



## Patronization during Early Medieval Chamba (A.D.600-A.D.1200)

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**ABSTRACT-** The article deals with the patronization in Chamba during the early medieval period. The paper will discuss the forms of patronage extended by different classes to various religious groups in Chamba region. The nature of patronization will also be analysed in the study.

**KEY WORDS:** Patronage, Religious groups, Structural manifestation, Royal class, Social Class.

### I. INTRODUCTION:

The major source of information about the study have been drawn from the varieties of inscriptions. The time period of the inscriptions range from A.D 600-A.D.1200. The inscriptions of Chamba gives us a fair idea about the distribution of settlements of Chamba region. There are 21 fountain stone-slab inscriptions, 11 image inscriptions and 6 copper-plate inscriptions (land charters) comes under our study belongs to early medieval Chamba.

There were many classes in Chamba who extended their patronage to various religious groups during the early medieval period. The forms of patronage extended by different classes to various religious groups in Chamba region is as follows:

#### (1) Royal Patronage:

Brahmour (ancient capital) and Chamba (new capital)<sup>1</sup> rulers followed the very pioneering strategy, brought changes in the existing traditional system of the society. The Chamba masterpieces of religious art and architecture are characterized by a dynamic vitality and linear elegance. These creations seems to be the product of a more spontaneous and indigenous vision.<sup>2</sup> The earliest image inscriptions of Chamba suggest a strong *Saivite* influence and Kashmir connection during the seventh-eighth century A.D.<sup>3</sup> Kashmir appears to have had strong artistic ties with Chamba, especially during the Karkota period.<sup>4</sup> During the first half of the seventh century, Kashmir became the focal point in North West India for both Buddhist and Brahmanical religion and art.<sup>5</sup> The bronzes of Kashmir come into view to have played a major role in disseminating Buddhist art to central Asia, the Western Himalayas and Tibet.<sup>6</sup> Kullu, Kangra were also the regions from where the Kashmiri style<sup>7</sup> bronzes have come into focus. It reflects that these regions were within the orbit of Kashmir's cultural influence.<sup>8</sup>

The royalty of Brahmour kingdom before the tenth century A.D. were the followers of Siva, the main deity of the region from the very beginning. But from the reign of Meru-Varman, we start getting the other epigraphical and archeological evidences of the worshipping of Siva, Shakti and his family. However, the inscriptions which have been found from Brahmapura (Brahmour)-located on the confluence of Ravi river and Buddhal nala-stream, gives the clear references to the erection of the images of Lakshana Devi,<sup>9</sup> Ganesh,<sup>10</sup> Nandi<sup>11</sup> (at Brahmour) and Shakti<sup>12</sup> at Chatrarhi (part of Brahmour) by the order of the ruling king Meru-Varman in 700 A.D.<sup>13</sup>

The details of the inscriptions are given below:

Lakshana image inscription: "famous lord Meru-Varman, who born from the own-house (*gotra*) of Mosana and from the solar race, the great -grandson of the memorable lord Aditya-Varman, the grandson of the well-known lord Bala-Varman, the son of the famous lord Divakara-Varman, got erected the holy image of the goddess Laksana, made by the workman Gugga, to enlarge their spiritual merit."<sup>14</sup>

Ganesh Image inscription: "Adoration to Ganapati. The famous Meru-Varman, born from the own-house of Musuna and from the solar race, the great-grandson of the memorable lord Aditya-Varman, the grandson of the well-known lord Bala-Varman and the son of the famous lord Divakara-Varman, the king of kings, has got erected this pious gift, made by the workman Gugga."<sup>15</sup>

Nandi image inscription: "After that he had himself built a temple like unto Mount Meru on the top of the Himavant through the manifold bliss of [his] superior works, an upper chamber (*candrasala*) pleased to the eye, was added to it with various porches (*mandapa*) and numerous ornaments (*citra*) turned towards the east; in front of it [was set this bull heavy of cheeks and body, compact of breast and hump, the glorious vehicle of the God (Shiva). This is the magnificent work of the illustrious Meru-Varman [famous] over the four oceans, [tending] continually to raise the [spiritual] fruit of his parents and himself. Made by the workman Gugga."<sup>16</sup>

Sakti image inscription: "There was an eminent chief of a pure race, the illustrious Deva-Varman of celebrated fame. His son, charming by every virtue, [is] the illustrious Meru-Varman, renowned on the earth. First, for the sake of the spiritual merit of his parents, he, out of devotion, caused the image of Sakti to be made, after having conquered [his] foes in their invincible strongholds, he has prolonged his life by glory, fame and religious merit."<sup>17</sup>

