

— GUIDE TO —

TREKKING

in Himachal

Over 65 treks and 100 destinations

Minakshi
Chaudhry

With Maps and Photographs

INDUS paperback

Guide to
TREKKING
in Himachal

Over 65 treks and 100 destinations

Minakshi Chaudhry



INDUS
PUBLISHING COMPANY

Dedicated to

B.S. Kanwar & Swarn Lata Kanwar

Parent-in-laws

and

J.R. Chaudhry & Tripta Chaudhry

Parents

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Maps and line drawings are by Rakesh Kanwar

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Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	8
<i>Preface</i>	9
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	11
1. The Indian Himalaya	13
India / Indian Himalaya	
2. Himachal Pradesh	21
The Land / Early History / British Rule and Freedom Struggle / Post-Independence Period / Economy / Culture / Temples	
3. Trekking in Himachal	29
Crossing a Mountain Pass / Trekking Season / Administrative Set up / Reaching Himachal / Accommodation / Tourist Offices / Travel Agencies / Telecommunication / Inner Line Permits / Altitude and Distances / Important Terms / Food and Fitness / Travel Tips	
4. General Preparedness	45
The Ten Essentials / Checklist of Equipments / Some Important Tips / Accidents and Rescue / Mountain Sickness / Surviving in Wilderness / Getting Lost / Setting Camp / Health and Fitness / Cold Injuries	
5. Treks in Kangra–Chamba Region	61
Kangra / Chamba / Gaddis / Dharamsala–Lam Dal–Chamba Across Gaj Pass	

Dharamsala–Chamba Across Inderhara Pass
Dharamsala–Chamba Across Kundli Pass
Dharamsala–Chamba Across Minkiani Pass
Bharmour–Bajjnath Across Jalsu Pass
Chamba–Dharamsala Across Talang Pass
Chamba–Dharamsala Across Waru Pass
Chamba–Kangra via Bara Bhangal Across Thamsar Pass
Bharmour–Hadsar–Manimahesh
Holi–Manimahesh Across Kalah Pass
Bharmour–Kugti–Manimahesh Across Jotnu (Chobu Pass)
Ghadasru Mahadev Trek

6. Chamba–Lahaul Region 104

Lahaul
Bharmour–Keylong Across Kalicho Pass
Bharmour–Keylong Across Chobia Pass
Bharmour–Lahaul Across Kugti Pass

7. Pangri Region 115

Approaches to the Valley
The Chenab (Chandrabhaga River)
Chamba–Pangri Across Sach Pass
Manali–Killar Across Rohtang Pass
Chamba–Killar via Kishtwar
Chamba–Killar Across Cheni Pass
Killar to Hudan Lake
Killar to Parmar Sub-Valley
Saichu–Twan–Chask Bhatori Trek
Sural Valley Trek
Sural–Killar Across Tingloti Pass
Killar–Parmar Across Kiryuni Dhar
Killar–Udaipur Across Gurdhar Pass

8. Shimla–Kinnaur Region 145

Access / Walks Around Shimla / Walks on
Mashobra Side / Walks towards Summer Hill Side /
Treks Around Shimla / Shali Peak / Tara Devi Trek /
Churdhar Trek / Tattapani Trek / Hatu Peak /
Shimla–Kinnaur Across Barua Pass
Shimla–Sangla Across Rupin Pass
Shimla to Kinnaur on Old Hindustan–Tibet Road
Kinner Kailash Parikrama
Baspa Valley
Karcham–Sangla Across Shibaling Pass

9. Treks in Mandi Region	176
Temples of Mandi	
Trek to Parashar Lake	
Rewalsar Lake	
Janjheli–Shikari Devi–Janjheli Trek	
The Barot Trail	
Barot–Bardharni Devi–Barot Trek	
Jogindernagar–Barot–Billing–Palampur Trek	
Barot to Dehnasar Lake and to Kullu	
10. Kullu–Spiti Region	189
Kullu–Manali /	
Kullu–Bijli Mahadev–Bhuntar /	
Naggar / Malana Village /	
Naggar–Malana Across Chandarkhani Pass	
Malana–Manikaran/Kullu Across Rashol Pass	
Manali–Solang Valley–Beas Kund Trek	
Beas Kund–Manali Across Tentu and Manali Passes	
Manali–Chandar Tal–Manali Trek	
Manali–Chatru–Chandar Tal–Suraj Tal–Baralacha Across Hamta Pass	
Manali–Bhrigu Lake Trek	
Manali–Dashohr Lake Trek	
Trekking in Seraj Region in Kullu	
The Great Himalayan National Park	
Kullu–Shimla Across Jalori Pass	
Kullu–Shimla Across Bashleo Pass	
Shrikhand Mahadev Yatra	
Pin Parvati Pass	
<i>Appendix 1: Language and Dialect</i>	217
<i>Appendix 2: Places of Interest</i>	219
<i>Appendix 3: Road Distances in Himachal</i>	233
<i>Appendix 4: List of HPTDC Hotels in Himachal</i>	235
<i>Appendix 5: List of Himachal Tourism's Offices</i>	237
<i>Appendix 6: List of Officers who can be Contacted</i>	239
<i>Bibliography</i>	242
<i>Index</i>	244

Foreword

Minakshi Chaudhry brings a breath of fresh air in her book *'Guide to Trekking in Himachal'*. There are plenty of books written on Trekking, but having herself been to the 65 trekking trails which are described in the book, it becomes an authentic reference material providing the latest information for a self-help guide.

The book also has a story to tell about the author and her love for being one with Nature. What is more, through her fascinating journey, she wants to share all the wonderful moments that one can get by living-moving-learning out of doors. Indeed, if one has to get the "Real Earth Experience", there is no better medium than trekking—be it mellow to the most arduous ones. The experience of a region and its culture is thus richer and deeper.

The book has been made interesting by providing information on the geography of Himachal and on its customs, traditions and culture. The practical tips given on outdoor preparedness and travel will encourage the reader to venture out and discover not only something about oneself but also something about the country that one lives in.

'Guide to Trekking in Himachal', I am sure, will generate a lot of enthusiasm—taking the readers into the land of unbridled beauty, delighting both beginners and seasoned trekkers to follow in the exciting trails known and unknown.

