the fact that it was they who were in positions of control and they who belonged to the class from which the rulers came, as their very nomenclature indicates. In numbers even the Brahmans were more than the Rajputs, in some states, like the Griths had an edge over them in point of numbers in the Kangra region.

1. Cf. "Kangra art is Rajput only in a qualified sense of the term. The community in which it arose and found its fulfilment was Rajput-dominated, not Rajput. The Rajputs - and here we must speak of those only of the first grade, not of the classes that claimed, in vain, Rajput status - formed a small minority". Cosmamy, Social Background, p. 439.

2. The word Rajput, one must remember, means the son of the ruler.
The broad division of Rajputs is into the
Suryavanshi and Chandravanshi groups, these groups
deriving their descent, according to their tradition, from
1 the Sun and the Moon. The ruling families, thus, in the
states of Chandernagor, Balor, Bhadra and Bhadrawah were
Chandra - or Somavanshi whereas as the rest of the Egar
2 Hindu states were of Suryavanshi clans. All the ruling
families of the Kangra circle of states belonged to the
Chandrabanri, or Lunar, 'race' of Rajouts, except for
Chamba which belonged to the Surya Vansh or Solar. The
family of Kulu rulers also belonged to this Vansh.
Interestingly, there is a third group here in the hills
also, and the families of Mandi, Suket and Nurpur states
belonged to this. This was the group of Rajouts
3 designated as the Fundir. To say that there was the
only divisions of the Rajouts in the hills is, however,
to oversimplify the matter. For these divisions gave
only the broadest indications of their status. It was
really the subdivisions which were the 'operative' part
of the structures within the Rajouts caste itself, for

1. In the Vanshavallis of many of the ruling
families, this descent is carefully traced.
3. Alexander Cunningham, Ancient Geography of India,
pp. 155-156.
it was these that for the most part underlay and
governed status and relationships. The one idea that
dominated was the 'grade' within the castes for this
determined much else. From this point of view, one of
the classifications of the Rajputs was into those who
were Jalkarias and those who were Salaminas. The word
"Jaikaria' comes from the honoured salutation of 'Jaideya'
(Sansk. Jaya Deva) meaning "Victory to the King" to which
only members of the royal families and later, the Mians
were entitled. The word "Salamia" comes from "Salam",
the Persian, or Muslim, greeting, and was applied with
some contempt, one imagines, to those who must have
'salammadi' the Muslim overlords at some time, thus
accepting survilige status. Whatever the precise derivation
of the word, the fact is that 'Salamias' were not entitled
to the salutation of "Jaideya" and were therefore lower
in rank. The broad practical distinction between these
two grades of Rajputs was that the Salaminas 'defiled' their
hands with the plough whereas the Jalkarias did not touch
the plough. Again the Jalkarias accepted the daughter of


2. This contrasts, however, curiously with the fact
that 'Mian' also a word with a Muslim connotation
was a token of distinct honour in the hills. It
is only recently that the word is being replaced
by the honorific, 'Thakur' as in Rajasthan.
a Salamia in marriage, but did not give their daughter
in marriage to a Salamia.

The Jaikarias were also known as Mians, which was,
as we have seen, a title of distinction among the Rajputs,
dating back to the times of the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir,
who conferred this title upon the twenty-two Rajput
Princes from the Panjab Hill States, who were kept by him
as hostages at the Imperial court. The Mians had their
own strict code of honour. In former times, a Mian, in
order to preserve this jealously-guarded honour, was to
2 stay within clearly defined limits: he must never drive
the plough; he must never give his daughter in marriage
to an inferior in social rank, nor himself marry much
below the rank; he must never accept money in exchange
for the betrothal of his daughter; and his female house-
hold must observe strict seclusion, if he is to preserve
his honour unsullied. A breaking of rules entailed all
the terrible consequences of excommunication from the
caste and was enough to deprive the Mian of the coveted
salutation of Jaideva offered to no other caste."

1. The Salamia were also sometimes called Skchra
Rajputs. See, Goswamy, Social Background, p. 155.
Each clan of the Rajputs was further subdivided into several sections. Thus, there were 13 chief groups among Bulerias, 22 among Pathanias and 4 among Katroches. Likewise, there were groups within the Jains, for instance, and the Badwals, the Chamblals, the Sihaliyas, the Jabs, the Balaurias, the Shadwals, the Kolas, the Mandals, the Suketars, the Kahlurias, and Kutleharias.

