

Himachal Pradesh

State (pop., 2008 est.: 6,550,000), northern India.

The earliest known inhabitants of the region were tribals called Dasas. Later, Aryans came and they assimilated in the tribes. In the later centuries, the hill chieftains accepted suzerainty of the Mauryan empire, the Kaushans, the Guptas and Kanauj rulers. During the Mughal period, the Rajas of the hill states made some mutually agreed arrangements which governed their relations. In the 19th century, Ranjit Singh annexed/subjugated many of the states. When the British came, they defeated Gorkhas and entered into treaties with some Rajas and annexed the kingdoms of others. The situation more or less remained unchanged till 1947. After Independence, 30 princely states of the area were united and Himachal Pradesh was formed on 15th April, 1948. With the recognition of Punjab on 1st November, 1966, certain areas belonging to it were also included in Himachal Pradesh. On 25th January, 1971, Himachal Pradesh was made a full-fledged State.

The State is bordered by Jammu & Kashmir on North, Punjab on West and South-West, Haryana on South, Uttar Pradesh on South-East and China on the East.

General

Location	
Latitude	30° 22' 40" N to 33° 12' 40" N
Longitude	75° 45' 55" E to 79° 04' 20" E
Height (From mean sea Level)	350 meter to 6975 meter
Population [2001-Census]	6077248 persons
Urban	594881 persons
Rural	5482367 persons
Geographical Area [2001]	55,673 sq. km
Density (per Sq. Km.) [2001]	109
Females per 1000 Males [2001]	970
Birth Rate (per 1000) [2002(P)]	22.1
Death Rate (per 1000) [2002(P)]	7.2

Administrative Structure [2002]

State Capital	Shimla
No. of Districts	12
No. of tehsils	75
No. of Sub Divisions	52
No. of Blocks	75
No. of Nagar Panchyats	

No. of Gram Panchyats	
No. of Villages	20118
No. of Towns	57
No. of Parliament Constituencies	
Lok Sabha	4
Rajya Sabha	3
No. of Assembly Constituencies	68

Development Indicators

Per Capita Income [2000-01]	Rs. 10942
Literacy [2001]	77.13 %
Male	86.03%
Female	68.08 %
Total Villages Electrified	100 %
Telephone sets	145505
No. of Hospitals	632
No. of Schools	
Primary	
Middle	
High/ Higher Secondary	
Colleges	
General	
Medical	2
Engineering	4
Universities	4
No. of S.S.I. Units	30176

Land Use Pattern

Net Area Sown	560154 Hects.
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Forest Cover [1996-97]

Reserved Forests Area	1896 sq.kms.
Protected Forests Area	43043 sq.kms.
Unclassed Forest Area	976 sq.kms.
Other Forests Area	370 sq.kms.
Forests not under control of forest Deptt.	748 sq.kms.
No. of Wild Life Sanctuaries	32

Others

Average Rainfall	1469 mm
State Animal	Snow Leopard
State Bird	Western Tragopan
State Flower	Pink Rhododendron
State Language	Hindi & Local Dialects
Major Rivers	Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Parbati
Major Lakes	Renuka, Rewalsar, Khajjiar, Dal, Beas Kund, Dasaur, Brighu, Prashar, Mani Mahesh, Chander Tal, Suraj Tal, Kareri, Sreolsar, Gobind Sagar, Nako