Apart from this, on the out-post of his region Meru-Varman constructed a shrine of the goddess Siva-Sakti at Chatrarhi, to commemorate his victory as well as to ritually legitimize this rule. The inscription of the temple clearly states that the temple was erected "for the spiritual merit of his parents".<sup>18</sup>

Various symbols used by the early state were reconciled in a wider religious systemic perspective. The connection of the Goddess as Shakti or power is momentous. She was closely associated in a dyadic relationship with Rudra - who could control the power, sometimes subverted it, sporadically by devising patriarchal strategy - which is in conformity with the tantric or Saiva-Sakta mythological tradition which was gaining impetus at this time in the Indo-Gangetic Plain in general and Kashmir in particular.<sup>19</sup> For the same purpose Meru-Varman got built the image of Sakti which states that "after having conquered his foes principality of Kulu in their invincible strongholds", the Sakti image inscription got constructed by Meru-Varman.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, Sakti imagery was a visual legitimating symbol and signifies her presence at Chatrarhi, as the Goddess of war.

The erection of these bronze images was the introduction of new technology in Brahmour. These images bear the name of the artisan i.e. master craftsman Gugga (*Karmina Guggenah*).<sup>21</sup> He was probably the head of the Brahmour workshop and supervised the whole group of artists.<sup>22</sup> This material culture offer us to study their contextual role in the relationship between patrons and the object. In addition to this, these objects which was a new media used by the royalty, cast new light on stylistic developments and craft practices, helps us to understand the different aspects of the society as well. This truly makes us to understand that Laksana image (one among the four images got constructed by Meru-Varman datable A.D 700) is actually *Mahishasurmardini*.

From the reign of Sahila-Varman (c.A.D 920<sup>23</sup>), we see a shift in the religious configuration of the region. Of the other temples in Chamba, the foremost one became that of Lakshmi-Narayana, or Vishnu in association with which a inquisitive legend has been preserved. Sahila-Varman being desirous to built the Lakshmi-Narayan temple, send nine of his sons to bring a block of white marble for the image of Lakshmi-Narayan from the Vindhya mountains. The stone they brought back was found to be contained a frog, and though inappropriate for the purposed image of Lakshmi Narayana. From that piece of marble the king got prepared other images of Shankara, Devi, and Ganapati, all installed in the same temple. The nine sons were sent once more for the same purpose. They were still unsuccessful as they were killed in a fight with robbers (skr. *dasyu*). Then Yugakara, apparently the only son, went for the same. There he slew the enemies from Mukuta-Kota and came back with the precious block of white marble.<sup>24</sup> Here, the state underwent transformation. These archaeological records provide evidences of the flourishing conditions of *Vaishnavism* in the subsequent centuries under the patronage of Sahila-Varman.

The royalty also patronized minor deities and one of the example would be the case of Champavati<sup>25</sup> in Chamba. At the same place/spot, there were also a number of *lingas*, at the confluence of the Salika (with the *Iravati*), and at the confluence of the Kunala and at the confluence of Salika with Sarasvati. Having brought these (to the town) with the acquiescence of Charpat, the king named Sahilla, the master of senses, established Gupta, & Candresvara, Kumesvara & other temples in Chamba town.<sup>26</sup> The Shiva *lingas* at the same place signifies that the local cult is assimilated in the brahmanical culture.

Apart from these, Laxmi-Narayan idol was consecrated and temple was established by Sahila-Varman. Before abdicating the throne, he established a sanctuary of Charpat in the Laxmi-Narayan temple

complex with the other temples also. The building of Laxmi Narayan temple suggests a shift in the religious process and mechanism of the state. This was influenced by theistic developments in Kashmir as well, where Kasmiragama sect or Tantrantra gained ground in which the worship of *bhuyistha-mukha* Visnu mainly Varaha and Narsimha-was accorded primary.<sup>27</sup>

The above facts and their analysis indicate the religious configuration at the same time and space i.e. *Saivism*, Nath cult, *Saktism*, *Vaishnavism* and manifestation of local deities. This is also evidenced through the Salhi fountain inscription in the succeeding years e.g. in A.D.1170. We find Shiva in the mid of the upper row, between Varuna, Indra, Ganesha and Karttikeya, each placed on his *vahana* on the fountain slab.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, reflects a change in the religion.