These groups frequently took their names from the places where an ancestor had settled down or the name of the ancestor who founded that particular branch of the family. We hear, thus, of clans like Jagniwal, and Saroinswan, or Balwantdeyiga and Fattakshariya. A book like Thakur Kahan Singh's history affords a really fascinating glimpse into the internal workings of the system within the Rajput clans. In the second grade of Rajputs were more clans like the Indaurias, the Malhotras, the Patialis and the Jagas who generally were keen on ignoring the distinction between themselves and the first grade Rajputs, but not always with success. Then there

1. All these subdivisions are very carefully separated from each other in the records of the priests at the centres of pilgrimage.

2. Tawarih: Rajputan-i-mulk-i-Panjab. Thakur Kahan Singh was in a sense especially qualified to go into these details because he was the secretary for some years of the Rajput Sabha to which claims for the determination of status were often submitted by clans or groups.
were the Thakkars and Rathis who were not even counted among themselves by other Rajputs, whatever their feelings on the subject might have been.

All this careful stratification was related quite obviously and intimately to the concept of honour among the Rajputs. Of the insistence upon this honour we have plenty of evidence. We knew thus of the celebrated case of Aniruddha Chand, son of Sansar Chand, of Kanpur who preferred losing his entire kingdom to giving away his sister in marriage at the asking of the Sikh Chief, Ranjit Singh, to Hira Singh, son of Chyan Singh. Hira Singh, a good favourite of the Maharaja of Lahore was no upstart by normal standards. His father was the Prime Minister of the Maharaja, his family was also Rajput and was descended from a younger branch from the ruling family of Jammu. But Aniruddha Chand regarded the proposal an insult to the royal house of the Katochies. He was himself descended from a proud and long line of Kings, while Chyan Singh had become a "Saja" only through the favour of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The suggestion was therefore disgraceful in the eyes of the Katoch chief and,

1. See Hutchison and Vogel, Vol. I, pp. 193-195. There is an interesting collection of letters that passed between Aniruddha Chand and the British. For references to these see Goswamy, Social Background, p. 13, notes.
learning that Hanlit Singh would not easily take "no"
for an answer, he decided to go into exile, crossed the
Jamuna and went and sought the protection of the British
with five hundred followers and, of course, his two
sisters whom he married to Vudarshan Shah, the ruler of
Garhwal. He never returned to his kingdom.

There is the other well known case of Sir Singh,
Raja of Surpur, whose misfortunes in exile are on record
in some detail. At one point he was about to receive a large
jagir that would have re-established him but then things
went wrong. The incident is narrated in some detail by
Barnes thus:

"Shian Singh had a sanad or patent in
his possession duly signed and sealed
under the sign manual of the Maharaja,
and before making it over he wished to
extort from Sir Singh the coveted
salutation of "Jaidiya", accorded to a
ruling Chief, the offering of which by
Sir Singh would have been an acknowledge-
ment of Shian Singh's legal status and of

was met during the period of his exile also by C.I.
Vigne who has left an account of his interview with
the Raja.

his own inferiority. This he refused to do. He was a Raja by hereditary right, while Bhain Singh held the title only by favour of Ranjit Singh, and the proud Rajput would not compromise his honour even for the sake of affluence, nor accord a salutation that would have involved a degradation of himself in the eyes of the brotherhood."

There are, of course, cases on record where their honour was compromised by some Rajputs themselves. We know of people marrying out of caste and even out of religion. The remonstrance of Guru Gobind Singh when he spoke to an assemblage of the hill rajas is well-known, even if it might have been couched in rhetoric by a later writer.

"Your morals have become so perverted that through fear and with a desire to please your Mussalman rulers, you have given them your daughter to gratify their lust ... Are you not ashamed to call yourselves Rajputs when the Mussalmans

---

seize upon your wives and daughters
before your eyes?"