Shrimati Urmila Singh HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR



**Prof. Prem Kumar Dhumal
Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh**

**Council of Ministers
Himachal Pradesh**

As on 19 May 2010

Name	Designation	Addl. Charge	Room No. Office	Phone Office	Phone Residence	E-mail
<u>Prof. Prem Kumar Dhumal</u>	Chief Minister	All other Departments, which are not allotted	E-101	2625400	2621384	cm-hp@nic.in
<u>Thakur Gulab Singh</u>	Public Works Minister	Public Works, Revenue	E-132	2621196	2621693	revmin-hp@nic.in
<u>Shri Ishwar Dass Dhiman</u>	Education Minister	Higher Education, Elementary Education	E-115	2621938	2623280	edumin-hp@nic.in
<u>Shri Ravinder Singh Ravi</u>	Irrigation & Public Health Minister	Irrigation & Public Health, Printing & Stationary	E-214	2621599	2623086	iphmin-hp@nic.in
<u>Shri Kishan Kapoor</u>	Industries Minister	Industries, Labour & Employment, Sainik Welfare	E-229	2622464	2625175	indmin-hp@nic.in
<u>Shri Narender Bragta</u>	Horticulture Minister	Horticulture, Technical Education, Vocational & Industrial Training	E-202A	2620623	2624200	narinder.bragta@nic.in
<u>Shri Ramesh Dhawala</u>	Food, Civil Supplies & Consumers Affairs Minister	Food, Civil Supplies & Consumers, Fisheries	E-123	2621580	2623817	fcsmin-hp@nic.in
<u>Dr. Rajeev Bindal</u>	Health & Family Welfare Minister	Health & Family Welfare, Ayurveda, Medical Education	E-321	2621004	2623900	healthmin-hp@nic.in
<u>Smt. Sarveen Chaudhari</u>	Social Justice & Empowerment Minister	Social Justice & Empowerment	E-221	2620191	2625754	minsje-hp@nic.in
<u>Sh. Jai Ram Thakur</u>	Panchayati Raj & Rural Development Minister	Panchayati Raj, Rural Development	E-21G	2621017		rdmin-hp@nic.in
<u>Sh. Mahender Singh</u>	Transport Minister	Transport, TCP, Housing, Urban Development	E-224	2621903	2623254	tptmin-hp@nic.in
	Control Room Phone Control Room FAX EPABX No. DID Code ISD code for Shimla	2622204 2621154 2621804 2880 91177				A - Armsdale Building E - Ellerslie Building Himachal Pradesh Government Secretariat, Shimla - 171002, Himachal Pradesh, INDIA

Located in the western Himalayas, it is bordered by the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and the states of Uttarakhand, Haryana, Punjab, and Jammu and Kashmir and covers an area of

21,495 sq mi (55,673 sq km); its capital is Shimla. The area's history dates to the Vedic period, when the Aryans entered the region and gradually assimilated the indigenous peoples. It was exposed to successive invasions through the centuries, ending with British domination in the 19th century. Between 1948 and the achievement of statehood in 1971, it underwent various changes in size and administrative status. It is one of the least urbanized states in India, and most of the people are subsistence farmers.

It is in the extreme northern part of the Asian subcontinent. It is bounded by the state of Jammu and Kashmir to the north, by the Tibet Autonomous Region of China to the east, and by the states of Uttarakhand to the southeast, Haryana to the south, and Punjab to the west. Himachal Pradesh occupies a region of scenic splendour in the western Himalayas, offering a mult textured display of lofty snow-clad mountains, deep gorges, thickly forested valleys, large lakes, terraced fields, and cascading streams. Indeed, the name of the state is a reference to its setting; Himachal means "snowy slopes" (Sanskrit: *hima*, "snow"; *acal*, "slopes"), and Pradesh means "state."

The city of Shimla was the summer headquarters of preindependence British viceroys; it is now the state capital and, at an elevation of about 7,100 feet (2,200 metres), one of the largest and most popular mountain resorts in the country. Formerly a union territory, Himachal Pradesh became a state of India on Jan. 25, 1971. Area 21,495 square miles (55,673 square km). Pop. (2008 est.) 6,550,000.

Land

Within the diverse terrain of Himachal Pradesh are several parallel physiographic regions corresponding to the northwest-southeast-trending ranges of the Himalayan mountain system. The region adjacent to the plains of Punjab and Haryana consists of two stretches of the Siwalik (Shiwalik) Range (the Outer Himalayas) separated by long, narrow valleys. Elevations in the southern tract of the region average about 1,600 feet (500 metres), while in the northern tract they range between 3,000 and 5,000 feet (900 and 1,500 metres). To the north of the Siwaliks are the Lesser (or Lower) Himalayas, which rise to about 15,000 feet (4,500 metres). Within this region are the spectacular snow-capped Dhaola Dhar and Pir Panjal ranges. To the north again is the Zaskar Range, which reaches elevations of more than 22,000 feet (6,700 metres), towering over the other ranges in the region. Many active mountain glaciers originate in this area.

