

## SET 93 - HIMACHAL PRADESH

Information and Photography by Ronald M. Bernier, Professor of Art History, Department of Fine Arts, Campus Box 318, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309.  
All slides ©AAAUM/Bernier

These photographs were made as part of a research project that resulted in publication of *Himalayan Towers - Temples and Palaces of Himachal Pradesh*, New Delhi 110055, and they will be part of the forthcoming *Himalayan Architecture*, a pan-Himalayan study of architecture from the Assam foothills in the east to the heights of Pakistan's Hunza in the west.

9301. The remoteness of many unstudied villages in Himachal Pradesh is indicated by this settlement with bhandar temple storehouse in Simla District.

9302. Arki stands for traditions of the Indian plain, including Rajasthan, as they were borrowed in combination with Mughal patterns mountain kingdoms.

9303. The audience of the diwankhana or audience hall is on the upper floor of the small fortress at Arki, and its open balcony commands a fine view. The dry fresco paintings that are found on the Arki fortress walls and ceilings are lively, clear, and often have folk art directness while they also show an eagerness to borrow imported styles and illusionism.

9304. Arki battle scenes are especially fresh and lively as well as based in historical fact, with British forces appearing to be almost comical in their rigid battle formations.

9305. This floral design in the entry hall of the diwankhana is a brittle and bold variation upon Mughal patterns as it shows the hand of a very local artist, no doubt.

9306. Battle scenes are the main subject of Arki fortress painting.

9307. Painting an illusionistic scene of Venice based upon vanishing point perspective was a challenge that the artist must have enjoyed, as in other scenes in upper registers of the murals showing international cities.

9308. As a fairly late medieval structure of stone, the temple of Siva Mahadeva at Baijnath beside the Beas River below Mandi is large and very heavy. It is prominently placed at the beginning of the route into the Kulu Valley and dates from the 14th century.

9309. Nandi, bull of Siva, is subject of this large and weighty image carved of stone to face the sanctum sanctorum of Siva Mahadeva temple at Baijnath.

9310. Like the image of Nandi, this statue of Ganesa lacks lively rhythm and supple volumes, perhaps revealing the heavy-handed directness of mountain tastes more than the sophistication of the Hindu Renaissance at lower elevations.

9311. Visvesvara Mahadeva temple at Bajaura, dating from the 8th century, is the first major monument encountered as one travels toward Kulu from Mandi. Measuring 13 feet square, it is classic in composition and function as it honors Siva in the form of a linga inside the garbha grha, with three subsidiary shrines to the other cardinal directions. The inner room measures 8 feet six inches by 7 feet 2 inches. It is located at the foot of Kulu Valley near the confluence of the Beas and Parbatti rivers.

9312. This triple visage of Siva, a bhadrakumha or "great face," gives rise to faces that are found on all four porches of the Bajaura temple tower, in this case a calmly male face at the center of a triple form above the major niche that holds a large image of Visnu of the back side

of the temple. V.C. Ohri identifies the faces found around the building as belonging to Siva in composite form as ghora (terrific), saumya ("human"), and female (Uma) emanations. These elements are generally accepted as later in date than the temples as a whole.

9313. This 8th century image of Visnu is rather stiff but finely finished, standing as a reminder of Mulk Raj Anand's judgment that Bajaura temple extends itself into late stages of early medieval art when "sculpture overwhelmed architecture and later possessed it almost completely."

9314. Durga slays Mahisa in one of the most appealing stone sculptures in the Himalaya in this 8th century image from Bajaura. The goddess is about half life-size as she plunges her spear toward the symbol of evil that shares her large niche on the temple's north side. The bhadrakumari above her centers on Uma.

9315. Ganesa is prominent in the large southern niche of Bajaura temple, with the bhadrakumari trio above him centering on the terrific visage of Siva with bared teeth.

9316. Simple temples like this one in Simla District are typical of Himachal Pradesh design and materials as timber-bonded buildings covered by slate shingles.

9317. Behna is home of a large and quite open temple of Siva Mahadeva that might be compared to the large but lower Siva temple at Jagatsukh in Kulu Valley. The village is located just above the Sutlej River where it meets the Ani River. It is quite hostile to foreign visitors, presumably due to bad experiences in the past, but worth venturing into to see such elements as fetish-like pounding of nails into the temple porch. The doorframe of the entry is elaborately carved and wooden pendants hang from the temple roofs above. An unusual figure that is carved along with those of Ganesa, Vishnu, Siva Nataraja, and Lakshmi is "the carpenter who made the temple"--possibly Visvakarman as Creative Principle. Its two-level open tower may be said to substitute for the stone sikhara of more classical temple while its open porch is made possible by the use of 16 vertical pillars and 20 slanting struts carved of deodar wood. Penelope Chetwode notes that this temple defines the "Sutlej Valley Style."