We do know of a number of marriages that took place
between the Rajputs family and those of some Sikh and
Dogra chiefs. The daughters of Sansar Chand by his
1
Gaddan wife were thus married to Ranjit Singh by Jodhbir
Chand; Chian Singh married the daughter of Raja of Sibs;
2
and Sansar Chand's nephew Luddar Chand, gave his daughter
3
in marriage to Hira Singh Dogra, the prince who was denied
the hand of Aniruddha Chand's sister. But the point
consistently is that some of these connections was
referred to with any pride. And, in a sense, the case
4
cited by Mr. Barnes of the Rajouts of Katgarh in Nurpur
voluntarily setting fire to their houses and immolating
their female relatives to avoid the disgrace of Ranjit
Singh's alliance is, in a sense, more in accordance with
5
the truth. It is Barnes again who tells us of the

1. *Gazetteer of the Kanura District*, Vol. 1.,
1893-94, p. 139.

Vols. I and II, p. 44.

3. Dewan Sarabdial, *Tawarikh-e-Hasan-ul-Alian-
Kanura*, p. 119.


"melancholy tenacity" with which the Rajput clung to his honour. He preferred to catch hawks on mountain tops to taking to the plough when he had fallen on bad days, for his pride would not let him disgrace himself by this kind of an act. Some of this pride becomes understandable because of the antiquity and purity of descent that of a Rajput clan like the Katoches claimed.

The Katoches whose long Vansavali Moorcroft saw with Sansar Chand at Sujanpur reminded a family which as Sir Alexander Cunningham said, is one of the oldest in India "and their genealogy from the time of the founder, Susarma Chandra, appears to me to have a musk stronger claim to our belief, than any of the long string of names now shown by the more powerful families in Rajputana."

All this, and the tradition that they were not of human origin, their prime ancestor, Shumi Chandra, being


"Sprung to life in full proportions like Minerva from the brain of Jove, created from the perspiration off the brow of the goddess enshrined at Kangra," must have bred undoubted pride. It is this type of pride that is of deep interest to our study because it is with it clearly that the custom, of sati, at least in some part, becomes clearly linked.

The other castes, besides the Rajput, do not interest us much here. The Brahmins did occupy a position of honour in the hills as elsewhere. In the ruling families a special status was given to the Rajguru, the Purohit and the Jyotishi. Even among other people, the Brahmins were highly respected. Like the Rajputs, many of the Brahman families, also came to the hills from the plains. They too had two broad divisions like the Rajputs: thus those who took to agriculture were carefully distinguished from those who abstained from it. Each grade of Brahman gave their daughters in marriage to the one above, and took prides from a grade below. The three main groups of Brahmanas in the eastern hills were the Nagarkotias, the Batehrs and the Halbahis.

1. Barnes, Kangra Settlement Reports, p. 6
while we have honoured clans like the Khajurias in
the Jammu region. The highest among the Brahmans east
of Ravi were the Nagarkotias, who gave their daughters to
no other tribe, but only inter-married. This is character-
istic of the walls built around themselves by groups
and
within groups not of the stratification within each
sub-group. There are scores of clan names of Brahmans
that one comes upon in the records of the pendas at
Daridwar, thus, and we are left in no doubt whatever that
the type of organization that obtained within the Rajput
caste did also belong to other castes.

Two other castes of marginal interest to this
study are also the Thakkar and the Kathi. The Thakkar
was not a first grade Rajput, although he was the most
distinguished, among the second grade Rajputs. The
Kathi comes directly after the Thakkar, among the second
grade Rajputs. Both of these sub-castes came in for a
great deal of favourable comment "as subjects" from
Barnes, but both of them stood outside the charmed
circle of first grade Rajputs. And if they, at any time
followed the practice of Sati, it was not because their

1. Kanura Settlement Report, p. 39; Gazetteer of the
Kanura District, Vol. 1, 1883-84, p.87.
family traditions expected this observance of them.

In the matter of caste in the hills in spite of rigid stratification that we have spoken of, two things are remarkable. One, the relative mobility within the caste-scale. This mobility came from the fact that men of the higher castes did marry women from the caste one run directly below theirs and this caused no problem to any one although the reverse of this was not possible. But this led to the well-known proverb that: "Catwina

2

pirhi chirathini ki beti rani ho lage." meaning that the daughter of a Chirth becomes a Rani in the seventh generations. The reference obviously is to the possibility of each generation of girls moving one step upwards by marrying in the caste above.