Himachal Pradesh has many perennial snow-fed rivers and streams, in addition to four major watercourses. The eastern portion of the state is drained primarily by the Sutlej River, which rises in Tibet. Draining the western part of Himachal Pradesh are the Chenab (Chandra-Bhaga), Ravi, and Beas rivers, which have their source in the Great Himalayas.

Climate

The Siwalik region has hot summers (March to June), with temperatures rising above 100 °F (38 °C), cool and dry winters (October to February), and a wet season (July to September), with rains brought by the southwestern monsoon. As elevations increase farther north, the climate becomes wetter and cooler. In the Great Himalayas, winters are bitterly cold and snowy, with temperatures dropping below 0 °F (-18 °C).

Population composition

The population of Himachal Pradesh is composed of a variety of distinct ethnolinguistic groups and social castes. Among the most prominent communities are the Gaddi (Gaddi), Gujari, Kinnauri, Lahuli, and Pangwali. Many Punjabi immigrants have settled in the major towns and cities since Indian independence in 1947.

The vast majority of the population is Hindu, although Buddhists form the dominant group in the sparsely populated districts of Lahaul and Spiti and Kinnaur, both of which share a border with Tibet. The state also has small minorities of Sikhs, Muslims, and Christians.

Although every former princely state within Himachal Pradesh has a local dialect named after it, Hindi (the official state language) and Pahari are the principal languages. Both are Indo-Aryan languages. In Lahaul and Spiti and in Kinnaur, however, the most widely spoken languages belong to the Sino-Tibetan family.

Settlement patterns

Himachal Pradesh is one of the least-urbanized states in India. In the early 21st century its urban population accounted for less than 10 percent of the total. There are more than 50 towns, and the capital, Shimla, constitutes a city of reasonable size. The capitals of the former princely states, including Bilaspur, Mandi, Chamba, and Kullu, are now district headquarters. Dalhousie, Kasauli, and Sabathu are hill resorts of British origin. Kangza, Palampur, Solan, and Dharmshala are other notable towns in the state.

Agriculture and manufacturing

Most people in Himachal Pradesh depend for their livelihood on agriculture, pastoralism, transhumance (seasonal herding), horticulture, and forestry. However, the government of Himachal Pradesh has encouraged the development and dispersal of manufacturing, with different towns—mostly in the southern part of the state—often specializing in the manufacture of particular goods. The town of Nahan, for instance, is known for its production of agricultural implements, turpentine, and resin, while television sets, fertilizer, beer, and liquor have been among the major manufactures of Solan. Meanwhile, Rajban is identified with cement production, and Parwanoo is recognized for its processed fruits, tractor parts, and electronics. Shimla is also known for its manufacture of electrical goods, while paper and hardboard products generally have come from Baddi and Barotiwala. Alongside the growth of heavier industry, thousands of artisan-based small-scale manufacturing units have remained in operation across the state.

Resources and power

The state has implemented a series of development plans based on the utilization of its abundant hydropower potential and mineral and forest resources. Himachal Pradesh produces a significant portion of India's hydroelectric power. Existing hydropower plants include a station on the Ujh River at Jogindarnagar, the massive Bhakra Dam on the Sutlej River, the Pong Dam on the Beas River, and the Giri Dam on the Giri River. Himachal Pradesh also has embarked on joint-

venture hydropower projects with the central government, such as the large Nathpa Jhakri project in Shimla district. To combat a serious soil-erosion problem in the Siwaliks and to protect the fragile Himalayan ecosystem, the state has launched a reforestation program. It also has instituted stricter enforcement of environmental laws.

