CHAPTER III

THE EVIDENCE

a. Literary and Inscriptional

The records from the hills are so scanty as a rule that finding the kind of evidence one wishes for on almost any subject presents serious problems. There are enough and broad indications of activity that can be had in considerable measure in many fields of life in the Pahari region, but it is the preciseness that one so laboriously seeks which eludes one in the general nature of the evidence one is able to collect. This applies as much to a field like Pahari painting in which fairly intensive work has been done of recent years, as to any effort that might be made to collect

1. Prof. B.N. Goswamy begins his discussion of one of the inscriptions on a Pahari painting thus: "Commenting on the sources of Indian social history, Professor Kosambi observes, with perfectly justifiable exaggeration, that uniform records, even the Sumerian, yield much more information". "The problem of the artist 'Nainsukh of Jasrota'". Artibus Asiae, Vol. xxviii, p. 205.

2. Even so for all the thousands of Pahari paintings that are known to exist in both public and private collections, it was not possible to gather the names of more than eighty artists and not possible to connect specific paintings with the names of more than ten artists till a few years ago.
material on the economic history of this region, for example, or on a subject like polyandry. It is no accident that for writing their painstakingly pieced-together history of the Panjab hill states, Hutchison and Vogel had to rely mostly on the incidental details found in the accounts of Muslim chronicles and historians, or vernacular histories written in the early 20th century, based mostly on oral tradition, and on rather barren genealogical tables.

Of literary activity in these parts there is very little evidence. The collection of manuscripts in the possession of the ruling families and families of learned pandits contain large numbers of copies of well known works ranging in subjects from veterinary science to the most abstruse commentaries on the Vedas, from erotic literature to works on astrology, but there is little that one can find of original works composed

1. Again and again, Hutchison and Vogel draw attention to the scantiness of all this material and one can find them straining to put facts together.

2. Traditionally, there were family collections of manuscripts in the households of Pandits and jyotishis. A collection like that of Pandit Bhuv Dev at Sujanpur or Pandit Mohan Lal at Samloli is typical of such collections from the point of view of the range of subjects to which it extends.
in the hills. The history of the Culer state by 1
Kavi Uttam, the rhapsodies of the bard Lambhir Rai 2
of Surpur or the long descriptions of a campaign of a
Jammu Prince, the **Brij Raj Panchaika** by Kavi Dutt are
to be treated as exceptions to the rule of very little
work of significance having been produced in the hills.

An early literary and historical work that
contains some information not only on Kashmir but also,
Incidentally, on the Panjab Hills, is, of course, Kalhana's
**Rajatarangini**. While sati does not naturally form the
theme of Kalhana's narrative, it has at places long
passages that are both of interest and significance and
these give information on the practice. One of these

1. Only one copy of this work, the **Rajatarangini**
   existed sometime ago in the collection of the
   late Raja Baldev Singh of Culer, but the manus-
   crip is no longer available and has perhaps
   been disposed of by his descendants. The work
   was composed for Raja Dillip Singh in A.D. 1703.

2. See John Beams, "The Rhapsodies of Gambhir Rai",
   1875.

3. This work was composed in the time of Raja Ranjit
   Dev of Jammu to commemorate a campaign undertaken
   by his son, Brij Raj Dev, to quell some chiefs east
   of the Ravi. The works of this poet have recently
   been brought together by Pandit Gauri Shankar
   in *Butt Granthawali*, Jammu.
relates to the immolation of a Kanya princess, 
Suryamati, queen of King Ananta of Kashmir, following 
the death of her husband in A.D. 1091. The entire 
passage deserves to be noticed here because of the 
completeness of the picture that it contains:

"When the husband had sacrificed his life 
as if in atonement for his breach of country, 
his wife in gratitude became the guardian 
(of his interests)."

"To all followers, from prince to chandala, 
she gave the daily allowances due to them, 
just as if she were at ease, in order to 
fulfill her husbands' obligations.

"When they had received their allowances, 
she herself made all the followers take 
before the Linga of Siva Vijayesa on 
oath by sacred libation (kosa) in order to 
(secure) the safety of her grandson.

"When her grandson, crying, touched her foot 
with his head, as she handed (him) the sacred

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libation, she kissed him on the head, and told him, 'Do not trust your father'.

"Then she stood up, and as a sati herself taking the stick, performed the office of doorkeeper for her husband while she had him adorned for the fast (rites).

"She first ordered a hundred mounted soldiers to watch there over her grandson; then she sent forth her husband placed on a litter.

"Having thus passed one night and half a day, this devoted wife paid her reverence to Vijayasava (Vijayesa) and proceeded outside seated in a litter.

"Then the people saw those two going forth, the horizon was set, as it were, by their tumultuous lamentations, which mixed with the vibrating sounds of the funeral music.

1. This recalls to one's mind the careful depiction of the family deity on commemorative stones. See, thus, Fig. 21, in which the raja is seated behind a Shivalinga.

2. Cf. Fig. 80. The object in the bottom left corner probably depicts the litter in which the rana was carried to the funeral pyre.
"The moving (images of the) people reflected in the ornaments of the hearse, which was decorated with flags, made it appear as if they were close to the King and striving to follow him.

"Swinging in the wind, the locks of the princes who had put their shoulders under the hearse appeared like splendid chowries (held) over the King, who was placed in it.

"Viewing the last service of the troops, the queen reached the burning ground as the day was sinking.

"Whether from maternal affection, which is hard to abandon, or for some other reason, she longed at that moment to see her son.

"Thinking that the dust which the wind had tossed up was raised by armed force, she locked out, trembling with agitation, in the hope of Kalasa's coming.

"At that moment some people arrived by the road from the city (Srinagar). Then she herself asked: "Well, has Kalasa come?"
"But the son, who had wished to come
to his mother, was kept back that time by
the romenters of the quarrel who frightened
him in various ways.