BACHENDRI PAL

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Preface

Trekking, as many people feel, is not only about walking and remaining fit. Nor is it a pass time for the eccentric, the rich and the idle. It has become an important outdoor activity for ordinary beings—school children, college-goers, couples, and families. It means travelling long distances by foot in remote villages and meeting cheerful, friendly and hospitable hill people, crossing over high passes with breathtaking views to enter beautiful, deep, serene and secluded valleys. It means spending the night in sleepy little villages, roadside *dhabas* or camping out in the splendid alpine meadows.

Above all trekking means understanding nature, being one with its calmness, beauty and ferocity. Being able to know that we can not fight her force whatever standard or degree of human development we might have accomplished, all we can do is to accept her gracefully.

Outdoor activity in whatever form it may be—rock climbing, mountaineering, rafting, skiing or simple cow walking (mountaineer's term for trekking) uplifts all your sensory organs and cleans both mind and body. At whatever level—physical, psychological, attitudinal, mental, spiritual, emotional—it changes your outlook for the better.

Fresh air; clear, cold water; the greenness and softness of the grass; the rising and setting of the golden sun; blinking stars with their unknown history; the silver moon enveloping the snowy peaks with its whiteness . . . all rejuvenate life and one goes back to the daily activities of practical world recharged with the desire to be back again and feel the essence of being alive.

I have wandered in the buoyancy of nature now and then and am sharing some of these journeys with you. My main purpose in writing

this book is to provide all adventure lovers information on trails and treks in Himachal Pradesh.

Himachal, the land of snow, is one of the most beautiful states of the Indian Union. Landscape is rich and varied: from the fertile plains to lush green meadows, from thick forests to barren mountainscape. Himachal has a lot to offer to both first-time trekkers and experienced mountaineers. Its valleys, passes and landscapes are still unknown, waiting to be explored and experienced. Sixty-five treks mentioned in the book cover more than hundred destinations but these are just the tip of an iceberg, there are hundreds others.

Nearly all the trek routes described here are the result of personal experience. I have travelled on these routes in recent years, therefore, the information contained in the book is latest, accurate and authentic to the best of my knowledge. I have stayed four years in the tribal valleys of Bharmour and Pangi, the trekking heartland of Himachal with my husband who was posted in these regions. I have accompanied him on all his travels, we have hugged mountains, forests and streams, romped on unknown trails discovering life in itself. These trails bound us not only with nature but also with each other and hundreds of people that we met on the way.

All this has not been a bed of roses. I can recall many incidents—when we felt we were being followed by a bear, worst we were following a bear's footmarks on snow, a friend slipped and I thought he had died, were misguided and got lost on way to Tingloti Pass, had to trudge more than fifty kilometres in a day, survived on half a *chapati* for two days, passed sleepless nights in fear of wild animals, walked shivering in the rains through dense forests full of leeches and clung to slippery rock faces being the only route available—but all the same merely twenty-four hours later I forgot the ordeal and planned the next trip.

I cherish the memory of all the friendly hill people (names I do not know) I have come across in these years. Faces of the man who guided us on Thamsar Pass and the teastall owner between Barot and Billing who made us comfortable in his cave-like shop as it poured cats and dogs outside are still fresh in my mind. No words can express the affection showed by the old woman at Kugti who gave me walnuts to eat on the way.

How can I forget the *chela* who carried me on his back while fording a dangerous stream and the *chowkidar* of forest rest house at

Darkund who provided us with sumptuous meal of *dal* and *chapati* after eating bread, maggi and biscuits for nearly six days. Then there was the Gaddi shepherd who saved our lives by guiding us to a *kud* in deteriorating weather . . . The list is endless.

I am very grateful to Suraj, Krishan, Jaggu and Lambo who in different regions welcomed me back home, relieved that nothing untoward had happened. Their countless advices and hot home-made food followed by endless cups of coffee as I sat down to jot my trips are a pleasure to recall. I am also thankful to the boys attached to the Mountaineering Institute Bharmour who as guides accompanied me in nearly all treks of Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal in Bharmour. Shubh Karan, Tilak, Chandarmani and Panditji specifically, they are the best to be recruited as guides as well as cooks for those interested to trek in this region.

Along with treks the book describes places and gives an insight into the customs, traditions and values of people of Himachal. It also contains information on general preparedness and tips on safe outdoor travel. The treks described cover all Himalayan ranges falling in Himachal, i.e. Shiwaliks, Dhauladhar, Pir Panjal and Great Himalayan range.

I hope this book will be useful to the reader.

Acknowledgements

This was not a one-sitting project—the work for it had been going on for the last eight years. This book could not have been possible without the support of Rakesh, my husband. We travelled together on most of the treks; he not only motivated me all along but also put in countless hours going through the manuscript, suggesting changes in the text, editing and typing the manuscript. He also drew the maps and sketches.

I would like to express deep appreciation to the following authors whose works I went through to give this book a completeness. Shiv Ram Saini (*Treks and Passes of Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal*), M.S. Bawa (*The Indian Himalaya*), Deepak Sanan and Dhanu Swadi (*Exploring Kinnaur and Spiti*), Gary Weare (*Trekking in the Indian Himalaya*), Harish Kapadia (*Spiti: Adventures in the Trans-Himalaya*). Various guidebooks (*Ten Essentials, Emergency Survival, First Aid, Mountain Sickness*) published by the Mountaineers Books, USA have been of immense help.

There are hundreds of people who helped me in one way or the

other during my trekking trips. I thank all of them profoundly.

My friends—Sneh, Shalini, Shekhar, Jyoti, Shashikant, Kaushik, Kittoo Bhai, Ashok, Lalit, Deepshikha, Gopal, Kalpana, Vipul, Dipen, Rana and Priyanka who accompanied me in various treks—were great partners and motivators. Thanks are also due to Hari Krishan Sarvata, Lakshman Singh Thakur, Dr. Mohinder Singh, Hans Raj Chauhan, Yash Paul Sharma, Rajesh Singh, Puran Bahadur Thapa, Devinder Pal Sharma, Kalyan Singh, Shubh Karan, Chandarmani, Tilak and Panditji for accompanying me on the treks, providing information and guidance.