Transportation

Despite its remote location, Himachal Pradesh has a reasonably well-developed infrastructure that not only has aided domestic mobility but also has helped in the promotion of tourism. Scenic narrow-gauge rail lines run from Kalka to Shimla and from Pathankot (in Punjab) to Jogindarnagar. There also is a railhead in Una. Roads, however, crisscrossing through the ranges and valleys, serve as the communications lifeline of Himachal Pradesh; the state operates many bus routes throughout the network. Regular domestic air service is available in Shimla and Kullu.

Constitutional framework

The basic governmental structure of Himachal Pradesh, like that of most other Indian states, is determined by the national constitution of 1950. The state government is led by a governor, appointed by the president of India. The Council of Ministers, headed by a chief minister and responsible to the directly elected Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha), assists and advises the governor.

The state is divided into a number of districts, each of which is headed by a deputy commissioner. The districts, in turn, comprise several subdivisions, which embrace several more levels of local administration. The smallest (and most numerous) administrative unit is the village.

Education

Since the late 20th century, Himachal Pradesh has made great efforts to expand education. Consequently, there has been a remarkable rise in the number of primary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions and a corresponding increase in enrollment at all levels.

Himachal Pradesh University, founded in 1970 in Shimla, was the state's first institution of higher education; it now has dozens of affiliated or associated colleges. Other major tertiary institutions include a medical college in Shimla, an agricultural university in Palampur, an engineering college in Hamirpur, a university of horticulture and forestry near Solan, and a university of information technology, also in Solan district. In addition to its universities and colleges, Himachal Pradesh has some important research centres, most notably the Indian Institute of Advanced Study in Shimla and the Central Research Institute in Kasauli.

Cultural life

The fairs and festivals of the rural communities provide many occasions for song, dance, and the display of colourful garments. The Kullu valley, known as the valley of the gods, provides the setting for the Dussehra festival held each autumn to celebrate the defeat of the demon king, Ravana, by the prince Rama (as recounted in the ancient Hindu epic the *Ramayana*). During the

festival, the various temple gods are carried in procession in covered palanquins, accompanied by bands of singers and dancers. Participants in this and other such celebrations are typically decked in vibrant attire, often accented with exquisitely designed shawls from Kinnaur district, finely embroidered handkerchiefs from Chamba, or distinctive woolen caps from Kullu.

Pilgrims from neighbouring states and from within Himachal Pradesh itself converge in large numbers to worship at shrines of legendary antiquity. The town of Dharmshala has more recently emerged as a sacred site, particularly for Tibetan Buddhists; it was in Dharmshala that the Dalai Lama settled after he fled from Tibet in 1959 in the wake of China's occupation of Lhasa.

Aside from their festivals and sacred sites, the Shimla hills, the Kullu valley (including the town of Manali), and Dalhousie are popular tourist destinations, especially for outdoor recreation. Indeed, skiing, golfing, fishing, trekking, and mountaineering are among the activities for which Himachal Pradesh is ideally suited.

History

The history of this mountainous state is complex and fragmented. It is known that a number of so-called Aryan groups filtered into the more productive valleys during the Vedic period (c. 1500 to 500 bce) and assimilated the pre-Aryan population. Later, successive Indian empires—such as the Mauryan (c. 321–185 bce), the Gupta (c. 320–540 ce), and the Mughal (1526–1761), all emerging in the Indo-Gangetic Plain—sought to exercise varying degrees of control over trade and pilgrimage routes into the area and between India and Tibet across the Himalayas.

The remote, predominantly Buddhist area that is now the district of Lahaul and Spiti was controlled by Ladakh from the decline of the Mughal Empire (about the mid-18th century) until the early 1840s, when it briefly came under Sikh rule. Also during this period, warring semiautonomous petty rulers controlled the trade routes, as well as desirable segments of agricultural and pastoral land, in the other areas of present-day Himachal Pradesh. British domination of this region followed the Sikh Wars of the 1840s and continued, directly or indirectly, for the next 100 years.

Around the time of Indian independence in 1947, there was a popular movement to end feudalism in the region, and the princely state of Suket virtually surrendered to peaceful demonstrators. Subsequently, Himachal Pradesh was constituted as a province in 1948. It consisted of 30 princely states and was administered by a chief commissioner, who represented the government of India.