"After this the queen abandoned the home of
seeing her son, and asking for water from
the Vitasta, recited the following verse.

"But those who die with Vitasta water in
their body, obtain for certain final deliver-
ance, just like those who proclaim sacred
leaning'.

"When she had drunk the water brought to her,
and had sprinkled it (over parts of her body),
she thus caused those who had destroyed
affection (between parents and son) by their
columnies:

"May those who have caused the fatal enmity
between us two and our son quickly be
destroyed together with their descendants!:

1. The curse of a sati was believed to have special
efficacy and was much feared. There are numerous
instances of such a curse being uttered by a sati
about to immolate herself.
"Through this unfailling curse of the afflicted (queen) Jayananda, Mindinaja and others found an early death.

"In order to put a stop to the slanderous rumours which had grown up with regard to Haladhara's position as her confidant, she, the Sati took an oath in proper form, pledging (her happiness in a future life).

"Having thus attested the purity of her moral character, she leaped with a bright smile from the litter into the flaming fire.

"The sky became encircled (and reddened) with sheets of flames, just as if the gods, in order to celebrate her arrival, had covered (it) with minium.

"The people did not notice the crackling of the fire owing to their lamentations, not its heat owing to their hot grief. It thus appeared to them as if it were merely painted in a picture.

"Gangadhara, Takkibuddha and the litter carrier Gandaka, and of the female servants Uddha, Nonika and Valga followed her."
Kalhana writes about numerous other satis besides this and some of the passages are indeed moving in their description especially where the satis utter a curse on the enemies of their families and take farewell of their kin. One could take, for example, the following account about the satis following the death of Kalla of Kashmir who was killed also in the end of the 11th century.

"Manda, the mother of the future kings, who was of noble birth, was in her own seraglio on the other side (of the river) and was eagerly looking from a high terrace towards the camps of her sons, distinguishable in the north and south by the smoke of their kitchen-fires. This virtuous lady burned herself in her house together with her nurse Gandā, who felt unable to see the water which was to be offered at the funeral libations of her whom she had brought up as a child with her own milk. She (Manda) had not yet seated herself in the flaming

fire, but was (already) surrounded by
the flames which were blazing around, as
(if they were her) female companions, when
she uttered the following curse against the
King 'May you, O sons, before many days, do
the family of your father's enemy what the
son of Jamadagni (Parasurama) did'.

There are, of course, cases in the Rajatarangini
of Satis who would have preferred to live, like Jayamati
whose inconsistent conduct called forth from Kalhana
this comment:

"Though given to unfaithfulness and
killing their husbands, yet they step
with ease into the fire. In no manner
can one be sure of women."

From the Panjab hills proper, an early and
quite remarkable passage touching upon sati occurs
in a long inscription from Deviri Kothi in Chamba
dating back to the 12th century. This inscription is
carved on a fountain stone so many of the like of which

1. Rajatarangini, VIII, 366.
2. See, J. Ph. Vogel, Antiquities of Chamba State,
have been noticed in Chamba. Interestingly, the evidence of sati here is indirect for what is mentioned is the keeping back of his mother from becoming sati by 1
Rajanaka Naya Pala, at the death of his father in A.D.
1159. The entire inscription deserves to be noticed both because of its literally flavour and the general light it throws on attitudes and family sentiments.

"...[this] was enough even to flatter her (who was) of measured speech and a vessel of virtue. She bore him (a son) the illustrious Nayanala, the sole abode of grace; great by his virtues, the destroyer of his foes, he who by his righteous works had swept away the web of sin, not (acting) like a child to in the forefront of the battle. After his father had gone to the next world, he—that abode of good department and modesty—overwhelmed with grief, with difficulty and through his younger brother (who was still) an infant held back from following him (into death) his mother, instantly fainting.

1. This chieftain was one of the Kanas who submitted allegiance to King Lalita Varman in the seventeenth year of whose reign this cistern was installed.
at the separation from her lord. She recovered consciousness and henceforth, whilst by rigid vows of constant fasts she redressed her body to meagreness, she brought up her sons and increased her charity, her compassion for the poor and her devotion to Krishna. On this Nagapala King Lalita conferred the title of Rana, on him who with his deadly sword and rod-like arm-fierce like the suddenly flashing rod of Death had torn asunder his foes.

"But Saltra (his mother), who at every step had conceived the world of the living to be unstable like the crescent reflected in a garland of waves, restless and trembling with the fleeting breeze, had this cistern made for the sake of the bliss of her lord.

"In the year shown by (the words) "sur" 1 and "moon" of (the reign of) the great Lalita-Vasman- who solely performs good works and

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1. This way of indicating dates is common to Sanskrit compositions. Thus the colophones of the Basohli Gita Govinda and the Banamani paintings employ the same mode of indicating dates.
whose sport is the misfortune of the wives of his enemies who has lent much support to the needy and baffled the joy of his rivals — Kamal Chandana, his spiritual guide composed this eulogy.

"May the righteous ever rejoice and the world be full of happiness; may the baron Nagaala be victorious on earth and may this cistern be stable.

"In the year 35-6(? of the Ustra era was this eulogy composed. May it be blessed. This cistern was constructed by Master Bhagaraja the son of Udda ... by the mason, Tyaga, by the mason Bhagira..."

Dr. Vogel rightly remarked about this eulogy that "we know of no Indian inscription in which human sentiments finds such eloquent expression."

1. For a discussion of this era, see Hutchison and Vogel, Vol. I, pp. 7-8. It might be noted that the dates on the inscriptions on the Bandi baramalas discussed below are given in the same era.