I am thankful to nature-lovers—S.R. Saini (Senior Mountaineering Supervisor, Regional Mountaineering Centre, Dharamsala), Ashok Dilwali (renowned photographer), Everestor Rajiv Sharma (Senior Instructor, Directorate of Mountaineering and Allied Sports, Manali) and M.S. Bawa (author) who made me confident enough to pen down this book for all those waiting to explore nature in its pristine beauty.

Of course encouragement given by my parent-in-laws and my parents has been tremendous. My long trips into the wilderness caused them enough worry but they have always been supportive.

I sincerely thank my teacher Prof. Vepa Rao for inculcating in me an urge to write, supporting and guiding me in all my writing projects.

MINAKSHI CHAUDHRY

Note to the Reader

Safety is the most important factor in outdoor activities. The grade of difficulty of trails and routes described in the book is subjective. One must be physically and mentally fit to undertake these journeys. Trekker's experience, fitness, general preparedness, planning and weather are important factors for trips to wilderness. One must not neglect safety concerns of oneself and fellow travellers.

Even though the maps of Survey of India and State Gazetteers have been taken as reference for the altitude and distances between places, these are based on personal approximations, comparisons and consultation with other trekkers.

Generally a person travelling with rucksack weighing one fifth or one fourth of the body weight treks two to three kilometres in one hour on an average, however this also depends on speed, fitness, mood, fatigue and weather.

The Indian Himalaya

INDIA

India is one of the most ancient civilizations, a recent nation and the largest democracy in the world. India indeed is land of wonders. Having geographical area of 3,287,263 square kilometres and population of over one billion, she is a country of mind-boggling diversities. The contrast is striking: world's tenth industrialized nation and sixth nation to have gone into space, yet millions of poor find it difficult to sustain livelihood. Highly advanced urban centers and slums exist side by side. For foreign visitors, India is a unique experience.

It is home for people practising almost every religion of the world. Hinduism and its offshoots that took shape of different religions like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism originated here. There are more Muslims in India than some of the Islamic nations. Christians, Parsis, Zoroastrians all find a place in its diverse religio-cultural heritage.

Majority of population is Hindu (82 percent). Ancient sacred texts of Hindus, the *Vedas*, are believed to have been composed more than 5000 years ago. Though there is no unanimity about the exact dates yet firm roots of Hinduism go well beyond 1000 B.C. There are around 330 million gods and goddesses in Hindu pantheon. Besides there are millions of local gods and goddesses. In many cases each village has a unique, separate, personalised and living presiding deity that speaks through the chosen ones. This tradition is more pronounced in the hills of northern India.

Buddhism and Jainism rose as a reaction to orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism in 6th century B.C. Islam came to northern India through invaders and to southern India through Arab traders. Christianity

arrived in southern India with Syrian immigrants in 4th century. Oldest Jewish communities are also found in India. Jews arrived in India as far back as 6th century B.C. Presently there are about 17 thousand Jews in the country. There are nearly 18 million Sikhs in India. Guru Nanak founded Sikhism in the late 15th century as a reaction against caste system and Brahmanical order.

There are more than thousand dialects in India. Hindi is national language but the constitution recognises 18 official languages. English is spoken and understood widely throughout the country.

Indian democratic system is mainly modeled on British democracy. Indian Parliament is bicameral. Lok Sabha (House of the People) is the Lower House with 545 members elected directly by voters of 18 years of age and above from territorial constituencies. Upper House, known as Rajya Sabha (Council of States) has 245 members.

India is divided into 29 states and six union territories. The states are further divided into districts and sub-divisions. District is the basic administrative unit headed by an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer called the District Magistrate (D.M.) or Deputy Commissioner or District Collector (D.C.). His or her counterpart in police is called Superintendent of Police (S.P.).

Climate

Broadly the climate may be described as tropical monsoon type but vastness of the country and strikingly different geophysical features lead to entirely different weather in different parts of the country at a given point of time. Different parts of the country experience flood and drought at the same time. While the plains burn with heat, high mountain routes remain blocked due to heavy snow. Temperature varies. In peak summer mercury hovers around 45 to 48 degrees Celsius in plains of Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi. In winters the temperature drops to minus fifty degrees at Drass in Ladakh and minus thirty to forty degrees Celsius in Spiti in Himachal Pradesh.

Mainly there are four seasons: winter (Jan-Feb); hot weather summer (March-May); rainy southwestern monsoon (June-September); and post-monsoon, also known as northeast monsoon in the southern peninsula (Oct-Dec). Two seasonal winds, the northeastern and the southwest monsoon, affect India's climate. Northeast monsoon commonly known as winter monsoon blows from land to sea whereas southwest monsoon brings most of the rainfall during the year in the country.

INDIAN HIMALAYA

The Himalaya, youngest mountain system in the world, took shape as a result of a major geological event millions of years ago when tectonic plate of Indian subcontinent collided with the Eurasian plate. Himalaya is a Sanskrit word that means the abode of snow. Himalaya has always been worshipped as abode of gods. It is held in great reverence even today and people consider the Himalayan mountains sacred. Several mountain peaks are named after gods and goddesses and there are thousands of sacred temples scattered all over the Himalayan region. Almost all high altitude lakes and ponds are sites of annual religious and cultural fairs. Mythologically, Hindus consider Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake located in present-day Tibet as center of universe with three sacred rivers—the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Satluj—originating here.

Principal Peaks & Passes in the Indian Himalaya

Peak	Height (m)	Pass	Height (m)
Kangchenjunga	8598	Meade's Col	7138
Nanga Parbat	8125	Lungser Pass	6240
Nanda Devi	7816	Ibex Col	6200
Mt. Kamet	7756	Jongsang la	6115
Saltoro Kangri	7742	Saltoro Pass	5900
Jongsang	7459	Bilafond la	5647
Rimo I	7385	Mana Pass	5608
Tent Peak	7365	Khardung la	5602
Abi Gamin	7355	Manirang Pass	5550
Mana	7274	Lipu Lekh	5450
Mukut	7242	Pin Parvati Pass	5319
Hardeol	7151	Saser la	5330
Nun	7135	Lamkhaga Pass	5282
Trisul	7120	Baralacha la	4939
Nanda Kot	6861	Hamta	4885
Leo Pargial	6791	Chobu	4750
Devtoli	6788	Kunzum la	4550
Lungser Kangri	6666	Sach Pass	4414
Shigri Parvat	6645	Inderhara	4350
Parvati Parvat	6632	Nathu la	4310
Manirang	6593	Rohtang	4116
Chiring We	6559	Chandrakhani Pass	3500

The Himalaya extends like a curve of parallel ranges for nearly 2500 kilometres across southern Asia. Its western end starts from Afghanistan and extends to India, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Tibet, China, Russia and Burma. This extensive mountain system has 14 peaks above 8000 m and hundreds over 7000 m above sea level. There are hundreds of peaks higher than the highest peaks of Europe, Africa and America.