Between 1948 and its achievement of statehood in 1971, Himachal Pradesh went through various changes in size and administrative form. It became a substate under the Indian constitution of 1950. In 1954 it joined with Bilaspur (a former Indian state and then a chief commissioner's province), and in 1956 it became a union territory. Himachal Pradesh was enlarged in 1966 by the merger and absorption of numerous Punjab hill areas, including the regions surrounding Shimla, Kangra, and Kullu; the district of Lahaul and Spiti; and parts of the districts centred at Ambala, Hoshiarpur, and Gurdaspur. Early in 1971, Himachal Pradesh

became the 18th state of India; Y.S. Parmar, who since the 1940s had been a leader in the quest for self-government in Himachal Pradesh, became the state's first chief minister.

Religious Tourism

Hindu Pilgrimage

Buddhist Pilgrimage

Sikh Pilgrimage

Christian Pilgrimage

Himachal was known since the earliest of times as "Devabhoomi", the abode of the Gods. The splendid heights of the Himalyan ranges, with its great scenic beauty and aura of spiritual calm seem the natural home of the Gods. Two thousands or more temples all over the State, reiterate this fact.

Being a State full of isolated valleys and high ranges, several different styles of temple architecture developed and there are temples with carved stone shikharas, pagoda style shrines, temples that look like Buddhist Gompas or Sikh Gurudwaras etc. Several of them are important places of pilgrimage and each year attract thousands of devotees from all over the country.

HINDU PILGRIMAGE

BAJRESHWARI TEMPLE: Just outside the town of Kangra is the temple dedicated to Bajreshwari Devi. Known once for its legendary wealth this temple was subject to successive depredations by invaders from the north. Destroyed completely in 1905 by an earthquake, it was rebuilt in 1920 and continues to be a busy place of pilgrimage.

BAIJNATH: The ancient temple at Baijnath is particularly beautiful. Built of stone in the 9th century AD, in the shikhara style, it is a fine blend of sculpture and architecture. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, Baijnath is close to Palampur and Kangra.



JWALAMUKHI TEMPLE: Not too far from Kangra is this popular place of pilgrimage. An eternally burning flame that issues from a hollow rock in the sanctum, is considered the manifestation of the goddess Devi. During March-April and September-October every year, colorful fairs are held during the Navratra celebration. Jwalamukhi temple is 30 km. from Kangra.

CHAMUNDA DEVI TEMPLE: Not far from Dharamsala (Kangra) is the famous temple to Chamunda Devi. It is an enchanting spot with glorious views of the mountains, the Baner Khud, Pathiar and Lahla forest.



LAKSHMI NARAYAN TEMPLE: The Lakshminarayan group of temples in the town of Chamba are of great archaeological importance. Six stone temples dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu with tall shikaras, finely carved, date from the 8th century AD. The Lakshminarayan Temple is the oldest in this group. Other temples around Chamba town include, those dedicated to Hari Rai, Champavati, Bansigopal, Ram Chandra, Brijeshwari, Chamunda, Narsingh, and Yogi Charpat Nath.

CHAURASI TEMPLES: The 9th century temples at Bharmaur are among the most important early Hindu temples in the Chamba Valley. According to legend, 84 (chaurasi) yogi's visited Bharmaur, capital of King Sahil Varma. They were so pleased with the king's humility and hospitality that they blessed him with ten sons and a daughter, Champavati. A cluster of shrines commemorates that visit. The temple square is the Centre of all activities in the little town of Bharmaur and the Lakshmi, Ganesh, Manimahesh and Narsing temples, the main shrines, are splendidly set off by the dramatic mountainscape.

CHATTARI TEMPLES: Not far from Bharmaur (Chamba) is the Chattari Temple with early examples of carved wood and an 8th century brass image of Shakti.