In the form of inscriptions we have a little more on sati than we have of literary passages, but here again, there is unfortunately not enough. The most widely noticed group of inscriptions is from the bamsals or memorial slabs from Bandi. These were noticed at some length by Sir Alexander Cunningham. (See Fig. 10). The reading of these inscriptions could not have by any means been an easy task, for, one, they are in Takri that "notoriously illegible" script of the hills, and, two, many of them are by now badly rubbed and almost indecipherable. The reading of seven of the more important of these inscriptions yielded Cunningham the following results:

No. 1 - Sural Sen
Sri Samvat 40
Sri Raja Suran
Jok to bardhya
Chalgun orai 15
Sural Sen Sukhali = Panchani ti-thi.


2. Takri is apparently one of the most difficult scripts to read and presents the kinds of problems that lead to acute controversies because of the possibility of different interpretations. The Takri inscriptions on Sahari paintings are instance in point.
(English translation)

"In the year 47 (= A.D. 1664), Raja Durj Sen went to heaven, (Surag-lok) 'on the 15th day of Bhålgun' the 5th tithi."

No. 2 - Lyan Sen

Sri Parvati 95
Sri Raja Surau loa
- k lo hoi

Saüj pray
12 Syêm Sen
Surag lok lo
hôl Sri Ràni 5
Khuasti 2 rakahi 37.

(English translation)

"In the year 55 (= A.D. 1679) Raja Syêm Sen went to heaven, on the 12th day of Saüj (ishwayuja) with five queens, two concubines, and thirty-seven slave girls."

No. 3 - Siddh Sen

Sri Saüj 3 re KS-
-tih pray -3 Sri
-samâni Sri

Siddh Sen

Sura
lok lo
ave.
(English translation)

"In the 3rd year (सिंवर = जैन 1727), on the 9th day of Kārtik, the Dewânjî Sri Sidh Sen went to heaven."

No. 4 - Shâmsîr Sen
Sri. : año = 57
Chaî : pra = 30 Sri
Mahâ-
-sa Sri
Sama-
er Sen
Sura lok
ti huâ.

(English translation)

"In the year 57 (जैन 1781) on the 20th day of Chaîtra, the Maharaja Shâmsîr Sen went to heaven."

No. 5 - Sûrma Sen
Sam : año = 74 yr
Chaî pra : 2 Sri Mahîrâ-
-sa Sri Sura-
-sa Sen = Sura k-âo (read lok)
ti gave.

1. This historical possibility has reference to Raja becoming a 'Dewan' of Madhorsai, the presiding deity of Mandî.
(English translation)

"In the 74th year (Ghauhattare = A.D. 1798) on the 2nd day of Bhāyun, the Mahârâja Sûrî Sûrma Sen went to heaven."

No. 6 - Ishwari Sen
Sri Raja
Sri Isari
Sen-ii
Sure lok
San 2 te ye-
Sâkh pra = 7 hâq
harâl 27 yê 2 = dî 5

(English translation)

"Raja Isâri Sen went to heaven in the 2nd year (dusera = A.D. 1826) on the 7th day of Vaisâkh, having reigned 27 years 2 months 5 days."

No. 7 - Jîlam Sen
Sri Maha-
raja-13-
lam Sen
Jâ. San. 14ye
Paus = Pra. 17 deva
lok 10 ka
arshya Sri Rani 2
Khosî 3 Bâkîl 17
Sahar Kandî sati hui.
(English translation)

"Maharaja Jālam Sen, in the 14th year (chaudar 1839) on the 17th day of Paush, went to heaven (Devāloka), (when) two queens, three concubines, and seventeen slave-girls, in the city of Vandi became satī'."

These inscriptions follow a fairly uniform pattern in respect of the details given of the date and year of the ruler's death, but not in respect of the details of the women who became satī with him. Only the inscriptions on the harasāla of Rajas Shyam Sen and Jalin Sen specify the number of satīs. But this is not to lead one to assume that there were no satīs at the deaths of the other rajas because the inscription has to be seen along with the sculptured representations, on the slabs which graphically portray the satīs. And all of these contain sufficient proof of the fact that each royal death was followed by the satīs of the women of his zenana.

The practice in Vandi of raising memorial stones of the same shape though generally in smaller size continued.

1. See Fig. 72 which shows a harasāla with numerous women who became satī.
even after the ban on sati and some of these stones also have inscriptions but these, for all their interest, do not concern the present study.

Of inscriptions on baraslas we have some again from the sister state of Suket but these baraslas are unfortunately in such a state of dilapidation that the inscriptions on them are almost completely indistinct but all but illegible.

We have nearly the same situation in Kulu where whatever inscriptional evidence on sati existed at one time has been claimed by time. The inscription on the baraslas at Nagar and Shamai can be seen but not used, for they have become dim and unreadable. A typical entry relating to them in the archaeological survey reports reads somewhat like this:

"Locality - Nagar
Inscribed object - Two Baraslas
(Sculptural slabs),
Dimensions - Inscribed surface
8 x 6" and 16 x 8".

1. The inscription on fig. 21. mentions Mian Kishan Singh and is dated in A.D. 1905.
Language and Script - Shasa -

Tankari,

Rulers name and date - .......

Remarks - Lettering very indistinct."

Another entry, this time relating to Shami I
also makes similar reading:

"Locality - Shami,
Inscribed object - Barala,
Dimensions - Four lines of c.5".
Language and Script - Shasa -

Tankari,

Rulers name and date - .......

Remarks - Very indistinct."