One of the striking features of the Himalaya is that it is not a single unbroken chain of mountains but is a combination of three almost parallel ranges—Great Himalaya, Lesser or Central Himalaya and the Outer or Shivalik Himalaya. There are many deep, wide and beautiful river valleys, sloping agricultural lands, vast alpine flowered meadows and high-rising plateaus between these ranges. The Himalaya is a storehouse of great biodiversity.

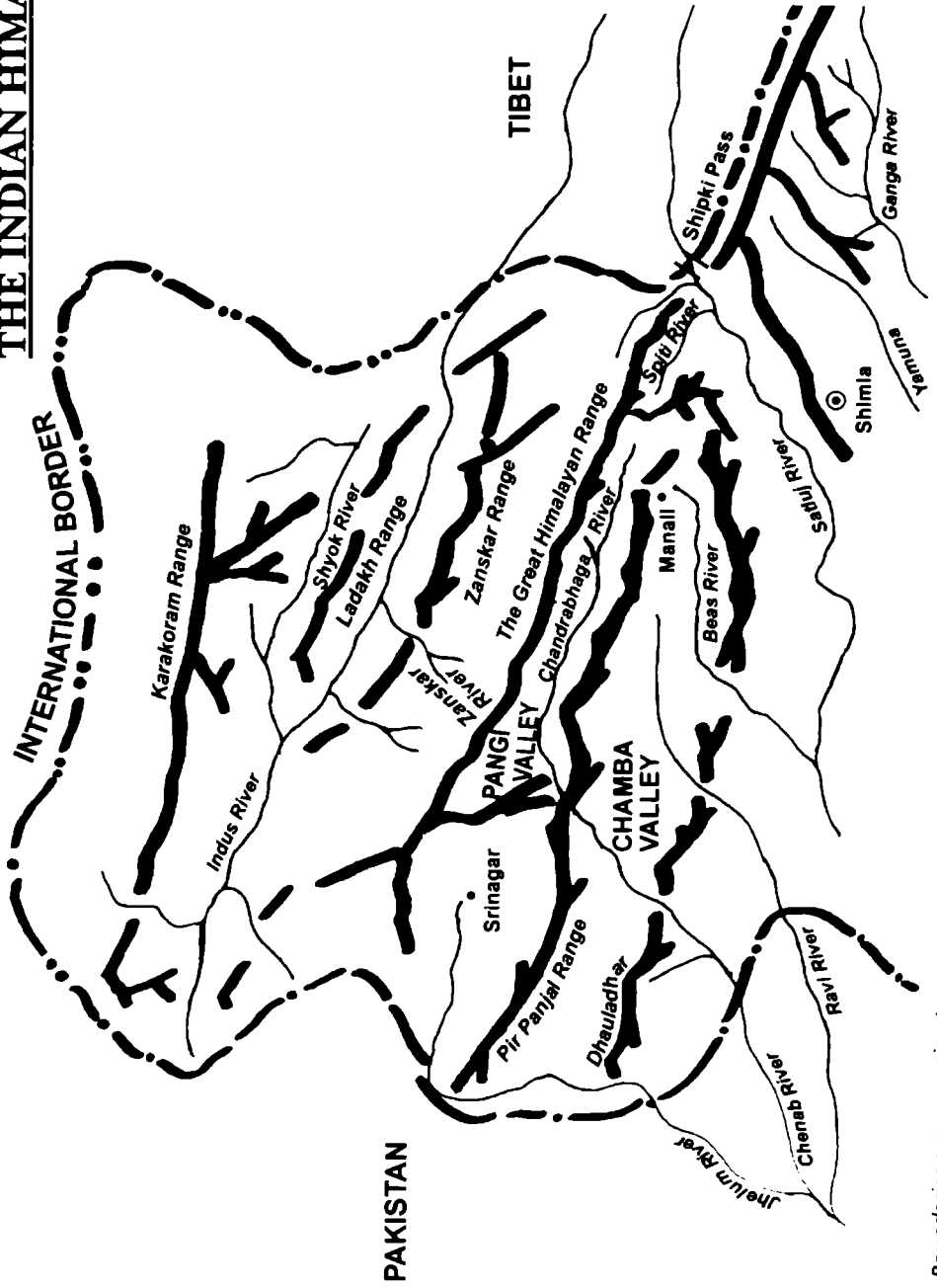
Main Himalayan ranges separate India from Tibetan plateau. From Nanga Parbat in west it extends as far as Sikkim and Bhutan in east. In western Himalayan region this range forms the natural division between Himachal and Ladakh.

To the south of main Himalayan range lies Pir Panjal range. It begins at Gulmarg and traverses through Kashmir till Banihal pass and then charts its route separating Chenab and Ravi valleys. Between Zaskar range and Pir Panjal range part of which is called Pangi range lie the valleys of Pangi and Lahaul. Pir Panjal extends from Kishtwar in Jammu to Kullu in Himachal where Dhauladhar joins it. The range then follows its route towards east dividing Kullu, Spiti and Kinnaur. Dhauladhar divides Ravi and Beas valleys.

Thus the Great Himalayan range stretches from Ladakh southward to Spiti and on to Nanda Devi and Mount Everest in the east. The western Himalaya comprising Lahaul and Spiti and Zaskar has an area of 7734 square kilometres with the altitude varying from 5000 m to 8500 m. The Pir Panjal and Outer Himalaya also join the Greater Himalaya range at Kullu in Himachal Pradesh near Deo Tibba (6001 m). Lahaul lies between these two Himalayan ranges. Zaskar range separates the basin of Tibet from Himachal Pradesh.