For the purpose i.e. to make *Vaishnavism*, the pronounce religion of Chamba (from 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D), land grants played an important role. So, the instrumentality of land grants is essential in understanding both acculturation as well as the process of building consent-to-rule. Through the land grants, the recipient accessed the local population easily i.e. the tillers, artisans & shepherds or cattlemen as in Churah and Brahmour, were economically subordinated and politically marginalized. For the purpose the first land charter was issued by Yugakara-Varman (c.A.D.940)<sup>29</sup> i.e. the Brahmour copper plate inscription<sup>30</sup> which throws light on so many prevalent concepts & ideology in the early medieval society of Chamba. The land was donated to a temple of Narasimha (Vishnu, Man-lion incarnation), by the Queen Rardha. The donation of the land grant on the auspicious day of solar eclipse shows the evolution of calendric ceremonies. The granting of land was endowed with the libation of water from the right hand.<sup>31</sup> So, therefore, points towards the presence of Brahmans/priestly class who were good in reciting the mantras and rituals.

As Sanskrit was the divine language must be spoken in a rhythm, so the skilled and experienced brahmanas were in demand who had the monopoly over the interpretation of the discourse. Hence, with the coming of the Bramanas from pan-India, the 'ritual<sup>32</sup>' of communication also came, which in turn clearly shows the Bramanic influence over the cultural processes of the society of Chamba state. Therefore, the Brahmanas played a very important role in the state. So, for this purpose the brahmanas were invited from the famous religious places and were given the *agraharas*.<sup>33</sup> In this context, we get the reference to Sungal Copper plate inscription<sup>34</sup> which was issued by Vidaghda-Varman in A.D.964.<sup>35</sup> The charter denotes the grant of land as *agrahara* to the son of Deddu (ka), grandson of the Brahman Devanna who came from the hermitage of holy Kuruksetra, the Brahman student belonged to the house of Kasyapa, who was the descendant of three prominent sages (*rsi*) & devotee of the school of the house of the *Vajasaneyas*. The state was playing through the ideology. Through the land charters, the verses of the *Dharmashastras* were publically texted which arrange, established and legitimized the king's right over the land by the Brahmans. The quotes are: "many kings from *Sagara* onwards have enjoyed the land. Whose is the ground, his is the fruit, whosoever shall take away one fold-piece, one cow, or one inch of land, he will stay put in hell as long as moon and sun exist."<sup>36</sup>

Further, we have Sai Copper plate inscription of Vidaghda-Varman<sup>37</sup> (A.D.960<sup>38</sup>) which speaks about the donation of land to a Brahmana. Then, we have Kulait Copper-plate inscription of Soma-Varman<sup>39</sup> (A.D.1060<sup>40</sup>). It mentions about the donation of land to a Brahmana. Next, we have Chamba-copper plate inscription of Soma-Varman and Asata<sup>41</sup> (A.D.1060). It gives the reference to the donation of land to the temples of Hara and Shiva. In the last, we have Thundu copper-plate inscription<sup>42</sup> of Asata-Varman which speaks about the donation of land to a Brahmana.<sup>43</sup> Almost, all the copper-plate inscriptions bear the same features and were issued on the same pattern with little variations.

Apart from the temples and land charters, fountain slabs and image inscriptions also got patronization from the ruling class. Image of Karttika had been erected by the king Dodaka-Varman (A.D.980<sup>44</sup>) as evidenced through the Tur image inscription.<sup>45</sup> Soma-Varman (A.D.1060)<sup>46</sup> erected Bahnota fountain inscription<sup>47</sup> for the purpose of the bliss in the next world of the departed ancestors, male and female. The inscription focused that "No higher religious merit than [the erection of] a *Varuna* [slab]. No higher ascetic merit is big than [the erection of] a *Varuna* slab. No higher god than Varuna is known in the three worlds."<sup>48</sup>

## (2) Patronage by *samanta* class:

Asadha Deva, the contemporary and Samanta of Meru-Varman got construct a temple. He dedicated it to Sankalisa and designated his territory as Sivapura.<sup>49</sup> The detail is as below:

“The feudatory chief Asadha-deva resorting to the lotus-like feet of the well-known prince Meruvarman) that scion of the house of Mosuna and Surya, and worshipper of the most exalted Siva, has prepared this pious gift-a shrine of Sankalisa in the midst of Shivapura-thanks to the service [rendered] to the multitude of the gods and the ancestral spirits.”<sup>50</sup>

Thakkika, who was the vassal of Vidagdha-Varman also got erect an image of Vishnu in village Tur evidenced through the Tur image inscription.<sup>51</sup> The detail is:

“Hail ! In the first year of the reign of the illustrious Vidagdha. Reverence to the feet of the famous Thakkika-*svamin*. . . . By the very illustrious baron, the lord of Makuta, the king of kings, the illustrious Dhara. . . in the midst of Brahm-pura. . . In the ancestry of the illustrious Dhara was born the illustrious Canna; his son was the illustrious-khikka; his son was the illustrious Carata; his son was the illustrious Thakkika, the highest worshipper of the Great Lord (Shiva), delighting in the adoration of the dieties and the spiritual preceptors. He, the king of the kings, the famous Thakkika disported himself in the combat with the maned lion, was an ocean of qualities, of lion-like prowess, the terror of the hostile host, when in the joy of battle he raised a rampart with his own arms marked with the crossing of swords in search of victory, and won great favour with the famous and divine Vidagdha, he, the king of kings. Erected in [the month of] Magha, the bright fortnight, the twelfth lunar day, on Tuesday.”<sup>52</sup>

### (3) Patronage by the chieftain class:

While the Brahmapura rulers [Brahmour (Brahmpura)- the ancient capital of Chamba before tenth century A.D] before 9th century A.D. consolidated themselves on the southern bands of upper Ravi river, legitimized by Saiva and Sakta symbols, the chieftains of the peripheral zone of Chamba valley and Churah forged an alliance of claimation against the expanding Brahmour. These chieftains, too, manipulated 'classical' symbols. Thus, Bhogata got construct an image of Bhagavati in the Himagiri pargana of Churah, devised a parallel genealogy and sanskritized the name of the area by appropriating epic cosmology. Claiming birth in Kishkinda district, he celebrated himself as the hereditary *rajanaka*.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, *rajanaka* Satyaki erected a temple of Siva as Chandra sekhara in the mid tenth century in Saho, (950. A.D), on the confluence of Ravi and Sal stream bordering Chamba. *Rajanaka* Satyaki was an independent chieftain as his inscription didn't mention any other name of authority. His matrimonial alliance with the daughter of Kishkinda suggests towards the extension policy of Satyaki. He claimed Sanskritic virtues, as the most excellent among man (Narendra), he wished his wife, modeled on Gauri, to befriend eternally the mountain goddess.<sup>54</sup> The epigraph not only compares Somaprabha with Parvati but also alludes to ties of friendship between the queen (Somaprabha) and the deity, which is clearly an attempt to increase the political power of the ruling class through identification with the divinity.<sup>55</sup> This political strategy which was stimulated through the religion brought a new genre of literature in the form of *prasasti*. Due to the consecration of a eulogy (*Prasasti*) the status of the chief get enhanced in the eyes of the society. According to Romila Thapar, “the eulogy was not merely a courtly gesture or the creation of a new literary genre, for it carries many other meanings and assumptions. The author was integral to social and political articulation”.<sup>56</sup> In effect they give us an elaborate view of the political strategy much prized at that time.

### (4) Patronage by other social groups:

The fountain slabs<sup>57</sup> and image inscriptions formed an important part of the society. Most of the fountain slabs were get erected in Churah before A.D.1081, when it was not the part of Chamba. The first fountain slab which get constructed in the territory of Chamba state was by Ranasiha and Dhanasiha during the reign of Asata-Varman(A.D.1081)<sup>58</sup> i.e. Siya fountain inscription.<sup>59</sup> These fountains slabs were got erected for the sake of bliss in the next world.<sup>60</sup> Some were memorials to the dead<sup>61</sup> also but few of them seems to have been erected by the living 'for ones self', fearing with the fear of existence e.g. Siya fountain inscription<sup>62</sup> (A.D.1081). Other than these, only one fountain slab was erected for getting the bliss in Siva's heaven for self, in order to gain the other heaven of Visnu for the aim to get the joy of paradise i.e. the fountain inscription of Salhi (A.D.1170).<sup>63</sup>

The tradition of creating fountain slabs and cisterns was a community affair also. This has been found in the lay fountain stone in Pangri which was erected during the reign of Chamba ruler Jasata (A.D.1105-06). On the occasion, people gathered grains and material for feast worth 20(30) *drammas*.<sup>64</sup> Because this was the medium to get the highest merit in the next world, a religious ideology deeply followed by the people of Churah, Pangri, Chamba, i.e. “No higher god than Varuna, no higher gain of penitence, no higher shrine than Varuna is heard of in the universe.”<sup>65</sup>