Quite clearly thus inscriptions such as these
do not leave one much wiser. It is only an occasional
recent inscription like the one on the jahri of Mian
Jodh Singh of Jammu which makes a specific statement with
reference to a past sati in the family. Thus:


2. This jahri is in the group of samadhis below
Gumat in Jammu town. The inscription is apparently
recently inscribed.

The attempt at commemorating in recent times, early satis, can also be seen in some of the dehri in 1 Jhūi, near Jammu. Some people who came over to India from the areas now in Pakistan after the partition of the country in 1947 constructed these dehris of the satis of their families at this particular spot at Jhūi, near Bawa Jit.to da dehwa. One could take a few of the inscriptions on these dehria as examples of the types which are found there. One of them bears thus the inscription:

1. Sthan Bhua Para, sevak Pariwar, Phawti. "Shrine of Bhua Para, raised by her (adoring) family of Phawti."

1. See figs. 95, 96, 97. for the group of dehris on which some of these inscriptions are to be found.

2. In the Jammu area the word "Bua" is indicative of respect for an elderly lady.
Another of the inscriptions reads:

2. Dehri Janaki, Suyawati, Suk Jro ke, barier.

   se Sat Ram Buta Ram ne banwai.

   "The dehri of Nanaki Suyawati, made by Sat Ram Buta
   Ram of the family of Suk Jro."

A third has this inscription:

3. "Bua Devi Janaki ka aethan 3 Jayar (Ja'th) Samvat
   (2014) Janaki dehri Jaswal mai untal Bundi
   thi. Yai dehri ka aethan Jhiri me banu gava hai.
   Sewak Sant Ram - Ram baradari.

   "The 'servant' Sant Ram and the whole community
   got the dehri of Bua Devi Janaki constructed in
   Jhui on the 3rd of Jyestha, VS. 2014 (= A.D. 1957)

   Of quite exceptional interest because of its
   peculier character and its unquestionable authority is
   the evidence about sati that we find in the records of
   the pandas or priests at centres of Hindu pilgrimage in
   North India. In these remarkably rich registers there is
   a very great deal of information of all kinds; and if

1. See, Goswamy, "The Records Kept by Priests".
one is fortunate one can locate most valuable information on a given subject. Not all the Bahl entries are as detailed as those made by one of the ancestors of Pandit Som Nath Chaklan of Hardwar, but reproduced below is an entry in the Kulu Bahl of the family of this priest made on the occasion of the remains of Raja Pritam Singh I being brought to Hardidwar for immersion in the Ganges. The whole entry makes fascinating readings:

"Haiout Pandit Rast Kulu ko Likham. Shri Maharaja Pritam ji ki rani Chauhan ji ke saath Saheli 9 ke aath iye. Shri Hardiwar ke pahti me parwah. Purohit Naat Ram lवके beta Sunesh kā, notē Purohit Bāsu kē saath. Achāri sahit Ram, betā Bilu kā, notē Moharu kā, saath pādha Lanesu betā Sukhram kā, notē Rachunath kē āvā, saath hotā Sandle āvā, bāsi Manikaran kā, saath walet Kathu āvā, bāsi Rāvā kā, beta Jangat Ram kā, notē Ulal Ram kā, saith Bohara Devar āsi Culer ke zahān Rachunathpur men, wa Phakir wa Bahu wa

1. This entry which was kindly pointed out to me by Professor B.N. Goswamy is typical of many such entries which are made with the specific purpose of recording a fact such as this. The retinue which came with the ashes of a ruler was often indicative of high status."
Dhiraj, bete Sankar ke, note Ramdas ke;
Lahi ka bete Harshai, wa Muni Ram sāth
hāzari Karam Pas bete Jaynand ke, wa Chauhani
ke, sāth hāzari Madhu, bai Radal kā; sāth
Kahār Pārah ave bai āpatukh ke; sāth
Muni Ram āva bai Trimali ka, sāth Medu āva,
beta Nairā kā, sāth Sant ve Sensāl bete
Nathu kā āva, sāth Bhalu āva was Kiraru
āva ....

In translation this apparently complicated
entry would read like this:

"Rajput Pundir of Kulū; Inscribed: At Maharaja
Pritam Singh's demise, his Rani Chauhani and nine
maids immolated themselves. Their ashes were
brought to Haridwar by Purohit Vast Ram son of
Sunasu, grandson of Purohit Dasu. Along with him
came Achari Swāt Ram, son of Dīlu, grandson of
Moharu; Padha Ganesu son of Sukh Ram, grandson
of Raghunath; the cook Sagalu resident of
Manikaran; Nazīr Kaithu, resident of Dayer, son
of Jagat Ram, grandson of Udai Ram; Behare
Balware natives of Gulur resident at Raghunathour;
Fakir, Lahi and Dhiraj, sons of Sankar,
grandson of Ramdass; Harshai, son of Lahi;
Mani Ram, personal attendant Karan Dass, son of Jainand, Chausani, personal attendant; Meho resident of Sadal, twelve palanquin bearers, residents of Jagatsukh; Mani Ram resident of Harwali, Meho son of Malo; Sant and Bengal, sons of Nathu, Dhajia and Kirpanu."

This is not by any means the only an entry of the kind in that Bahi. There are other entries relating to sati following the demise of more members of that ruling house. Thus the satis with the bodies of Raja Bikram Singh, Raja Ajit Singh, Mian Charan Singh and Mian Pran Singh are all recorded in detail.

b. Historical

In this category in respect of sati we come upon many references in histories, but very many of contemporary notices. The histories that we have of the Pahari region almost all make mention of satis of very early times, but it is difficult to determine whether the basis of these statements is any material evidence or only a projection into the remote past of

1. It is unfortunate that it is not always possible to locate with ease the material one is looking for but there is always the possibility that in these records similar evidence will suddenly turn up.
what was known to exist in recent past. Thus, we learn
from one account that as early as the 3rd century to
Rani of Raja Mandasiin of Kulu immolated herself with
him when he was murdered by his brother-in-law. Another
reference to a sati of the 3rd or 4th century, relates
to that which followed the death of Raja Rai Balabh of
Jammu who died fighting against Mangal Chand Katoch.
His rani who was from a Padhiyar family became sati.
There are, of course, numerous references to Sati in
Kashmir especially from the 10th to the 11th century and
we hear again and again of wives following their
husbands in death "just as the sun (is followed) by his
own light." From Bilaspur we hear that when Raja Sail
Chand who ruled in the 10th century, his two wives, Hem
Sati and Dev Sati became sati with him. Hem Sati immolated
herself with the Raja's corpse but Dev Sati who was then
carrying a child at the time of the death of the Raja,
became sati later after she had given birth to the child.
The rani of Raja Kailash of Nurpur (14th century) again.