Main Himalayan region has world's tallest peaks. Climbing Everest, Kangchenjunga, Makalu, Nanga Parbat, Nanda Devi and Annapurna is the most cherished and passionate dream of mountaineers the world over.

THE INDIAN HIMALAYA



Map not to scale. Boundaries are approximate.

The middle Himalayan chain commonly referred as Pir Panjal range varies from 4500 m to 6500 m in elevation and spreads over an area of 3574 square kilometres. Pir Panjal lying to the south of main Himalaya joins Dhauladhar at Bara Bhagal and Kullu.

Dhauladhar range is further south of Pir Panjal. Also called the outer or lesser Himalaya, it spreads from Dalhausie in Chamba district to Bara Bhagal and Kullu in Himachal Pradesh. The Dhauladhar extends through Dalhausie to Bhadarwah region in Jammu & Kashmir. This range can be crossed on Jammu-Srinagar road at Patni Top.

Further south are Shivalik ranges. These are the first hills seen while entering Himalayan region from the plains. After Chandigarh on way to Shimla the Shivaliks are crossed. Kasauli, Dharampur, Dagshai, Solan are main stations on this route. From Pathankot one enters Kangra hills in Shivaliks. These hills have average elevation of 1500 to 2000 metres.

The Himalaya has attracted people for various reasons. Its beauty, ruggedness and difficulty have always fascinated people. Seekers of truth, mystics, nature-lovers, environmentalists, scientists, trekkers, climbers and mountaineers have all been lured to the Himalaya. It has challenged men to dare. The call of mountains has been so strong that many people lost their lives while attempting to conquer these.

The Himalaya has very rich flora and fauna. It is estimated that western Himalaya alone may have more than 7500 species of flowers. One of the main reasons of the floral diversity found in the Himalaya is the variation in altitude. At several points snow peaks rise more than 10,000 vertical feet from the bottom of valley floor abruptly like a wall. The vegetation varies in identifiable patches starting from the valley floor to the snow-covered mountain. The lower forests are commonly composed of broad leaf plants. Oak, rhododendron, pine, fir, *deodar* give way to birch (*bhojpatras*) forest which is replaced by shrubs of different kinds as altitude is gained. After treeline, grass and alpine plants remain in vast pastures that gradually merge in the moraine and scree.

All this variation in vegetation can be experienced on a trail that connects two valleys across a high rising mountain pass. The Himalaya has hundreds of mountain passes called *La* or *Jot* in local dialect that connect different valleys. Local shepherds discovered most of these passes as they crossed these with their flock of sheep and goats from one valley to the other. These traditional routes that were used

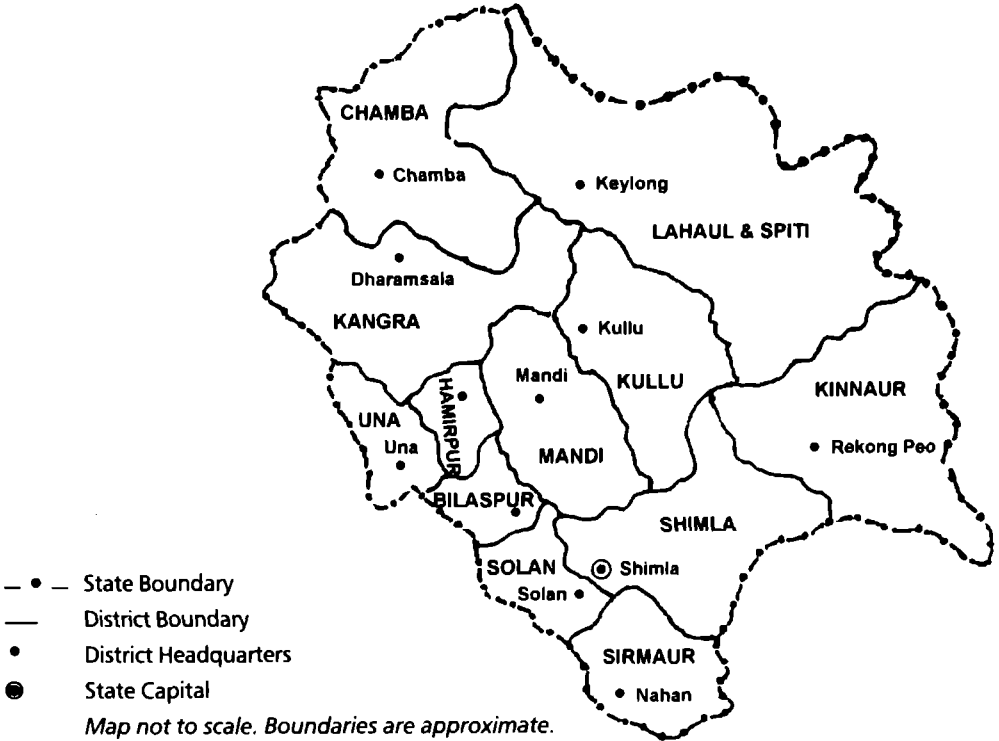
by migratory tribes and traders are the main attraction for trekkers and climbers today.

The attraction of the Himalaya is there and will always be there. It gives limitless joy and happiness to all those who approach it. It also teaches humility and smallness of men in front of mighty Nature.

It finds a special place in the ancient texts of India. Lord Krishna says in the *Gita* that among the non-moving I am the Himalaya. Many go to these mystic mountains in search of peace and solace, others seek the wonders of nature in its lap, still others accept the challenge thrown by its mighty peaks and wonderful valleys.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

(Administrative Divisions)



Facts & Figures

Area	: 55,673 sq km (1.69% of country's area and 10.54% of Himalayan land mass)
Capital	: Shimla
Languages	: Hindi and Pahari
Districts	: 12
Population	: 60,77,248 (Males: 30,85,256; Females: 29,91,992)
Density	: 109 persons per sq km
Sex Ratio	: 970 (females per 1000 males)
Literacy	: 77.13%
Villages	: 20,118
Height	: 350 m to 6975 m (from mean sea level)
Main Rivers	: Beas, Satluj, Ravi, Chenab and Yamuna
Main Peaks	: Abi Gamin, Gya, Reo Purgil, Jorkanden, Shigri, Parvati, Manirang
Main Passes	: Pin Parvati, Inderhara, Sach, Rohtang, Rupin, Kugti
Airports	: Jubbar Hatti (Shimla); Gaggal (Kangra) and Bhuntar (Kullu)
Railway	: Kalka to Shimla (96 kms) & Pathankot to Jogindernagar (113 kms)