MANIMAHESH (3,950 m): The Manimahesh Lake, high up in the mountains near Bharmaur, is an important place of pilgrimage. The solitary Manimahesh Kailash Peak- the legendary abode of Shiva, is reflected in its still waters. A little temple in the shikhara style with an exquisite brass image of Lakshmi Devi as Mahishasuramardini stands near-by. Every year, following Janmashtami, the annual Manimahesh Yatra is undertaken. The pilgrimage starts from Chamba from the Lakshminarayan Temple and devotees wend their way up the arduous track from Bharmaur to take a sacred dip in the waters of the lake.

MANDI: Mandi has a picturesque group of ancient stone temples with tall vimanas, splendidly located below the town on the banks of the foaming river. The Tarna Devi Temple (Mandi), a new shrine up on a hill, overlooks the town and valley.

REWALSAR: Around a natural lake with a floating island are a Shiva temple-the Lomesh Rishi Temple, Guru Govind Singh's gurdwara and a Buddhist monastery founded by Guru Padmasambhava. A spot that is revered by people of three faiths (Mandi).

PRASHAR TEMPLE: This temple, built in the 14th century, is a shrine where the rulers of Mandi once worshipped. The pagoda-style temple stands in the little green hollow around the Prashar lake, above the town of Pandoh. The views of the mountains are spectacular.

SHIKARI DEVI (2850 m): It is possible to trek up to Shikari Devi from Janjheli and Karsog (Mandi). Through woods of assorted trees and shrubs - which include several medicinal herbs - two separate trek routes lead up to this ancient shrine located at the crown of the hill. Hunters in the area once prayed to the Goddess for success in their hunt - and here, perhaps, lies the origin of the name 'Shikari Devi'. The Goddess is worshipped in the form of a stone image. Interestingly, the temple which is said to have been



in existence since the time of the Pandavas, has no roof - for local legend has it, that all attempts to build one have been unsuccessful.

HANOGI MAA & KOYLA MAA TEMPLE: Hanogi Maa temple is on the way from Mandi to Kullu near Pandoh and Koyla Maa temple near Sunder Nagar in Mandi district.

RAGHUNATHJI TEMPLE: Built in 1651 by the Raja of Kullu, the temple has an image of Raghunathji that was brought from Ayodhya. During the Kullu Dussehra, all the temples in the area send their deities to pay homage to Raghunathji at Kullu.

BIJLI MAHADEV TEMPLE: An unusual temple dedicated to Shiva-the Lord of lightning, is located on a height overlooking the Kullu and Parvati valleys. A 60ft staff above the temple attracts divine blessing in the form of lightning and breaks the stone linga in the sanctum.

DHOONGRI TEMPLE: This four tiered pagoda, embellished in finely carved wood, stands sheltered in grove of tall deodar at Manali (Kullu). It is dedicated to Hadimba Devi, wife of the Pandava, Bhim.

BHIMAKALI TEMPLE: A marvelous example of hill architecture, the temple complex at Sarahanis set against the incredibly beautiful backdrop of high ranges and forested slopes. Built in a mixture of the Hindu and Budhists styles, it was the temple of Bushair rulers of Rampur (Shimla). The palaces of the royal family are adjacent to the temple. From Sarahan there is a view of the Srikhand Peak, revered as the home of goddess Lakshami.

HATKOTI: Along the River Pabbar, 104 km from Shimla, is the temple dedicated to Durga and Shiva. The gods are said to have fought a pitched battle at this spot.

JAKHU AND SANKAT MOCHAN: These two temples close to Shimla have a commanding views of the hills.

NAINA DEVI TEMPLE: On a hill, close to Bilaspur and Kiratpur (34 km), is famous shrine of Naina Devi. A colourful fair, the Shravana Astami Mela is held in July-August.

CHINTPURNI: A winding road goes up to the temple dedicated to Bhagwati Chinmastika or Chinpurni-the goddess who grants all wishes. A popular place of pilgrimage, Chintpurni is about 75 km from the town of Una and 100 km from Jalandhar.

RENUKA: The temple, dedicated to the immortal Renuka, stands near the picturesque Renuka Lake (Sirmour).