1. Kahan Singh, Tawarikh-i-Raiputana-i-Mulk-i-Punjab,
3. Rajasthani, Vol. V, 226; VI, 104-176; VI, 138,
   VI, 194-195; VIII, 23-4.
4. Kahan Singh, Tawarikh-i-Raiputana-i-Mulk-i-Punjab,
according to a tradition in the Surpur family, became 1
sati with him at his death. There is mention again, 2
in Culier, of the rani of Raja Hari Chand, in the 15th
century, becoming sati in the belief that her husband
had died while away on a hunt.

From the 16th century onwards the references to
sati increase, even though we do not find sati recorded
specifically in each case from each state. This is
however not to make one believe that sati was practised
only in the cases where it is thus mentioned. In a
sense, one has to take it for granted because it was
the non-observance of the practice rather than its
observance which called for comment. The cases of sati
find special mention occasionally only because the number
of satis following a royal death was enormously large 3
or there was some other circumstance, that called for
special comment.

All the seven rani of Raja Sangram Pal of
Basohli (A.D. 1635-1673) are thus mentioned having become 4
sati at his death. From Basohli again, we have the account

1. Kahan Singh, Jawariakh-i-Kaj outpost-1-Kalk-1-Punjab,
2. This is mentioned at some length in the Diliparanilini
the Culier chronicles.
3. Thus if a ruler died while he was away from his state
and his rani became sati with some token of his like
a dagger or a turban, this fact is likely to find spe-
cial mention.
4. Kahan Singh, Jawariakh-i-Kaj outpost-1-Kalk-1-Punjab,
again of the death of Raja Amrit Pal of Basohli at Benaras in A.D. 1776 and his rani a Jat princess, becoming Sati with him there. At the death of Jai Singh of Kulu, in A.D. 1731, the sati of his wife is recorded. As many as sixty-four ranis and other women of the palace establishment are recorded as having become sati with Raja Tedi Singh of that state, at his death in A.D. 1767. The sati in Mandi find pointed mention in the history of the state by Nan Mohan. Similarly in Chamba at the death of Raja Udal Singh all his four ranis along with 18 maid servants practised sati. Again, from the 18th century we have an account which tells of a battle between Raja Fatih Shah of Srinagar (Garhwal) and Raja Hari Chand of Bilaspur.

3. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 60.
4. A History of Mandi State, p. 57, 72 etc.
5. Chamba State Gazetteer, Part A, 1904, p. 44. Likewise the sati of the ranis of Raja Singh of Chamba is mentioned in the Gazetteer at p. 101.
on the one hand and Guru Gobind Singh on the other. In this both the Hindu chiefs were killed, and their wives became sati with them at Bhawaini where their samadhis still stand.

Relating to the 19th century we have an interesting and fairly detailed passage about sati in the Persian history of Jammu and Kashmir, the Rajadarshani. This is how the 19th century historian reconstructs, probably on strong oral or traditional evidence, what happened under Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu when we have noticed alive.

This entire passage is of relevance.

"In the matters of female infanticide, which is practised by all the Rajput clans, and of sati which is a source of pride could not openly legislate. But his sagacity led him to wish for the end of both these cruel practices. In accordance with the precept that "the way of the prince is the way of the folk" he decided to show the way by his personal example .... he left a will that no

woman was to become sati on his funeral pyre. It was submitted to the Raja that it was a point of honour among princes that a Raja should not embark upon the journey to the other world all by himself. The virtuous women were privileged on such occasions to accompany the husband to paradise. The Raja reminded them: 'It is safe to be alone, to be in company is being in trouble.' Hafiz Shirazi says: 'Go alone, for narrow is the path to the life hereafter.' The Raja also added that if women were the means of going to paradise, he would rather not go there through their mediacy, for manliness did not lean upon women for support. Verses:

'It is the human nature which is both heaven and hells,
And generosity and courage are the loftiest citadels.'

It is well known that the will of the Raja was honoured and none of the virtuous women of his household immolated with his dead body.'

1. The inclusion of these verses obviously shows a preference on the part of the author rather than of the Raja by Hafiz Shirazi. The inclusion of such as this was part of a tradition in Persian writing.
From the 2nd half of the 18th century and in the 19th century we begin to get the fortunately accounts of foreign travellers to these parts and in them there is frequent mention of sati and sati monuments in the hills. The references to sati in the Travels of Moorcroft and Trebeck are well known and valuable. The notice of the Mandi baresias by Trebeck follows his description of the palace of the Mandi raja "with roofs of blue slate, concave, like those of Chinese pagodas". He then notices this other curiosity:

"Close to the entrance of the town are several pilasters, and smaller blocks of stone bearing representations, in relief, of the Rajas of Wundi. One of these is set up on the death of each Raja and sometimes on the demise of his relations. Each is sculptured, also, with the figures of his wives who have been burnt with him...."

The practice of the horrible rite of Sati which was "frequent in these mountains" was commented upon by Moorcroft himself during his stay at Almure with Maharaja Sansar Chand of Kangra. It was here that there was occasion for him to practice his medical skill because the Raja's

brother, Mian Fateh Chand fell seriously ill and got cured by the treatment of Moorcroft. This led to great jubilation and expression of profuse gratitude on the part of the entire family of the Raja, and it is with reference to this event that he wrote:

"The wives of Fateh Chand were in readiness for accompany his body to the nile, when the success of my endeavours rescued them, for a while at least, from fearful a consequence."