However, in Chamba, we also come across some memorial stones.<sup>66</sup> These memorial stones were also worshiped as local deities. For example, Mul-Kihar fountain Inscription<sup>67</sup> was constructed, evidently in memory of the deceased Suramati.<sup>68</sup> Thematically, the memorial stones of Chamba may commemorate the dead but geographically they mark the holy site of water, marking the site with the slab indicate that it is dedicated to a higher presence and is a suitable place to offer water to the manes.<sup>69</sup> The memorial stone of the two regions Churah and Chamba are technically and stylistically dissimilar from each other and have their own tutelary deities. Varuna on the fountain stone slabs of Churah and *Seshashai* Vishnu on the fountain slab of Brahmour and Chatrarhi area, both the deities are associated with water, placed at the mouth end of the spring, they seem to mark the holy site of water. The water fountains are the most sanctified of all the sites to offer water to the manes while doing daily abulations. It could be termed as *Tirtha* in miniature. Time and again the inscriptions engraved on them is the indication of the water being tangible manifestation of the cosmos *Apo Vai Pranah orjalam hi jivant loke* and again no superior penitence, no superior law than Varuna is known in three worlds.<sup>70</sup>

**Conclusion:** Patronage was given to the various religious cults and that patronization was associated with royalty and dominant section of society. They patronized the cult by creating different religious structure. The Religious landscape and its structural manifestation in the region has been differential through the period under study. The Chamba rulers patronize the cults and symbols to create linkages with the Sanskritic cultural cosmos which was prevalent on the pan-India level during that time. The religious process which was following by the authority went through the process of *acculturation* and *Sanskritization*, for the purpose of the state. Various chieftains, too, manipulated 'classical' symbols for the same purpose in their specific areas.

Besides, a religious ideology was followed by the people of Chamba. The fountain slabs and image inscriptions formed an important part of the society, reflects the expression of people's faith in tangible form. The analysis of the fountain inscriptions shows that most of the fountain slabs were erected by the elite class including the brahmanas, *ranas* and *rajanakas*.

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- 2 Pal, Pratapaditya (1975). *Bronzes in Kashmir*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manohar Lal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, pp.38-39.
- 3 The debris of Manimahesh temple is build in Kashmiri style, continued to languish until Sahilavarman (c.A.D.920-940) rebuilt the temple in stone after removing debris of the earlier wooden temple from its site. Honda, O.C. (2005). *Gaddi Land in Chamba-Its History, Art & Culture*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing, pp.134-35; Lakana- the façade of the Laksana temple has the trefoil arch enclosed in a triangular pediment, which forms a typical feature of the Kashmir temples. Vogel, J.Ph., (1994), *Antiquities of Chamba*, part I, Archeological Survey of India, Govt of India, New Delhi, p.143; It also reflect the post-Gupta mannerism, integrating the Gurjara-Pratihara art of the mainland with the Kashmiri diction together to formalize a unique hybrid style. O.C. Honda, *op.cit.*, p.136; The concentric layout of the Sakti temple at Chatrarhi was like the Kashmiri layout pattern. Suggestively, it could be earlier than the Laksana temple at Brahmour. O.C. Honda, *op.cit.*, p.147.
- 4 Lalitaditya conquered territories as far as Kannauj in the east. Pal, Pratapaditya. *op.cit.*, pp.3,33.
- 5 Pal, Pratapaditya, *op.cit.*, p.48.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Ghandhara style played a fundamental role in the creation of a Kashmiri style. Arabs had already breezed through Gandhara leaving death and desolation in their trail. So, as a result, it seems extremely probably that monks and artists moved into Kashmir where the karkotas had already consolidated their power. Apart from Gandhara, artistis influences must also have infiltrated into Kashmir from the south, especially from the area around Mathura. As an integral part of the

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Kushana empire, Kashmir must have maintained close political and cultural contacts with Mathura, which was probably the southern capital of the empire. Mathura was a singularly important religious centre in northern India and played a significant role in the development of Indian iconography, whether Brahmanical Buddhist or Jaina. *Ibid.*, pp.48-49.