9318. We are reminded that any Asian art is vulnerable, even great towers that are built of stone, as we witness the submersion and silt-burial of the temples of Bilaspur that resulted from the completion of a major dam and water project in Himachal Pradesh.

9319. In its protected mountain setting, Brahmor served as the first capital of the royal hill state of Chamba state, and it preserved monuments dating from as early as the 7th century A.D. It is high above the Iravati River and above Budhal Valley, its fastness allowing for preservation of some of the most important art in Himachal Pradesh.

9320. In its protected mountain setting, Brahmor, the sikhara temple of Manimahesa Siva in Brahmor's main square dominates the small town. It shelters a linga in its garbha griha and there is a bhadrakumari face of Siva above its doorway. The linga suggests middle pratihara prototypes and the temple is dated to the 10th century reign of King Sahilavarman as a replacement of an earlier temple of Siva. It is topped by a chatra umbrella roof made of wood that relates to those that are found in the later capital of Chamba town.

9321. The temple of Laksana Devi is the oldest structure in Brahmor, with a now roof line and repaired outer walls but still preserving its steeply pitched former roof line at the front and the rich wood carving of its entry doorframe and facade. While no recorded date is found here, it is attributed to the 7th or 8th century A.D., partly by evidence of the bronze image that it holds and of other bronze masterworks in Brahmor.

9322. The lantern ceiling of Lakshana Devi temple in Brahmor relates to countless other patterns in wood and stone that extend into Afghanistan and Kashmir, for example, but its importance in this case is due to its early origin and its immediate comparison to ceiling patterns at Ajanta and other Gupta or early post-Gupta sites. After moving through a small antechamber, one reaches the square sanctum and finds the lantern-enclosed mandala of the ceiling to be directly over the goddess herself. Her exquisite jewelry, but she represents Bhagavati as Durga in the act of destroying Mahisa. She stands just 3 feet 4 inches tall.

9323. Overview of the Brahmor temple square with art that dates from the 7th/8th century and later.

9324. Ganesa image made of cire perdu bronze (more properly brass) that occupies a humble structure as substitute for an earlier shrine lacks its original legs but is still imposing in its three foot height as it rests on a 14-inch pedestal. It is inscribed with the name of King Meruvarman whose reign is traced to the second or third quarter of the 7th century A.D., or just slightly later. Also recorded on the image is the name of the artist who made it: Gugga. J.Ph. Vogel was impressed more by the artist's technique than his style, but does allow that "we cannot but admire the skill with which he has succeeded in imparting majesty to the grotesque features of the elephant-faced god."

9325. The open pavilion that holds this charming image of the smiling Nandi is a recent construction, but the image itself, like the others here, was probably made at the site according to Hermann Goetz who terms them "good copies of late Gupta statuary such as it had flourished under the great Darshavardhana of Thanesar." Folk art inspiration is an important element of this statue that stands 5 feet tall. Local legend records that King Meruvarman used to write his royal decrees on Nandi's back.

9326. Like the other images in Brahmor, this statue of Narasimha is made of asthadhatu multiple metals. It stands 3 feet tall and occupies a small shrine that is later in date than this image that is, once more, associated with King Meruvarman and the artist Gugga.

9327. This ordinary house in Chamba town is "timber bonded" in the typical Himachal way.

9328. The most prominent architecture in Chamba consists of this grouping of sikhara temples topped by chatra roofs made of wood and covered with slate shingles in accommodation of Himalayan preferences. Such additions were first made in the 17th century.

9329. This compound image of Gauri Sankara shows Siva and Parvati with Nandi in two-thirds life-size within the garbha griha of their stone sikhara temple of the same name. The figures' eyes are inlaid with silver and the bodies of both, usually hidden by cloth offerings, are adorned with abundant cast jewelry and garlands. The temple is attributed to the 10th century and, according to J.Ph. Vogel, was founded by Yugakaravarman, son of Sahilavarman.