This point is not necessarily contradictory to the one about the rigidity of caste divisions, as it might at first seem, for the process of this mobility did not keep anyone in doubt about the precise status

1. This was in keeping with the approval in ancient India of anuloma marriages in general. The reverse of anuloma was pratillum marriages which were regarded with disapproval.

of a family as a person at any given moment of time, so that the actions of that family or person were guided by what was expected of him, in that status. The second feature of the caste system related to the relationship in which the castes stood towards each other. The society in the hills gives the impression of being remarkably well adjusted and one does not come across many tensions that are themselves from the divisions along caste lines.

Religion

Whatever the caste of a person, he became quickly bound to the others because nearly everyone partook of the same faith. Broadly speaking in the Hills, as in the plains, religion can be seen centering around the three principal faiths: Shaktism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism.

1. For a discussion of the actual operation of the caste system in the hills see Goswamy, Social Background, pp. 172-74.

2. This section is based for the most part upon Karuna Goswamy, Vaishnavism in the Panjab Hills and Pahari Painting, in which the religious situation in the hills has been treated at great length.
Shakti: the worship of the Devi is perhaps the oldest and the most widespread of Hindu sects in the hills. With the hills the association of the Devi is old, and in the legend about the burning of Sati, consort of Shiva, it is in the hills that Shiva is seen wandering a great deal so that the tongue of the Devi fell at Jwalamukhi and her eyes, according to another tradition, at Baijnath Devi in Bilaspur state. The Devi is worshiped in the hills not only by the common people of the region but she stands in a special relationship with the ruling families. She is thus the Kul Devi of the Katoches. The Kangra chiefs always believed themselves to be especially favoured by the Goddess, and it was said of each great ruler that the "goddess always walks by his side". The temple of Devi which is inside the fort of Kangra is believed to have been established by Raja Susarmachand, in the days of Mahabharata. In the complex of famous buildings at Sujanpur Tira, for some time the proud capital of Raja Sansar Chand, the highest point was reserved for a temple of the Devi. The temple of

1. This legend has been briefly referred to above in the prologue.

2. The Katoches regard themselves as the santana of progeny of the Devi.

3. Another temple inside the fort here is dedicated to Gauri Shankar or Shiva and Varvati; there is a small temple to Rama outside the fort.
Vajeshwari Devi at Kangra is one of the most celebrated shrines not only of this region but of the whole of Northern India. The records kept by the pujaris of the pilgrims coming from the furthest corners of India are fair indication of this.

There is then that other cittra of Shakti, the temple of Jwalamukhi, "the goddess of the flaming mouth." Records are full of the references to the sanctity of this shrine and the multitudes of pilgrims that assemble there still in the Navaratras of Chaitra and Asvina go back to hundreds of years in history. Chamba is another ancient principality, where the faith centering around the cult of the Devi is very old. The temple and image of her is 3 lakshana, going back by more than a thousand years still command both respect and affection.

1. See, Goswamy, Social Background, pp. 178-79, for more details. Popularly the shrine is called the Bhavan temple. It was of this that the Emperor Jahangir wrote: "A whole world has here wandered in the desert of error."

2. This temple lay formerly in the Katoch territories and was obviously a source of a very considerable revenue. For an interesting document relating to the shrine, see Goswamy, "Documents from Three Kshatri Temple."  

3. This is in one of the wooden temples so ably discussed by Prof. Coetz. See, H. Coetz, The Early Wooden Temples of Chamba. The Chatrakh village where this temple is situated still attracts large crowds. See, Census of India, 1961, Vol. XX, Village Survey Report of Chatrakh Village.
The 'presence' of the Devi is felt everywhere in the hills. The famous wooden temple at Jagatsukh in Kulu was dedicated to Sandhya Devi, "goddess of the Dawn", as that of Hirimba. Devi near Manali was another of her kumars. Basohli has a very old temple devoted to the Devi, the temple of Chamunda Bhagwati. In Jammu, again the connection of the state with the Devi goes back far into the past. Kali is worshipped under the name of the Bhagwati, and the Jamwal Rajputs believe in the Devi as their family or kula deity; as would be evidenced by the temples of the goddess inside all the principal forts in the Jammu region.