The account given of this very event by Moorcroft in his *Journals* is more detailed. Here he speaks of the offer to him of a Turkoman horse and a large estate by Sansar Chand as tokens of gratitude. But those offers, he says:

"Conveyed to my mind not half the satisfaction as the discovery of my having been ... to the saving the lives of many of the females of the family of M. Fateh Chand who had left their private apartments...


2. India Office Library, MS. SUR. D264, f 277. My attention to this account was kindly drawn by Prof. B. N. Goswamy.
and actually crossed the threshold of
the outer door of their house to promise
to the supposed dying body of their Lord
that they would burn with it.

"Mula Futteh Chand abandoned by his physicians
laid on the ground to die was given up to
my care with an injunction from the Raja
that I might do whatever I thought proper
even to producing loss of caste, provided
the means were thought necessary to be
conducive to his recovery.

"One favourite female attended upon the Mula
during his illness and her ... in affording
assistance, her unremitting care and the
distressing expression of her countenance
evined the anxiety to save a life on the
preservation of which her own personal safety
depended."

The Sati stones at Naggar, old capital of the
Kulu Rajas are thus noticed by Forbes:

1. To Kulu and Back, pp. 75-76. Cf. Mrs. J.C.
Murray-Aynsley: "... Such stones were placed in
position at the death of every sovereign, and that
the female figures were the effigies of such of
his wives as had performed suttee at their lord's
demise ..." p. 269.
"About half a mile from the castle, on the path running southwards from its upper entrance, at a place called Birah Kund is a small walled in space filled with what looks like a tomb stones elowing each other in rows as closely as possible. These are not tombstones but memorials of the numerous Kulu Rajahs ... On each is carved a rough effigy of the late chief, ... and surrounded by as many wives as were burnt at his death. Some of the stones show as many as eighty female figures ..., while others have only two or three. A horse is often seen too, and presumably a steed was sacrificed at the death of its master."

But what is of the greatest interest in all these records, is the eye-witness account that the traveller Vigne has left of a sati that he saw in Mandi. Vigne had been alive to the prevalence of the practice in India, but this event which he saw with his own eyes apparently affected him much;

"One morning my munshi came to me, and told me that a sati (Suttee), or widow, who was going to burn herself on the funeral pile of her husband, was about to pass by the garden gate. I hastened to obtain a sight of her. She was dressed in her gayest attire; a large crowd of persons followed her, as she walked forward with a hurried and faltering step, like that of a person about to faint. A brahmin supported her on either side, and there, as well as many around, were calling loudly and almost fiercely upon the different Hindu deities; and the name which was most repeatedly and most earnestly called upon was that of Jagannath; but I do not know whether they alluded to the great idol of Bengal, or to some local divinity. Juger signifies a place, and nath is a Sanskrit word for lord, or master, applied to Vishnu or Krishna. Her countenance had assumed a sickly and ghastly appearance, which was partly owing to internal agitation, and partly, so I was informed, to the effects of opium and bhang, and other narcotics,
with which she had been previously drugged, in order to render her less awake to the misery of her situation. She was not, however, so insensible to what was passing as to be inattentive to two persons in particular, amongst several others who were stooping before her, and were evidently imploring her blessings. They were probably near relations. She was presented at interval with a plate of moist red colour in which saffron was no doubt an ingredient, and into this she dipped the ends of her fingers, and then impressed them on the shoulders of the persons who stooped before her in order to be thus marked.

In about half an hour the preparations were completed. She was regularly thatched in, upon the top of the pile, whilst her husband's body yet lay outside. It was finally lifted up to her; the head, as usual, and which is the most interesting part of the ceremony, was received upon her lap, the fire was applied in different parts;
and all was as quickly enveloped in a shroud of mingled flame and smoke, that I believe her sufferings to have been of very short duration, as she must almost immediately have been suffocated."

There are of course, fairly detailed references to sati and sati monuments in the accounts left by the British administrators who 'took over much of this area in the middle of the 19th century and went to record with curiosity and preciseness about this institution in the hill areas. Typical of this interest is that taken by Lt. Harcourt, who was assistant commissioner of Kulu, in what he saw of Sati monuments:

"At Nuggur there is a curious collection of what resemble tombstones, that are to be found just below Nuggur Castle. They are inserted into the ground in four rows, rising one over the other on the hillside ... each ornamented with stone carvings of chiefs of Koofoo, their wives and concubines being portrayed either beside them or in lines

below ... these stones were placed in position at the death of every reigning sovereign of Kooloo, the female figures being the effigies of such wives or mistresses who have performed suttee at their lord's demise. If this be the true state of the case, then the human sacrifices must have been very great in some instances, for it is not uncommon to find forty and fifty female figures crowding the crumbling and worn surface of the stone ...."

c. Archaeological

This is the type of evidence on sati which lends substance to our knowledge of the extent of the prevalence of the practice in the hills. It is difficult to go a few miles even today without someone pointing out some monuments or remain of a sati that occurred long ago. The types of the monuments, however, are not many.

Barsela: a barsela or commemorative pillar, briefly noticed before, is a monolithic stone slab which was
set up at the death of a ruler. On this slab was
carved the likeness, real or supposed, of the ruler
along with the effigies of such of his wives, concubines
and maid-servants who became sati with him. Sir Alexander
Cunningham noticed the _mardasas_ in some detail and has
left a precise description:

"The sati pillars of the Mandi Rajas and
their families stand in a group on a plot
of ground on the left bank of the Suketi
Nala, a little way outside Mandi town, on
the road to Suket. Some of them are 6 and
7 feet high and all are carved with figures
of the Rajas and of the women who became sati
with them. Each Raja is represented as
seated above with a row of raniis or queens,
also seated immediately below still lower
are standing figures of khwatis or concubines
and rakhails or slave girls. The inscription
records the name of the Raja and the date of
his death, as also the number of queens,
concubines and slave-girls who were burnt
with him ..."