Himachal Pradesh

The Land

Bordered by Jammu and Kashmir to its north and northwest, Tibet to its east, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh to its southeast, Punjab and Haryana to the southwest and south, Himachal is the eighteenth state of India. It lies between $30^{\circ} 22''$ to $33^{\circ} 12''$ North latitude and $75^{\circ} 49''$ to $79^{\circ} 4''$ East longitude. With an area of 55,673 sq km, the state comprises 1.69 percent area of the country. Lahaul & Spiti is the largest district areawise and Hamirpur the smallest. The state capital is Shimla (Simla of the Raj days—the summer capital of the British) where the state secretariat is located. There are twelve administrative divisions (districts): Bilaspur, Chamba, Hamirpur, Kangra, Kinnaur, Kullu, Lahaul & Spiti, Mandi, Shimla, Sirmaur, Solan and Una.

Himachal, the land of snow, is one of the most beautiful states in India. It has a rich and varied landscape. From the fertile plains to lush green, rain-fed valleys; from vast grasslands, meadows and thick forests to barren mountainscape of cold desert of Spiti, nature presents striking contrast. Himachal extends from the plains of Punjab and Haryana to the majestic mountains through the Shivalik, Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal ranges. These ranges run almost parallel to each other and amongst them form beautiful valleys of the state that are irrigated by numerous perennial water sources. The Himalayan rivers, rivulets, streams and *nallahs* flow through the hills down to the fertile plains

Komic in district Spiti at 4937 m altitude is the highest village connected by road in Asia.

Administrative Divisions (Districts) of Himachal Pradesh

District	Area (sq km)	Population (2001)	Headquarters
Bilaspur	1,167	3,40,735	Bilaspur
Chamba	6,528	4,60,499	Chamba
Hamirpur	1,118	4,12,009	Hamirpur
Kangra	5,739	13,38,536	Dharamsala
Kinnaur	6,401	83,950	Kalpa (Peo)
Kullu	5,503	3,79,865	Kullu
Lahaul & Spiti	13,835	33,224	Keylong
Mandi	3,950	9,00,987	Mandi
Shimla	5,131	7,21,745	Shimla
Sirmaur	2,825	4,58,351	Nahan
Solan	1,936	4,99,380	Solan
Una	1,540	4,47,967	Una

of Punjab and Haryana. The Satluj, Ravi, Beas, Chenab (Chandrabhaga) and Yamuna are the major rivers that either originate in the state or flow through it. There are many other important rivers and streams that irrigate the terraced fields of this hill state. The valleys of Kullu and Kangra receive plenty of monsoon rains as mighty Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal help in precipitation but the valleys of Lahaul, Pangi, Spiti and Kinnaur that lie beyond Pir Panjal get very little rain. In fact the valley of Spiti is known as cold desert.

Himachal is the land of high passes and deep valleys. Mean elevation ranges from 350 m in the plains of Kangra and Una to about 7000 m in the high hills of Lahaul & Spiti. Dharamsala receives the highest rainfall in the state and second highest in the country whereas Lahaul & Spiti valleys go without rains.

Early History

Not much is known about original inhabitants of the state. It is generally believed that people from Indus Valley civilization, which flourished between 2250 and 1750 B.C, pushed the original inhabitants known as Kolorian people of Gangetic plains towards north. These people moved to the hills of present-day Himachal Pradesh where they could live peacefully and preserve their way of life.

People referred to as Dasas, Dasyus and Nishadas in the Vedic literature are believed to be inhabitants of this area. In later works

inhabitants of this part of the Himalaya have been called Kinners, Nagas and Yakshas.

According to some historians people of present-day Himachal came to the hills in several successive waves of migration. The Kols or Mundas are said to be the original migrants followed by Mongoloid people known as Bhots and Kiratas. Then came the Aryans. Historians opine that when Aryans started their migration from Central Asia, one group reached India via Afghanistan and Hindukush. Second group, which came to be known as the Khash proceeded towards Khashgar, Gilgit, Kashmir and then spread throughout the Himalayan regions of Kangra, Kullu, Mahasu, Chamba, Garhwal, Kumaun and Nepal. Rivers of Himachal—Chenab (Chandrabhaga), Ravi, Beas and Satluj—find mention in the Vedic literature as Asikini, Parushni, Vipasha and Satudri respectively.

Recorded chronological events of the hill states start after seventh century when many Rajput states ascended in Rajasthan. They fought amongst themselves and the vanquished moved to the hills with their followers, where they set up small states or principalities. These states were Kangra, Nurpur, Suket, Mandi, Kutlehar, Baghal, Bilaspur, Nalagarh, Keonthal, Dhami, Kunihar, Bushahr and Sirmaur.

These small states enjoyed a large degree of independence till Muslim invasions in northern India. Mahmud Ghaznavi conquered Kangra at the beginning of the tenth century. Timur and Sikander Lodhi also marched through the lower Shivalik hills.

After the decline of Mughals the Katoch rulers of Kangra managed to retain independent status of Kangra under Maharaja Sansar Chand who ruled for nearly half a century. Hill states of Chamba, Suket, Mandi, Bilaspur, Guler, Jaswan, Siwan and Datarpur came under the direct or indirect control of Sansar Chand.

The Gorkhas defeated Sansar Chand in 1806 with the help of many hill chiefs. They also annexed Sirmaur and Shimla hill states under the leadership of Amar Singh Thapa.

The Gorkhas could not hold on to their exploits and most of their area fell under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In 1845 when the Sikhs invaded the British territory by crossing the Satluj, the rulers of many hill states sided with the English. This led to supremacy of the British in the hill regions.

British Rule and Freedom Struggle

British territories came under British Crown after Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858. During the First World War, almost all hill chiefs contributed to the British war effort.

Shimla became the summer capital of the British raj in 1864.