The ruling family of Guler being an offshoot from Kangra, the Devi there again is the family deity. Here she is also worshipped under the name of Bala Sundari, and to this day the members of Guler family worship the goddess in the temple at Harsar, because it was she who saved the life of the founder, Hari Chand, when he fell into a well. The ruling family of Mandi again believed in the Devi as its family deity, under the name of Rajeshwari, or Sri Vidya. The eminence of the goddess

in the hills is accurately reflected in the painting
from the region also where some of the earliest, and
most beautiful, those from the XVII century, show her
in her various aspects as Shyama or Bhadrakali or
1 Bagulamukhi.

Equally ancient and powerful in the hills was
the worship of Shiva. "Whenever there is a deep glen,
a natural fountain, or a cascade, the traveller will
infallibly discover some traces of the great god of the
Hindus, the creator and destroyer of Life", so wrote
Col. Tod of Rajasthan, but this applies equally well
to the Panjab hills. The worship of Shiva here apart
from being very ancient, assumed forms at least as
numerous as those of the Devi. He is associated with
forces of nature, and whenever a strange natural phenomenon
was observed, a temple to him was raised. The temples
of Shiva in the hills are thus countless. One can
spot them even from the names because they end usually
with "Mahadeva" thus leaving no doubt about their nature.

1. Some of these paintings were drawn attention to
by S.N. Gupta in his Catalogue of Paintings in
the Central Museum, Lahore.

Thus one comes upon names such as Tameshwar, Kamateshwar or Harbadeshwar Mahadeva. Apart from these there are other shrines which have names ending in "Nath", again becoming linked thus to the cult of Shiva. Mahasu and Shirigul are yet other cults linked with Shaitism. Likewise, Bhairo, a minor deity who is associated with the terrible aspect of Mahadeva has a considerable following.

We now know a great deal about Vaishnavism in the Panjab Hills which has been the subject of recent and intensive study. Vaishnavism was one of the early faiths in the hills though not quite as early perhaps as the worship of Devi and Shiva. But Vaishnava activity in the hills increased considerably in the 17th century due to the arrival of the missionaries who were determined to carry their faith with them. There are many Vaishnava temples as a result. The temples of Lakshmi Narayan in Kangra fort, of Mrali Manohar at Sujanpur, of Ram Chander


3. This temple was built by one of the rans of Sansar Chand like another temple at Sujanpur, the Harbadeshwar, which was got constructed by his Suketi rani.
at Haridwar and of Vishnu at Jaisinghpur are some of the principal Vaishnava temples in the Kangra valley. Similarly we come across temples raised to Vishnu in Chamba, Mandi, Kulu, Jammu, as in many other parts of the hills. The spread of Vaishnavism was somewhat slow but still considerable.

Ill this apart, at the level of the common man in the hills, the faith which was nearest to him was not any of the orthodox sects, to which he did pay respect, but what has often been described as "popular Hinduism". And here we speak of the local gods and godlings, whose number was legion and whose power over the minds of the populace great.

Among these gods, and goddesses were the Nagas, serpent-deities, their worship is so extensive in the hills that Abul Fazal wrote nearly from centuries ago about 700 places in the hills which had "graven images of snakes which they (the people of the hills) worship and regarding which wonderful legends are told." These Naga

1. See the section on minor gods in the chapter of religion in Goswamy, Social Background. Rose wrote a series of articles on "Hinduism in the Himalayas, in Indian Antiquity" in which he discussed many of these gods and godlings at some length.

2. J. Ph. Vogel, Indian Serpent Lore, p. 221. Dr. Vogel has brought together a larger number of legends from the Punjab hills also in this work.
temples are usually situated inside a clump of trees and are to be seen everywhere. A large number of minor deities are simply known as "Deotias". They are the local demi-gods believed in devoutly by the hill people. The names of the deotias are sometimes curious and a vast variety of legends about them is in currency throughout the hills. To each temple a mela is attached and the deotias command through him complete and total obedience. These deotias as a class seem to have been worshipped from very remote times. Even now on their shrines fairs are held on special occasions and a vast numbers gather there at the shrine where there is a feast and dance, to the accompaniment of music. The temples to these deotias are more in the higher hills like Kulu and Simla, but in the lower hills also they are equally to be found. It is these who are resorted to in times of crises and need, as when an epidemic disease breaks out, or a crop fails, or when draught strikes, or when a woman longs for a male child.