TRILOKPUR: About 25 km from Nurpur (Kangra), at the confluence of the Bohar and Bhali streams, is another sacred spot popular with pilgrims of various faiths. There is a Hindu temple, a Buddhist monastery, a gurdwara and a mosque at Trilokpur.

BABA BALAK NATH TEMPLE: A cave temple located in Deothsidh, in the Dhaulagiri Hills of Hamirpur, is a noted place of pilgrimage. People come here to seek the blessing of Baba Balak Nath whose image is located in the cave.



Shahtalai, 46 km from the the district headquarters of Hamirpur and accessible by road, is about 10 km from Deothsidh.

BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGES

The remote valleys of Lahaul, Spiti and Kinnaur have strong Buddhist traditions. Splendid gompas, Buddhist monasteries, built along bare mountain-sides seem to be a part of the rugged terrain. These are the repositories of a wealth of Buddhist art and culture. The dim, cool interiors of ancient monasteries glow with the brilliance of painted murals, stuccos and elaborate thangkas framed with rich borders of silk.

In Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama has settled in exile, is a marvelous Tibetan township where an entire cultural tradition is being nurtured. It is a centre that attracts scholars, pilgrims and tourists.

REWALSAR: Perhaps the most sacred spot for Buddhists in Himachal Pradesh, Rewalsar is 20 km south west of Mandi. According to legend, Guru Padmasambhava departed for Tibet from this beautiful spot, to spread the 'dharma'. A pagoda-style monastery stands along the edge of the lake.

GURU GHANTAL MONASTERY(3020 m): This is on the right bank of Chandra river about 4 kms. above Tandi and is believed to be the oldest Gompa of Lahaul having wooden structure with pyramidal roofs, wood carving, preserving the idols of Padmasambhava & Brajeshwari Devi. On the full moon night in mid-June a festival called "GHANTAL" is celebrated by Lamas & Thakurs together.

KARDANG MONASTERY(3500 m): It is about 5 kms. from Keylong across Bhaga river. It is believed to be built in 12th century. Monastery has a large library of Kangyur and Tangyur volumes of Budhist scriptures in Bhoti. Kardang village was once the capital of Lahaul.

SHASHUR MONASTERY: Situated on a hill about 3 kms from Keylong (Lahaul & Spiti) towards north on the same slope. During June/ July this monastery attracts a large number of visitors when Lamas perform the devil dance. It was founded in the 17th century a.d. It belongs to red hat sec and is located among the blue pines. The paintings represent the history of 84 Buddhas.

TAYUL GOMPA(3900 m): Tayul Gompa is 6 kms. from Keylong (Lahaul & Spiti) and is one of the oldest monasteries of the valley having a huge statue of Guru Padmasamhava about 5m high and houses library of Kangyur having 101 volumes. In Tibetan language Ta-Yul means the chosen place. There is an interesting story behind this.



KYE MONASTERY: It is situated 12 kms. north of Kaza (Lahaul & Spiti) and serves the western population of Spiti. It is the oldest and biggest monastery of the valley and located at (4116 m) above Kye village. It houses beautiful scriptures and paintings of Buddha and other goddesses. Lamas practice dance, sing and play on pipes and horns. Religious training to Lama's is imparted here. It has murals and books of high value.

THANG YUG GOMPA: It is located 13 kms. above Kaza (Lahaul & Spiti) serving western part of central Spiti. Situated in a secluded place in the narrow gauge of Kaza Nallah, it generally has a Lama from Tibet. Above this there is a long plateau which leads to Shilla peak.

KUNGRI GOMPA: It is situated in the Pin valley about 10 kms. from Attargo where Spiti river has to be crossed to enter Pin valley. It serves the population of Pin valley.

DHANKAR MONASTERY: It is situated about 25 kms. east of Kaza and serves eastern part of central Spiti. Dhankar is a big village and erstwhile capital of Spiti King. On top of a hill there is a fort which use to be a prison in olden times. The Monastery has about 100 Lamas and is in position of Buddhist scriptures in Bhoti language. Principal figure is a Statue of "Vairochana" (Dhayan Budha) consisting of 4 complete figures seated back to back. It has relics in the shape of paintings and sculptures.