9330. The marble images of Laksmi and Narayana are the most prominent in local lore of Chamba and, like their towering temple, they are traced to patronage by King Sahilavarman in the 10th century, possibly to commemorate the establishment of Vaisnavism as official "state" religion. It is said that the marble was brought from the Mt. Abu area (accounting, perhaps for the style of the images) but it may in fact have come from Markuta on the road to Baleni Pass and the town of Kangra. The figure of Visnu with three faces is about two-thirds like-size while Laksmi is much smaller as she stands beside him. A metal base with Garuda supports the pair.

9331. Hanuman and his retinue are carved of living rock at Sarota in the vicinity of Chamba town. The figures are simple and direct as they reveal a kind of folk directness. They are undated.

9332. Chamunda Devi pent roof temple is on a hill overlooking the town of Chamba and it has ritual importance that belies its simple appearance. It has an open circumambulatory with roof and its exterior walls are painted all around with classic Hindu narratives. Its arts include wood carvings that are bold but often show borrowed Rajput elements, noted in costumes and framing of minor characters. The ceiling of the circumambulatory cavity filled with attendant figures dressed in Rajput/Mughal style.

9333. This exterior wall painting in fresco from the porch of Chamunda Devi temple shows Siva and Parvati with their sons Kartikkeya and Ganesa. The rectangular format framed by flowers with 8-pointed stars is typical.

9334. One of the best-preserved exterior paintings of Chamunda Devi temple shows Siva and Vishnu in combined form as Hai-Hara. The dimensions are approximately 14 by 24 inches.

9335. The second and newer palace of Chamba is named Akhand Chandi and dates from about 1860 A.D. It functions as a college today but still preserved are vibrant fresco paintings in two small audience halls. The main painting of its sill-standing predecessor, the Rang Mahal palace, are now in Delhi's National Museum.

9336. The main subject of the murals in Akhand Chandi Palace, dated about 1860, are the battle of two opposing armies from the Mahabharata and curious sporting scenes showing British characters in top-hats as they hunt and enjoy pig-sticking. M.S. Randhawa credits a revival of Chamba painting style to the rule of Sri Singh (1844-1870), and the hot red intensity of these palace painting convey their undeniable strength. The lower part of the walls present various animals and more as attendant pictures.

9337. Detail of the large-scale murals in Akhand Chandi Palace from about 1860.

9338. Sivalaya temple near the river below Chamba is a fairly simple building and not a major site for local devotees, but its outer walls and enclosed porch that surrounds the rectangular structure have paintings that are comparable to those at the temple of Chamunda Devi. The structure is pent-roof.

9339. Siva and Parvati are painted on plaster on the outer wall of Sivalaya temple below Chamba town.

9340. The road from Chamba as "new" capital of Chamba District leads through this rugged river valley to Chatrarhi with its temple of Sakti Devi and on to the earlier and still quite inaccessible capital of Brahmor.

9341. The temple of Sakti Devi is supported by the small village of Chatrarhi today. Built in "domestic" style like the temple of Jagatsukh in Kulu Valley, the building holds a dazzling image of the goddess that stands 4 feet 6 inches tall. It is highly polished in asthadhatu metal and has a particularly gentle expression, rather like that of medieval bronze images from Nepal. It is recorded that King Meruvarman defeated his enemies with the help of this goddess and it is conceivable that this image was made in thanks. The wood carving inside of the double-walled temple with circumambulatory passage is as fine as that on the temple of Lakshana Devi in Brahmor and may also date from that temple's time in the 7th or 8th century.

9342. Image of Sakti Devi, 4 feet six inches tall in the garbha griha of the Chatrarhi temple.

9343. The fairly large temple at Dashed in Kulu Valley is one of the highest located examples of the sikhara temple type in the Himalaya region and it is dedicated to Siva, with some stone carvings conveying folk art impact.

9344. The village of Dashed has many fine domestic structures and this window of a house on the main lane shows wood-chipping patterns that recall Central Asian as well as Himalayan comparisons.

9345. This timber-bonded tower in Gazta functions as a bhandar or temple storehouse in Himachal Pradesh.

9346. This mohra or metal mask in Ghosal is meant to be carried in sacred procession as well as to accommodate the spirit of a local devata.

9347. The carved temple elements of Ghosal are among the purest in their representation of local gods and local aesthetic preferences.

9348. Found not far from the main road in upper Kulu Valley, the village of Gushaini holds this finely treated temple of a local devata or deity.