The cult of Gugga allied to the worship of the Naga again has many devotees in the hills. There are numerous shrines of Gugga who is really one of the classes of deities called "Birs" or bards. The belief in Birs is both strong and widespread. They are minor deities only in name. The foremost among the Birs in some
parts is "Sindhu Bir", the whistling demon whose wrath is much feared but who is also easily propitiated. There are other Birs, like Narsingh Bir, or Gaun Birs, spirits who reside in trees and bushes, and Jakha and Yaksha, who take up their abodes in the fields.

There is a widespread worship in the hills also of the Siddhas or saintly men. They are often associated with a major deity, but are also worshipped in their own right. Thus Baba Balak Rud is widely followed throughout the Kangra district. Another Siddha who is greatly believed in is popularly called Deot Siddha. Siddha stones, on which are roughly carved a shhari or stick, and two imprints of feet, which become the symbol of Bawa or Siddha, are encountered everywhere. These stones are widely worshipped and the worship consists of pouring milk or water on them as they stand in the courtyard of a house or by the roadside.

1. The extent of the belief in these deities is not quite the same today as it was in the earlier centuries, but it is still amazingly strong.

2. These stones are carved by families of traditional sculptors called Betehras in the hills.
Of quite special interest to this study is the worship of ancestors in the hills. This takes not only the form of Shraddhas or offerings made to the names of ancestors, but also of raising monuments to them. Among these monuments are those that are raised in honour of the Satis, which are treated of later.

The worship of all these deities becomes, at one level intimately linked with superstition, and with each place of worship, whether it is the shrine of a great god or the dehri of a sati, become linked stories about efficacy, boons, punishments etc. The man in the hills is still generally religiously inclined and prone to beliefs and superstitions of all kinds. Much of this springs from his basic conservatism, his desire to continue with the customs of his ancestors, and not to question established practices, beliefs or institutions. We come across quite remarkable instances of conservatism.

1. Cf. Tod, Annals and Antiquities. Vol. I, p. 62: "Each sacred spot, termed 'the place of great sacrifice' (Maha-Sati), is the haunted ground of legendary lore. Amongst the altars on which have burned the beauteous and the brave, the harpy takes up her abode, and stalks forth to devour the heads of her victims."
In this respect among the hill people, for here customs were often preserved in their "primitive integrity". In the Katoch families thus, the first thing done at weddings is to worship a potter's wheel. The explanation of this practice simply is that a son of a Kangra Raja in exile was brought up many hundred years ago, by a potter, and so this ceremony is observed as a token of gratitude to that craftsman. In the Chamba royal family, the mouse is still regarded with tenderness because, according to a tradition, Prince Mubanswarwan was saved by mice in a cave while an infant. Till this day if a mouse is caught in the palace, it is never killed. Again, the Rajas of Chamba used to wear the dagger loose in their belts from the time of Janardan, who was killed by Jayat Singh of Nurpur because he could not defend himself the dagger being too tight in its sheath.

1. Imbetsam, Panjab Customs, p. 269.
2. Sarbdial, Tawariikh-i-Rajgan-i-dillah Kangra, p. 73.
Status of Women

As one thinks of women in the Rajput society of the hills, one thinks inevitably of the women in Pahari painting. These creatures of incredible loveliness, shy and reticent and full of the most tender sentiments, seem to dominate the world of the Pahari painter almost completely. The type is, of course, idealized but even so the ideal could only have arisen in a society that saw them in a special light, bathed in romance and delicate in the extreme. The subject of this study being sati, much interest attached to the actual status that women occupied in the hill society. The status of Rajput women, which stood highest in the thought of Rajputs, Col. Tod wrote: "... if defence and respect (for women) be proofs of civilization, Rajputana must be considered as redundant in evidence of it." This applies equally well also to the 'northern' Rajputs,

1. What especially comes to the mind is what Karl Khandalavala calls the "Bhagavata face", from the female facial type in Kanra paintings of the Bhagavata Purana. This indeed is one of the loveliest creations of the Indian painter.