British established the hill stations of Shimla, Dharamsala and Dalhausie. They also set up cantonments at Dagshai, Subathu, Kasauli, Bakloh, Jatogh, Dalhausie and McLeodganj.

Hill states did not play very significant role in the freedom movement. Praja Mandal movement was merely an extension of the freedom movement.

Post-Independence Period

The Chief Commissioner's province of Himachal Pradesh came into being on 15th April 1948. Himachal became a part C State of Indian Union on 26th January 1950, the day Indian Constitution was implemented. Bilaspur was merged with Himachal Pradesh on 1st July 1954. Himachal Pradesh was given status of Union Territory on 1st November 1956. Kangra and most of the other hill areas of Punjab were merged with Himachal Pradesh on 1st November 1966.

On 18th December 1970 the State of Himachal Pradesh Act was passed by Parliament and the new state came into being on 25th January 1971. Thus Himachal Pradesh emerged as the eighteenth state of Indian Union.

Economy

Agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry are main occupations of the people. While upper Himachal is famous for apple, apricot and walnut, the lower part of the state has its niche in citrus fruit. Land holdings are small and hill farming in itself is incapable of mass production of foodgrain and cereals, therefore more and more people are opting for cash crops. Farmers are taking up cultivation of seed potato, off-season green peas and vegetables for income. Floriculture, cultivation of exotic vegetables and fruit are other areas that are getting attention. In addition to these, tourism is a major income-generating activity in the state.

Culture

Culture is as diverse as the landscape. More than two thousand *devis* and *devtas*, local gods and goddesses, are worshipped in the state. Almost every village has its own presiding deity. These gods speak through the chosen ones called *chelas* or *gurs*. Numerous fairs and festivals are held around the year.

Dialect changes after every few kilometres and customs and traditions also vary. Population is mostly Hindu. Sikhs, Buddhists and Muslims also live peacefully in this land known as *dev bhoomi*, the land of gods.

Just as every village has its own god it has its own particular fair. Some of the fairs and festivals are very popular. Dussehra festival at Kullu, Shivratri fair at Mandi, Lavi fair at Rampur, Minjar and Manimahesh fairs in Chamba, Renuka fair in Sirmaur are main fairs and festivals of the state. In addition to these several other fairs and festivals are celebrated round the year. All important temples and lakes in the state have at least one particular fair or festival. Site of these festive occasions is not only a pilgrim center but also a tourist attraction. Religion and tourism mix very well in this hill state. Thousands throng sacred places, temples and festive places to pay respects to various gods and goddesses.

Main Dussehra festival takes place in the Dhalpur ground at Kullu in the month of October. Hundreds of gods and goddesses come in processions to pay homage to Raghunathji—Lord Rama. The festivities continue for more than ten days. Shivratri is celebrated all over the state as it is connected with the main deity of the hills—Lord Shiva, the destroyer god of Hindu trinity. Lavi fair at Rampur in district Shimla is basically a trade fair. The fair starts on 11th November every year. Earlier traders from Tibet and Spiti used to come and exchange goods. Raja of Rampur had signed a treaty with Raja of

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- Sui fair of Chamba is held in memory of Rani Sunaina Devi who sacrificed herself to bring water to the town of Chamba.
 - Sairi fair at Arki in district Solan is famous for bull fighting.
 - Dhami ka Mela is a famous fair held at Halog in district Shimla, where the people divide themselves into two groups and throw stones on each other. Stone throwing continues till one person starts bleeding.
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Tibet for bilateral trade. But old trade routes have now been closed. Attempts to reopen the trade have not proved successful. Lavi fair is famous for trade of dry fruit, juicy Kinnaur apples, hand-woven woolens and Chaumurthi horses.

Manimahesh peak (5486 m) or *Chhota Kailash* is located at a distance of about 100 kilometres from Chamba town. The Kailash is believed to be the abode of Lord Shiva. Every year a fair is held in the month of August or September starting from Krishna Janamashtami to Radha Ashtami. People trek thirteen kilometres on foot to reach Manimahesh Lake located at a height of 4115 m at the base of the Kailash. Before starting on their journey on foot from Hadsar, 85 kilometres from Chamba, they visit ancient temple complex Chaurasi (temples dating back to seventh century) and temple of Bharmani Devi.

Minjar, the other main fair of Chamba, is celebrated in the first week of August. A procession starts from Akhand Chandi Palace in the town and proceeds to the bank of river Ravi with great pomp and show where a coconut, fruit and few sheaves of paddy are offered to Ravi. This offering symbolises sowing of paddy in the fields.

Even though most of these fairs have been losing traditional colour, and film music has overshadowed the folk music, these fairs retain their earthy look and feel.

Local village-level fairs are dedicated to the local gods and goddesses called *devtas* and *devis*. The people of the village hold these gods and goddesses in great esteem. Individuals invite the gods to their houses on special occasions and mostly the gods oblige. *Devtas* are dressed for the occasion and are led in a procession with trumpets and drums. People dance to the folk tunes. The celebrations continue for days. Local brew flows freely and festive spirit reigns.

Sometimes these *devis* and *devtas* go to visit their relatives and other gods. Hundreds of gods come in colourful processions with local bands to attend Shivratri at Mandi, Dussehra at Kullu, Fag mela at Rampur. These are special occasions and everyone, the gods and people wear best of clothes and jewellery. The *chelas* or *gurs* of these gods are in great demand as the gods speak through them.

Lakes are also held sacred in Himachal. Almost all the lakes witness an annual fair. There are several beautiful lakes in Himachal. Some of these lakes are: Manimahesh, Ghadasru, Lam Dal and Nag Dal in Chamba; Parashar and Rewalsar in Mandi; Renuka in Sirmaur;

Chandar Tal, Suraj Tal, Neelkanth and Dhankar in Lahaul & Spiti; Dal in Kangra; Dashohar, Bhrigu and Beas Kund in Kullu. People travel long distances on foot to reach these sacred places. For example, people from Lahaul walk for days to cross Kugti pass (5040 m) and Jotnu (4750 m) to reach Manimahesh lake. Similarly some people from Kangra who come to Manimahesh walk across Jalsu (3600 m) or Inderhara (4350 m) and Kalah Jot (4720 m).