9349. The temple grouping in Hatkoti, dedicated primarily to Siva and Bhagavati, is early and in many ways unique. Most notable is the unusual concave silhouette of the slate-shingled roofs, but such a tight clustering of related buildings is also unexpected. A large bhadramukha of Siva's multiple faces that was found here now rests in the Himachal State Museum in Simla, 110 kilometers from this place in Jubbal Tehsil. Inscriptions of the 7th and 8th centuries survive here in Sankha and Siddha-matrika scripts.

9350. The temple of Hatesvari Durga in Hatkoti dates from the 8th or 9th century A.D. according to inscriptional evidence.

9351. Wooden pendants of the temple of Hatesvari Durga in Hatkoti.

9352. This image of Durga Mahisasuramardini is 8-armed within a frame of metal that bears an inscription in Siddha-matrika script that is attributable to the late 8th or early 9th century according to V.C. Ohri. It stands nearly 2 meters tall with its pedestal and elaborate frame. The figure itself is attributed to the 7th century by Mian Goverdhan Singh, an origin that would make the image as important historically as the goddess sculpture in Brahmor and Chatrarhi.

9353. Jagatsukh village in upper Kulu Valley is typical of Himachal settlements that cling to steep hillside locations while working terraced fields. The lower levels of houses are used for storage and sometimes to shelter animals while living space is on the upper floors.

9354. Sandhya Devi temple in Jagatsukh shows absolute integration of wooden and stone elements as it houses the spirit of a local mother goddess with a small stone sikhara near by. The sikhara is named for Gauri Sankara and its Gupta-derived style belongs to the 7th or 8th century (Mian Goverdhan Singh considers its "late" Gupta style to date from the 9th or 10th century), a style that was revived under Raja Jagat Singh in the 7th century. The timber-bonded and pitch-roof building dated from 1428 and the reign of Raja Udhran Pa.

9355. This detail of the Sandhya Devi temple in Jagatsukh shows the building tradition that joins wood to stone without regard for the special physical qualities of either.

9356. The temple of Cauri Sankara in Jagatsukh (see notes 9354).

9357. The richly carved stone walls of Kangra Fort are more universally Indian than most examples of architecture in Himachal Pradesh.
9358. This doorframe of a shrine in Kangra Fort shows the polish and intricate details of stone carving that Himachal Pradesh owes to traditions of India as a whole.
9359. Kulu citizens take pride in their special identity, a sign of which, for men, is the well-known "Kulu cap."
9360. The palace of the former raja in Kulu town is a curiosity that shows the Indo-European architectural style that was created by Indians, as if to be vengeance for Britain's Indo-Saracenic complexes that arose like strange visions in the 19th and 20th centuries.
9361. This temple guardian made of brightly painted wood owes more to local tastes than to any pan-Indian tradition as it guards the main shrine that is attached to the palace of the Raja of Kulu.
9362. this golden devata mask from the Mata temple in Kulu Valley is typical of mohra art that has its greatest prominence in this area. Devi mask in Assam are just one possible comparison.
9363. It is usual for music-playing processions to carry one or more devata masks from village to village and back again in the Kulu area. A small palanquin will carry an entire "family" of such local gods.
9364. The landscape with its glacial river is dramatic near the village of Khokhan in Kulu Valley.
9365. The temple of Adi Brahma in the village of Khokhan is unusual in having four roofs as it rises above its small courtyard enclosure.
9366. The small courtyard area of the Adi Brahma temple is marked by some very direct woodcarving patterns.
9367. Jenog (Jonog) near Simla is a small village that is crowned by a small devi temple as it holds a large bhandar or temple storehouse in attendance.
9368. The bhandar of Jenog is about 4 storeys high and is ascended by a notched log to the upper levels where the most important temple goods, likely to include palanquins and musical instruments, are kept.
9369. Wooden ladder and pendants of the Jenog village bhandar.
9370. The temple of Trigaresvara Mahadeva is a small but very sacred edifice of Siva on the highest ground of Jenog village near Simla.
9371. This high-contrast black-and-white photograph is intended to reveal the sharp quality of door and doorframe woodcarving on the entrance of Trigaresvara Mahadeva temple in Jenog.
9372. Children on Manan village in the Simla hills area are proud of their Himachal identity.
9373. Evidence of earlier stone architecture is found in such remnants of amalaka sun-discs and other fragments in villages like Manan in the Simla hills.

9374. Bhagavati temple in Manan is not exactly like any other temple of Himachal Pradesh, showing that area-to-area variation is considerable.