those of the Panjab hills. No insult was higher to a Rajput than an insult to his ladies. The incident that is mentioned in the Diliparanjita, in which a slight to the women of the household of Mian Gopal Singh of Guler at the hands of Khan Hussaini led to the outbreak of a war between Guler and that Muslim chief, does not in this context come as a surprise at all. For even in classes not high in the social rank, at least a minimum of respect was as a matter of rule expected to be shown to the women.

is a token of the inviolable esteem in which they were held, the women of the high castes observed almost complete seclusion. The custom of Purdah arrived most likely with the Muslims, but in the high classes it really had become general, soon after the beginning of the present millennium. The rule that "the higher the rank, the higher rose the walls outside the palace or the mansion" was very much in evidence. Barnes 2 gives a remarkable instance of the rigour with which

1. Diliparanjita, f. 71.

2. Kanora Settlement Report, p. 38. C/. Bermier, Travels, p. 246; who write of a fire in Delhi. "Many of the inmates of the seraglio also fell victim to the devouring elements; for these poor women are so bashful and helpless that they can do nothing but hide their faces at the sight of strangers, and those who perished possessed not sufficient energy to fly from the danger."
the seclusion was protected. A Katoche's house in Mandi caught fire in broad daylight. There was no wood nearby to help the escape of women and rather than brave the public gaze, they kept their apartments shut and burnt themselves to death. It is against this background that one understands the preference of Rajputs to take up dwelling on high positions, on the crests of hills or on the verge of forest forming an impenetrable screen. In families of rank no male outsiders except the Guru, the Purahit, the Vaidya or the Jyotishit were allowed to enter the interior of the household. A story is told by Man Mohan of a confidant of the Raja of Mandi entering the female apartment of the Raja of Datarupur and the Raja demanding his head, "for no crime is more heinous than for a stranger to enter a Raja's harem."

The seclusion of women, however, it might be mentioned, did not prevail in the lower classes the women of which went about freely. Connected with women was a custom that did definitely prevail in the hills was female infanticide. The extent of the practice is not easily determined but it is reasonable to conclude that it was confined to Rajput families of noble rank. The

The birth of a daughter in a Rajput household of slender means was often a day not the greatest happiness, because the marriage of a daughter not only entailed enormous expenditure but also posed diverse problems connected with the honour of the family especially in the matter of marriages. The Rajputs, on no account read to compromise on any of these points, did sometimes resort to this cruel practice. And it was only with the coming of the British that this stigma was finally removed from the Rajput name, even though some attempts at countenancing the practice had earlier been made.

Great emphasis was laid on marital devotion in the upper classes. Loyalty total and complete, was expected of a woman but not, in the male dominated society, necessarily of men. Polygamy was a normal state among the upper classes, and there was no legal limit to the number of wives a man could keep. A Raja usually had a large number of legally married wives, besides a full harem of concubines, the *rakherara* of


2. The children from these concubines were called *Sartorans*.
whom one hears so often. Ministering to the royal pleasures often was also a contingent of _dasis_. It is all these apparently who figure on the _sati_ monuments like _harsnala_ in such large numbers.

Even among the lower classes, polygamy was common, the fights between the co-wives or _sauté_ was the subject of many a story. A popular Chamba folk-tale tells graphically of the hazards of polygamous state. Two thieves, according to it, went to commit burglary in a house and entered, only to see the owner being pulled upstairs from his topmost by one wife and dragged down by his leg by the other. This went on for the whole night and the thieves, hypnotized by the scene, kept on watching till they were caught in the morning. On being presented before the Raja, they pleaded guilty, but made humble petition that they be awarded any punishment except being ordered to marry two wives.

Polyandry, as the reverse of polygamy, was not however, a normal state. It is only in the higher hills, in some areas of Kulu, Kanawar, Saraj, Lahaul and Spiti etc. that we hear of it. In the higher hills the institution arose more out of economic necessity than out of the kind of desire that led to polygamy. Among the upper

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class, unfaithfulness in women was not countenanced at all. In the code of that society, the greatest dishonour would attach to a person whose wife's character could be called in question. In the lower classes however, the situation was different and we do hear of loose morals. Among women the woman of the Whirth caste and her wayward conduct for instance, is the subject of many a proverb and lampoon.

