The Temples of Himachal Pradesh

Shanti Lal Nagar

Himachal Pradesh has been known from the time immemorial as the ‘Land of Gods’, who have their abodes in the entire length and breadth of the state. The deities enshrined therein, belong to different cults and creeds, of the Hindu, the Buddhist and the Jaina pantheons. These shrines belong to the different periods of Indian history, portray different schools of art and architecture and have been handed over by the past in the form of stone as well as wooden or even brick structures of šikhara, pagoda, pentroof and dome shaped temples and monasteries.

An attempt has been made in this work to project a descriptive account of nearly three hundred such religious edifices belonging to different periods of Indian history in the twelve districts of the state, arranged in a chronological order, also classifying them in (i) Śakti temples, (ii) Śiva temples, (iii) Vaishṇava temples and (iv) temples of the other deities. While doing so, an effort has been made to correlate the copper plate grants concerning the different temples, which highlight the importance of each one of them. Another interesting feature of the work is, the account concerning the various temples dedicated to the Purānic sages like Vyāsa, Mārkandeya, Paraśurāma and others, besides the local deities (not related to any of the renowned faiths) which include Deosiddha Bālakanāth, Shirgil, Devatās and Nāgas.

Contents: Preface; List of Drawings and Maps; List of Plates; Chapter 1. Introduction: (i) Genesis and Evolution of the State; (ii) Topography and Climate; (iii) The People and Civilization of the Highlands; (iv) The Cultural Heritage and its sources; (v) Art and Architecture; (vi) Architectural Designs; (vii) About the Artist; (viii) Linkage of the Region with the Ancient Past; Chapter 2. The Temple Styles: (i) Nagara or Śikhara Type: a. Pyramidal Type; b. Latikā Type; (ii) Wooden Temples: a. Pentroof-Hill Type Temples; b. Pagoda Type Temples; (iii) Dome-Shaped Temples; (iv) Rock-cut Cave Temples; (v) Miscellaneous Types of Temples; (vi) Buddhist Monasteries; Chapter 3. Different Faiths and their Deities: (i) Hinduism: a. Prajāpati Brahmā; b. Śaivism; c. Šaktism; d. Vaishṇavism; e. Worship of the sun; f. Worship of the Gaṇeśa; (ii) Jainism; (iii) Buddhism; (iv) Confluence of Different Faiths; Chapter 4. The Temple Architecture: (i) Bilaspur Temples; (ii) Chamba Temples; (iii) Hamirpur Temples; (iv) Kangra Temples; (v) Kinnaur Temples; (vi) Kulu Temples; (vii) Lahaul Temples; (viii) Mandi Temples; (ix) Shimla Temples; (x) Sirmaur Temples; (xi) UNA Temples; Chapter 5. Buddhist Monasteries: (i) Kangra; (ii) Mandi; (iii) Kinnaur; (iv) Shimla; (v) Lahaul; (vi) Spiti; Chapter 6. The Artists and Artisans; Chapter 7. Financial Resources for Temples; Chapter 8. Epilogue; Bibliography; Index.

ISBN 81-85179-48-4