TABO MONASTERY: This is another large gompa serving the population of eastern side. It has its origin in the tenth century old and is located 50 kms. from Kaza (Lahaul & Spiti). In fame it is next to Tholing Gompa in Tibet. It has about 60 Lamas and houses a large collection of Scriptures, wall paintings etc. Murals of this gompa have similarity to that of the Ajanta paintings.

NAKO: The legendary footprints of the Guru Padamsambhava are enshrined at the Lotsabaage Monastery at Nako. This high altitude village in Kinnaur is located near a limpid lake.

TASHIGANG GOMPA: Can be visited by taking diversion from Khab to Namgya and then trekking to the Gompa.

TILASANGH MONASTERY: 1 km. trek from Ka, it is 12 km. short of Yangthang.

SIKH PILGRIMAGES

The Sikhs came to the Shivalik Hills, in Himachal Pradesh in 1695, at the invitation of the ruler of Sirmaur, to help him fight the Mughals. Guru Gobind Singh with his army, settled in Paonta Sahib in the foothills. During the reign

of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, at the end of the 18th century, many of the western hill states also came under Sikh sovereignty.

PAONTA SAHIB: This is the main centre of Sikh pilgrimage in Himachal. The gurdwara picturesquely located on the banks of the River Yamuna in district Sirmour, is venerated due to its association with Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th Sikh Guru. In March, an important fair is held and the holy Granth Sahib is taken out in procession.

REWALSAR: The gurdwara at Rewalsar, near Mandi, is located on the periphery of a lake sacred to both the Hindus and Buddhists as well.

MANIKARAN: The serene location and the seemingly mysterious hot springs made Manikaran (Kullu) a place of pilgrimage in earlier times. Guru Nanak, the first Guru of the Sikhs, visited this place to spend time in meditation. A gurdwara that was built to commemorate his visit, is now a place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs.



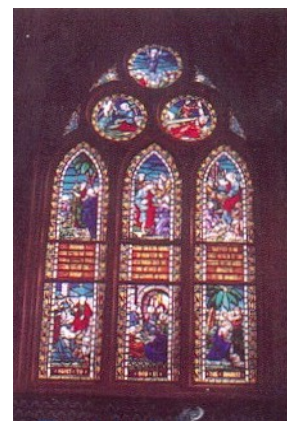
CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGES

Christianity made a late appearance in Himachal Pradesh, after the arrival of the British. The churches here are not more than 150 years old. Tall churches-the relics of the Raj, are to be found mainly in the small hill stations that the British created as summer retreats.

KASAULI: Still unspoiled and very much as the British left it fifty years ago, Kasauli (Solan) has a fine old church. The Christ Church, is a typically Anglican structure of the period. Its foundation stone was laid in 1844. Well proportioned, its spires, buttresses and gothic arches are framed against the stately deodars.



SHIMLA: The Christ Church, with its tall spire dominates the ridge in Shimla. This imposing structure is visible from as far away as Tara Devi, 8 km away. It was built in 1844, when Shimla was slowly coming into its own as the premier hill station of India., the Christ Church was designed to accommodate the entire Shimla congregation. Various memorials and stained glass windows fill the somber interior with colour and light.



The first Catholic edifice of Shimla, St. Michael's Church, was built in 1850, at the western end of the Lower Bazaar. Later additions have made it an unusual piece of architecture. Inside the church are five marble altars, all brought from Italy in 1855 and fine stained glass windows.

DHARAMSHALA: The stone church of St. John lies on a motorable road between Mcleodganj and Forsyteganj 8 Km from Lower Dharamshala (Kangra). It has a monument of Lord Elgin, one of the viceroys of India, who died in Dharamshala and was buried here.

DALHOUSIE: Dalhosie (Chamba) is another hill station with a number of old churches. The church near the G.P.O. looks untouched by time. It has an angular roof of inter-leafed hexagonal slates. The Catholic church of St. Francis, built in 1894, is set against a backdrop of tall pines overlooking the Subash Chowk.