Again it is only among the lower classes that we hear of widow remarriage which of course, in the matter of the faithfulness of wives to their husbands, stands at the opposite pole from sati. Among the high class Rajputs there was no question of widow remarriage for there could be no greater dishonour to the memory of the deceased husband. In the lower classes, the institution flourished, although it often took the form of the widow marrying in the family of the husband alone, most often to his younger brother.

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1. One of the proverb says that it is difficult to make a virathini a widow.
Art

Of the art of the Panjab Hills, especially painting, a great deal is by now known. From the time that Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy brought Rajput painting to the notice of an admiring world at the beginning of this century, there has come into being a remarkable amount of literature on the subject. An attempt to study and publish the paintings of the hills has been made with such enthusiasm that the Pahari schools have perhaps left all other schools of Indian paintings behind as far as the collection of material on them is concerned. We know now of a great many styles and sub-styles of Pahari painting: Basohli with its idioms of Mankot, Bandralta, Kulu, Nandi, Bhadrath and early Chamba; Kangra with its idioms of Culer, Surpur, Jammu, Jasrota, late Chamba, Nalagarh, Dilsamour and others.

The range of themes treated of by the Pahari painter with such marvellous fluency and charm is extremely wide. First and foremost among these themes

1. Much of the work on this subject has come from W.G. Archer, Karl Khandalavala, N.R. Bendhawa, and P.N. Goswamy.
are illustrations of religious and poetic texts like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Chandl, Saotchati, the Shivasurana, the Bhagavata-Duraga, the Varayama, the Jagadgovinda, the Satyai of Bihari, the Rasikantya of Keshava Dass. There are again whole sets of paintings dealing with stories and romances such as Usha-Anirudha, Mala-Damayanti, Madhovanala-Kamakandala, and a countless number of Nayaka-Nyika and Raga-Sagini theme pictures. Again, there are sets of erotic paintings, portraits, darbar scenes and genre pictures in which the events of the times are reflected to an extent. There are, from the court of Maharaja Sansar Chand, thus, paintings which record events after event, like the visit of a dignitary, the celebration of a festival, the birth of a son or even a pleasure party in moonlight.

But, with all this it is remarkable that there is not one painting dealing with the theme of Sati, following the death of a Rajput chief. The only painting of the theme done by a Pahari painter perhaps that has so far come to light relates to the sati of rani of the Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh (fig. 48).

1. This painting is reproduced in N.C. Archer, Paintings of the Sikhs, Figure No. 16.
And this must apparently have been done by the painter when he had taken up residence at Lahore and was working under the patronage of the Sikh ruler or one of his nobles. One can put this determined refusal to paint a sati scene only to one of the two considerations: either the artist was obeying the general aesthetic injunction against the portrayal of tragic themes or he was respecting the sanctity of the occasion, by not giving it a perishable form. Somehow, in the situation one does not even conceive the possibility of the patron asking him to paint or not to paint a picture on sati, or the painter himself thinking of doing it in violation of "established" practice.

In the other visual art, that of sculpture, we have a different situation that obtains. Sati monuments in sculptured forms are common and are discussed in another chapter later. But the point that needs mention here again is that whatever sculptured representations there are on these monuments, are purely idealized. The portraits even of the rulers bear no resemblance to them, because of many of them we do have authenticated portraits and comparison is possible. In the case of the women who are 'portrayed', there was no question at any rate even of an attempt at portraiture, because female portraiture from the hills even in painting except of women of the lower classes such as
courtesans and singing-girls, is completely unknown.

If we do have the sati theme in sculpture and not in painting, this must perhaps be put down to the fact that the erection of a sculptured slab was a part of a religious ritual going far back into the past, which the making of a painting clearly was not.

Of sculpture in the hills, from an early date we have apparently a strong tradition, and it is with justice that early images such as those in bronze by 1 Gudda in the wooden temples of Chamba are famous. Of an equally early date are stray sophisticated stone sculptures in the hills also but, in the period to which most of the existing sculptured sati monuments relate, the tradition of sculpture in the hills had apparently dried up and it was only at the level of folk art that it was still practised. There is a vast gap thus in the quality of the paintings that were being produced in the 17th century in the hills and the sculptures of

1. See, Goetz, The Early Wooden Temples of Chamba.
the same date. It is only with some difficulty that one is able to reconcile oneself to this vast qualitative disparity in the creative output of the Pahari painter and the Pahari sculptor.