1. Cunningham, _Archaeological Survey Reports_, Vol. XIV,
Barestly in the
fly in Suket.

These Incidentally, are
the most widely noticed or commented upon sati stones,
because of their strange striking appearance.

Dehris: Dehris is feminine diminutive of the word 'dehra' which is the general name for a commemorative temple in the hills. One thus speaks of dehra of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba near Nerti in Kangra District which was raised to commemorate his prowess in battle against Sansar Chand of Kangra at whose hands he was killed in A.D. 1794 but not before he had performed prodigies of valour. Not every temple, of course, is called a dehra, and the word is mostly reserved to refer to a structure that commemorates an act of sacrifice or bravery etc.

Dehris are therefore temple-like structures which commemorate, most often, satis. These can vary in size, from very considerable temple-like structures like the ones standing at Jaisinghpur, in Kangra district, to very small miniature temples as the ones standing by the river bed near Haripur-Guler and Nurnpur.

1. See B.N. Goswamy, "Documents of the Pahari Temples."
Stone Heaps or ‘Father da dheri: These stone heaps are found scattered all over the hills. These heaps could roughly be likened to cairns that we know from elsewhere. According to tradition it is said that when a woman prepared to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her husband, she used to put a stone at a certain spot. Later, other people followed her example and even passers-by took to doing this, throwing a stone on it, leading to the foundation of a cairn. This heap also locally called chhards and formal worship is offered at it twice a year. A typical cairn like this is found in village Shilka, in Mandi, for it is much smaller now than it must have been once, because stones are often picked up and

1. Of cairns one hears a great deal in other parts of the world, especially Northern Europe. These were raised as sepulchral monuments, though of course the size of the stones associated with them is larger than one finds in the stone heaps in the hills. See, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, pp. 794-795; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. IV, p. 534a.


4. This village is about six miles from the town of Sundernagar.
taken away these days. The sizes of the stones vary a great deal. Till today the passers-by throw a stone at the cairn, and bow their head in respect as they pass. It was mentioned by the people locally that only odd numbers of stones are thrown at the cairn, because the villagers consider these numbers lucky. Occasionally a diya or a lamp is found burning near the cairn, and at times, people come to it for the grant of a wish.

2

Mohara: There are small stone slabs with roughly carved figures supposed to be representative or magically symbolic of the deceased. There are two uses to which a mohara is put: one, for placing inside the dehri and, secondly for being placed singly as commemorative stones. This practice of putting up moharas even in families in which there never was any sati earlier, still continues, thus merging with the traditions of ancestor worship that go back far to the past.

1. Shri Titia Ram of village Khilra, interviewed.
2. The word comes most probably from 'muhh' or face.
3. By the side of water-tanks or at under a pipal tree, one can still see mohara's everywhere.
Present day samadhi and satha. These satha of which one sees so many in the hills, are strictly speaking not related to satha and many of them are modern structures raised on early sites. But occasionally, the commemorates in a new form satha whose memory is still alive in the community.

It is not easy to give an accurate estimate of the numbers in the hills of all or any of the categories of these monuments. But one can roughly point to the major groups. The Mandi bargalas (see Figs. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23) have come in for the widest notice and of their singular collection, Murray Ainsley counted "upwards of one hundred in number". "There were perhaps, about four or five large ones about 12 feet high on which were sculptured a man on horseback, with a sword in his hand, his steed being "fully caparisoned; also figures holding chauris to drive away the flies." Mrs. Murray Ainsley also mentions that smaller ones varying in size from four feet in height down to twelve inches.

1. The word 'sathan' literally means only a place but is generally used in the sense of a sacred spot.

2. Our Visit to Hindostan, Kashmir and Ladak, p. 269.
These figures show clearly an underestimate, because at present, on the same spot by the Sukati khad, 270 of these barselas can be counted. These have all lately been enclosed by a wall and are looked after by a trust. Fifteen of these barselas are of a really large size. Some of them, with the passage of time, have sunk deeper into the ground.

At Sundarnagar there is a large group of barselas. (see figs. 26, 27) at present numbering 35, which standing facing the Tambrakut mountain.

At Naggar (see figs. 29-34), Captain Harcourt counted 141 barselas a hundred years ago. The estimate of their number given by Forbes was 150. At present, however, there are only a hundred barselas there, many of them having been removed from there by people from time to time. The other spot in Kulu where there are barselas, is Shamsi (see fig. 23) close to the present Kagahunathpur town where the capital of the state shifted in mid-XVII century. Here, at present, there are 45.

1. This spot is half a furlong off Kharidhi Gall.
2. Kulu Lahul and Spiti, p. 357.
3. To Kulu and Back, p. 74.
barasidas. These are looked after today by Pandit Shri Ram, who also cares after the temple close by.

When the old town of Bilasapur got submerged in water under the present Govindsagar lake, the barasidas which used to lie in the Shiva temple were removed from there. They now lie outside the Lakshmi Narayan temple and count 27 in number. A few of them are unfortunately badly damaged.

Of dehri, the largest and most impressive group is in Jaisinghour (see figs. 35, 36). These are really situated in village Rakpur, one and a half miles from Jaisinghour, by the roadside. Jaisinghour may appear at first to be an odd place for such a concentration of numbers - there are 55 of them - but one has to recall that this little place was once the capital of the Katoches when they were in flight from the Mughals who had occupied Kangra, their capital. The dehri stand here in two rows, facing each other, a path running between them. Out of these 55 only 27 of them are at present in proper shape; the rest are damaged. Some of the dehri are tall, stone structured and can be mistaken for regular

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1. This was only one of the temporary capitals that the Katoch chiefs occupied during the period of virtual exile.
temples. In Kangra proper there are dehri, on the bank of the Baner stream, adjoining the funeral ground of the town. There must originally have been more than 20 dehri there, because many other small platforms can still be seen standing. Two of the dehri are still in good shape, and bear a striking resemblance to the dehri of Jaisingnour. This, of course, is no matter for surprise for they belong to the same royal house of the Katoches.