- 8 *Ibid.*, p.39.
- 9 Vogel, J.Ph. *op.cit.*, plate x, no.6,p.142.
- 10 *Ibid*, plate x, no.7, p.143.
- 11 *Ibid* plate x, no.8, p.145.
- 12 Vogel, J.Ph. *op.cit.*, p.140.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p.138; *Gazetteer of The Chamba State* (1994),Part-A, Vol.XXII, Archeological Survey of India, New Delhi,pp.49-50.
- 14 Vogel, J.Ph. (1994). *Antiquities of Chamba*, part I. Archeological Survey of India, Govt. of India, New Delhi., plate x,no.5,p.142.
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- 18 Sharma, Mahesh (2009). *Western Himalayan Temple Records: State, Pilgrimage, Ritual and Legality in Chamba*. Boston: Brill, p.21.
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- 24 Vogel, J.Ph. *op.cit.*,pp.99-100,
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- 27 Sharma, Mahesh (2009). *Western Himalayan Temple Records: State, Pilgrimage, Ritual and Legality in Chamba*. Boston: Brill, p.26.
- 28 Vogel, J.Ph. *op.cit.*, p.32.
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- 31 *Ibid.*, p.164.
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- 55 Bawa Seema. *op.cit.*, p.44.
- 56 Thapar, Romila (2008).*Cultural transaction and Early India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.27-28.
- 57 The fountain slabs of Chamba form a unique and strange chapter in the history of Indian art. For nowhere in the history of Indian art. For nowhere else they are found in such large number and nowhere they are decorated with such motifs as lotus rounds, meandering creepers, striding elephants, horse-riders, foot soldiers, varunas, ganga and Yamuna, interlacking snakes sometimes all of them occurring in a single stone slab. See. Sethi, S.M. & Hari Chauhan. (2006). *Fountain Stone Slabs of Chamba*. Jaipur: Sheetal Printers., p.49. Most of these slabs are decorated with ornamental carvings like interlacing snakes and hamsas; lotus –rosettes are also seen on these fountains stone slabs ,which are the symbols of prosperity and fertility. Religiously and mythological goose(*hamsa*) is the most exalted bird, its high flight, sets its apart from other bird and its flight, sets its apart from other bird and its loneliness and white colour make it an emblem of the pure soul. Sethi, S.M. & Hari Chauhan. *op.cit.*, p.pf.
- 58 Exact date is not given, rough date is estimated on the basis of the date of accession of Asata Deva in A.D.1080 + issuance of the fountain slab in the first year of Asata's reign.
- 59 Vogel, J.Ph. *op.cit.*, plates xxiii & xxvii, p.200.
- 60 *Ibid.*, plates xxiii & xxvii,p.200; plates xxviii & xxxvii b,p.205.
- 61 *Ibid.*, plate xxx,p.212.
- 62 *Ibid.*, plates xxiii & xxvii, p. 200.
- 63 *Ibid.*, plates xxxi & xxxii, p.216; *Gazetteer of The Chamba State* (1994), Part-A, Vol.XXII, Archeological Survey of India, New Delhi, p.63.
- 64 *Ibid.*, plates xxvii & xxviii, pp.202-05. *Gazetteer of The Chamba State* (1994), Part-A, Vol.XXII, Archeological Survey of India, New Delhi, p.63.
- 65 Vogel, J.Ph. *op.cit.*, p.205.
- 66 Sethi, S.M. & Hari Chauhan.*op.cit.*, p.49.
- 67 Vogel, J.Ph. *op.cit.*, plate xxxiii, no.34, p.224; *Gazetteer of The Chamba State* (1994), Part-A, Vol.XXII, Archeological Survey of India, New Delhi,p.53.
- 68 The inscription tells us about the valour of the queen of Rajanaka called the illustrious Gayapalaka. She secured success to the factions of her father-in-law and her father. Her son had a lawful wife adorned with a multitude of virtues. By her was born a son. His spouse Suramati, who is spotless nature, who bestowed land, food, gold and clothes at sacrifices and on the afflicted. Suramati passed away. It is written that 'certainly, having attained her wish and conquered the whole of men, she left earth and reached the abode of heaven, to transcend in beauty, loneliness and manners the women of the chief of the Gods'. Vogel, J.Ph. *op.cit.*, plates xxxiii,no.34,p.224. By all means, it suggests that the queens had a very valuable place in the family and society. She was known and admired for
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her intellect. She got respect and admiration even after her death. In the inscription, the use of the particular words that 'she conquered the world of men' left no doubt that she got the highest respect because the inscription got built by the son of Suramati after her death and as a male, he had no objection while engraving those words on the slab.

69 A catalogue of stone sculptures in the Museums of Himachal Pradesh, Department of Language & Culture, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla, 2002, p.14.

70 Sethi, S.M. & Hari Chauhan. (2006). *Fountain Stone Slabs of Chamba*. Jaipur: Sheetal Printers. p. 1