9375. The superstructure of Bhagavati temple in Manan is made up of triple slate-covered roofs.

9376. The carved ceiling of the entry porch or mandapa of Manan's temple to Bhagavati is unusually colorful with application of aluminum paint as well as enamel red, yellow, black, and more.

9377. The bhandar that holds stores for the temple in Manan is one of the most elaborate in Himachal Pradesh and its double gables atop its balcony are unusual elements.

9378. Another view of the bhandar in Manan with its painted wooden fringe shows its balance and color.

9379. The former raja's palace in Mandi looks plain but secure from the river side while its entry courtyard that is not visible here has some fine window carvings and a garage for the owner's Rolls-Royce.

9380. The temple of Triloknath that stands across the Beas River from Mandi's palace is imposing as it preserves the mandapa and sikhara elements of classic late Hindu architecture from the vast plains below. It is identified with Siva and was built in 1520 A.D. by Sultan Devi as queen of Raja Ajbar Singh, according to Madanjeet Singh.

9381. Another stone temple on the Beas River and Mandi is the 14th century Panchavakra tower.

9382. The temple of the goddess Hidimba Devi at Dhungri just above the busy town of Manali at the top of Kulu Valley is a multi-stage pagoda that dates from 1553 A.D.

9383. The entrance complex of Hidimba Devi temple in its forest of deodar cedar.

9384. A detail of the doorframe of Hidimba Devi temple, 1553 A.D.

9385. The main entrance lintel with a carved image of Ganesa at its center on the facade of Hidimba Devi temple.

9386. Carved deodar wood, without painted layers that were removed by restorers from India's Archaeological Survey, on the facade of Hidimba Devi temple in upper Kulu Valley.

9387. Brahma shown on his feathered vehicle, a goose, is carved on the entry walls of Hidimba Devi temple to the Great Mother.

9388. This double window calls for comparison to Central Asian and many other architectural tradition as a fine example of wood chipping as one of two window compounds on either side of the door to Hidimba Devi temple, dated 1553.

9389. The building that appears to be multi-storeyed from the outside actually contains only one high-ceilinged space. The goddess Hidimba Devi is represented both by a huge rock that is adorned with flower garlands and by a small bronze casting at its base. Legend recounts the tradition of giving human sacrifices here.

9390. Pilgrims leave Hidimba Devi temple in this photograph that was made before the Archaeological Survey of India completed its restoration project here.
9391. The pagoda temple of Tripura Sundari in Naggar, established in the 15th century, was substantially restored in the late 20th century, including construction of a new wooded roof.
9392. Parasurama temple of temple in the Brahmanical town of Nirmand is a large complex with interconnecting courtyards and images made of both metal and stone. Its exterior woodcarving is outstanding and "baroque," revealing much European influences.
9393. Detail of the exterior carving of the Parasurama temple compound in Nirmand.
9394. The imposing multiple temple complex at Masrur in the foothills of Himachal Pradesh was dedicated to Siva and Visnu in the 8th century but never finished, being attacked by Mahmud of Ghazni and others.
9395. Detail of an unfinished door in the living rock of Masrur. Note "late Gupta" elements in both composition and figural types.
9396. A pack train crosses the snows of the Rohtang Pass as the only route between the norther Kulu Valley and Lahaul, where the Himachal Pradesh artistic tradition continues.
9397. The tower of the "Thakur's Castle" above the village of gondhla resembles bhandar storehouse towers but especially the watchtowers of other castles in Himachal Pradesh such as Chail.
9398. Markula Devi temple in Udaipur is perhaps over-protected from foreign visitors while it calls for detailed study. It has been partially rebuilt but its entrance facade and other elements may still be compared to the important temple of Laksana Devi in Brahmor. Markula Devi temple is not as early as Brahmor art, probably dating from the 11th century, but its interior wood carvings are outstanding and its proportions are believed to be basically true to early medieval customs.
9399. The magnificent complex of two major towers and many attendant buildings and courtyards that makes up Bhima Kali temple in upper Sarahan may date from as late as the 19th century in its present form. But it shelters timeless legends and beliefs, including that of a ferocious female spirit, living in a dark crevice within the innermost courtyard. Her voice, demanding human blood, is said to be heard from the deep darkness. An upper level of the main tower this is now in use (perhaps the lean of the earlier tower made it unsafe) holds a finely rendered metal image of Bhagavati as a bridge. The exterior carving bears comparison to the flamboyant reliefs that are found in Nirmand.
9400. Silver covered doors of the Bimha Kali Temple in upper Sarahan.