A group of 20 dehri stand at Harinour (see fig. 30), though in a very dilapidated condition, on the left bank of the Baner. They are scattered all over on a plot of ground. Many of those earlier here must apparently have been claimed by the river. At Jamiu the dehri are all locally called "samadhis", more specifically, "Khanian di samadian" (figs. 93, 94). They are located in the locality called Chand Nagar and there are eleven of them in number. All of them are clustered together and are looked after by a quiari who is appointed by the religious trust. All the necessary repairs are made by the trust, out of the income of the jauri attached to these samadhis. The jauri consists of fourteen kanals of land. Besides this, there is the income from charhaws or offering, but this is very nominal and the quiari is allowed to keep it for himself.
There is another group of 7 dehris in village Thana, in Kangra. Since a group of villages had a common funeral ground near the Newgal stream, the dehris of these villages were raised on the hill right above this stream. These dehris are maintained and looked after by their respective families, and necessary repairs are made whenever needed. In Akhnur near Janru, any visitor is easily taken to a group of seven dehris which are near the temple of Swami Kameshwar. Two out of these seven dehris have been recently repaired and white washed, but the others are very badly damaged.

Of dehris standing just by themselves or in very small group there is a very large number scattered all over the hills. Of these it really is perhaps difficult to keep count.

Commemorative stone-heaps are also scattered all over the hills. One can see them thus in places such as Sarkaghat, Jogindernagar, Mandi, Suket, Village Khiha (fig.48), village Mahadev, Saoli Khad in Mandi, village Mahal in Suket, Jaisinghmur and all over the

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2. Gazetteer of Mandi and Suket, 1904, p. 35.
Kangra district.

Moharas (figs. 47, 48, 50) are also encountered everywhere in the hills, like the dehris. Of modern structures on old sathans the one group that demands special attention is at Jhiri near Jammu (figs. 95, 96, 97). These dehris as noticed before were made by the families who migrated from Pakistan to India in 1947. The spot was chosen probably because of its proximity to the much revered sathan of Bawa Jitto. There are here 80 dehris scattered all around, nearly all of them in a good state of repair.

d. Oral

In a sense the most valuable evidence on much that belonged to the hills in the past is still oral because tradition is remarkably strong and memories very vivid in the hills. One cannot expect much accuracy in the matter of details like names and dates etc., but as one travels from village to village and collects oral traditions, one becomes aware of the prevalence of the

custom of sati in the past through this evidence much more sharply than through any other. Whatever the state of repair or disrepair in which sati monuments may now be, sati are still real to many people and beliefs in them remarkably strong. This is reflected best in the stories that one hears almost everywhere. One such story that is very popular relates to village Thana. The wife of one Har Lal from this village, it is said, once went to their family dehri with offering of the first fruits of the harvest. When she came back home, her little son wanted all the halwa or pudding which had been taken as an offering, in the shali or plate. His mother however, gave him only a small quantity, for she was to distribute the rest amongst the other members of the family as prasad. At this the child began to cry and cried as much that after a few days he went blind. His mother, greatly worried, took him to her family guru and related the whole story to him. The guru told her that she had annoyed the sati by refusing the child all the halwa. At this, she once again made some halwa, took

1. See the section on oral evidence collected from interviews in the bibliography. Many of the persons interviewed were full of the most fascinating information.

2. Shrimati Giani Devi of Thana, interviewed.
it to the dehrī, offered some to the satī and gave the rest to her son. After having the ālīvā the child miraculously got back his eye sight. This same innocent but strong belief is reflected in many other legend. It is thus said about a satī that before leaving the house for the funeral ground, she gave a lemon to her relatives and told them that its possession will mean good luck for the family and that it will never dry up. This lemon did bring prosperity to the family while it was with them for over 200 years. The lemon however was lost, we are told, 30 years ago, and the family has since fallen on bad days.

Of the rānis of Raja Suraj Sen of Mandi who became satī, a story is told still with much vividness. Before going to the funeral grounds, it is said, they sent for some money to give away in charity, but were told that all of it was under lock and key. In anger and disappointment, one of them threw a dagger on the wall of the Damdama palace, and the cut of the cut of the dagger is pointed out to this day. The popular belief in Mandi is that when a woman gets excessive pain during

1. Shrimati Nihati Devi of village Thana interviewed.
her menstruation, her people pour some water over the

dagger cut, collect the water in a cup and give it to
the woman in pain, resulting in much relief. One can
see the belief in the efficacy of the cure from the
large number of people who still come to it from far.

In the Trilokinath temple in Mandi town, there
is huge round slab of stone and a similar one in the
Stambhanath Temple in village Mahadev, in Suket. These
stones have strong association with early satis and
would be pointed out to anyone curious to know about
the satis. Of them it is said that women, before going
to the funeral ground for becoming sati, used to come
to this stone, remove it and see something under it.
No one knows as to what they were able to see under this
stone, but the legend is that once they had done this
they did not feel the fire on their body. The story
also says, that only those ladies were able to see
something under the stone who were truly devoted and
loyal to their husbands.

1. Shri Chander Mani Kashyap interviewed at Mandi.
2. Shri Chander Mani Kashyap of Mandi and Pandit
   Noti Ram of village Mahadev in Suket interviewed.
There is a sati 'Kund', small cistern, in village Jhikali Bet in Kangra, about a furlong off the main road from Baijnath Paprola to Palamour - in this area known as Padkeesar. In early days, one is told, a woman before becoming sati, used to take two and a half rounds around this kund. Doing this made the woman immune to ordinary sensation and she did not feel the fire of the funeral pyre on her body.

1. Shri Lachman Dass and Shri Sunder Singh of Jhikali Bet interviewed.