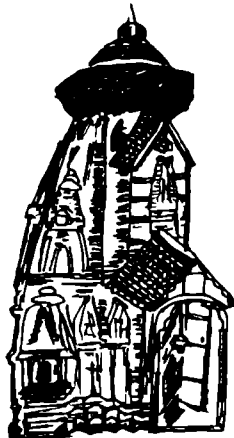
Temples

Himachal has more than six thousand big and small temples of different architectural styles, excluding personalised shrines existing in sub-villages and hamlets. Pyramid-shaped stone temples are called *Shikhara* temples. Lakshmi Narayan, Hari Rai, Gauri Shankar and Manimahesh (at Bharmour) temples in Chamba; Baijnath temple in Kangra and Triloknath temple in Lahaul fall in this category.

Pagoda style temples have pyramid-tiered roofs. These are mainly wooden temples such as Hidimba, Bijli Mahadev and Tripura Sundari in Kullu; Sungra Mahadev in Kinnaur; Bhimakali in Shimla and Parashar in Mandi districts.

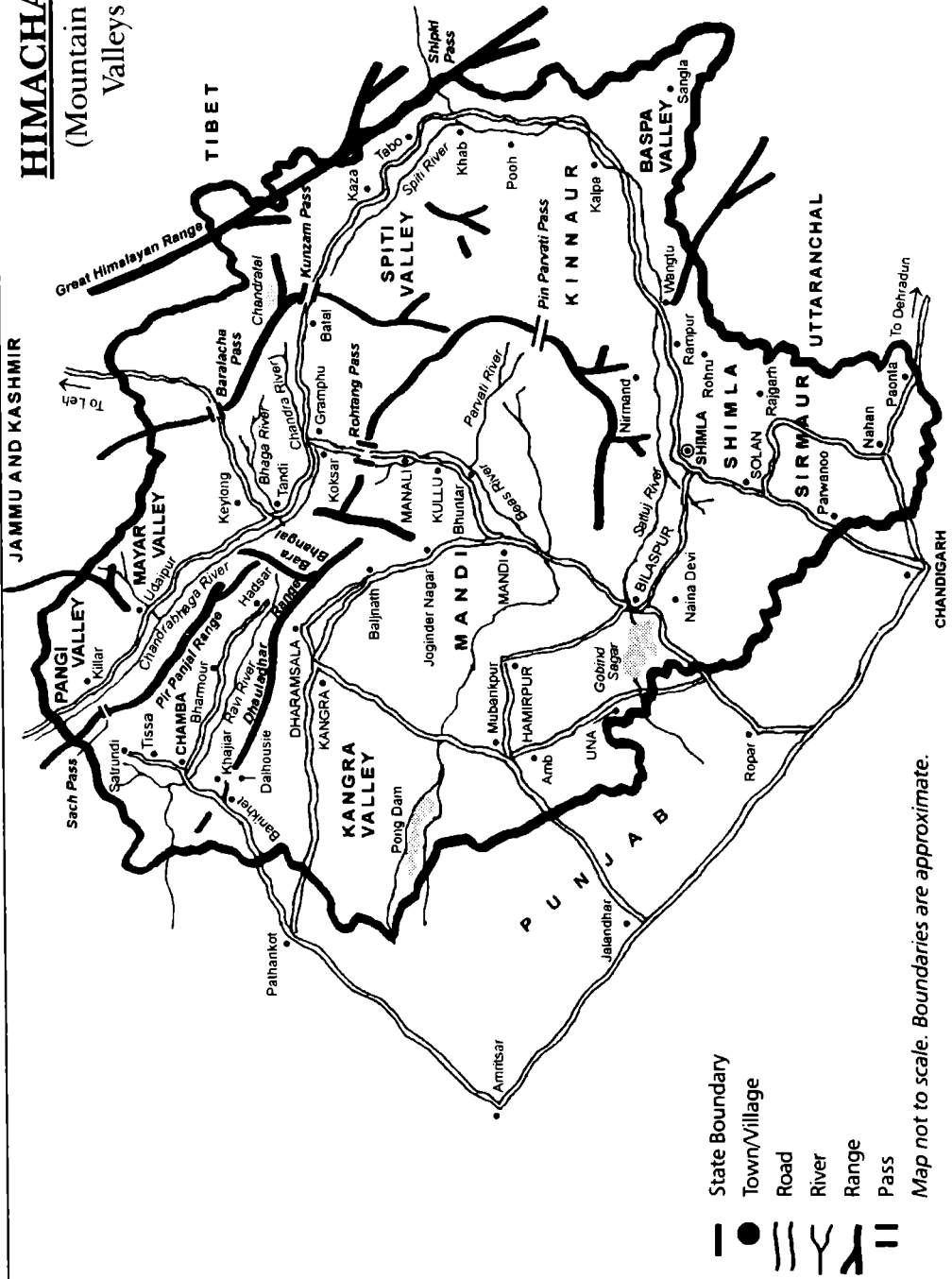
Hatkoti temple in Shimla and Lakshna Devi temple in Chamba are another distinct type of temples known as Pent-Roofed. Plenty of wood is used in this type of temples.

Then there are Buddhist monasteries in the state that exhibit different architectural style. Most of these are located in Kinnaur and Lahaul & Spiti districts.



HIMACHAL PRADESH

(Mountain Ranges, Rivers, Valleys and Roads)



Trekking in Himachal

Himachal is a paradise for walkers, trekkers, hikers, skiers, rafters, climbers and mountaineers. Innumerable treks originate or culminate in the beautiful valleys of Kullu and Manali, Chamba and Kangra. Several mountain passes connect normally inaccessible valleys. Local people have been crossing these passes for centuries with their flock of sheep and goats. Trekkers can enjoy unparalleled beauty on these trails. Most of the trails are safe and defined. Several mountain passes do not require technical skill or mountaineering equipment. There are countless trails that are easy even for the inexperienced. At the same time innumerable tough treks also beckon lovers of wilderness.

Several perennial rivers flow down the slopes of the Himalaya. These form natural boundaries between different regions of the state. Valleys of Kangra and Kullu are formed by watershed of the Beas river. Chenab or Chandrabhaga shapes the Lahaul and Pangi valleys whereas river Satluj carves out the region of Kinnaur and Shimla. Chamba valley is mainly on the river Ravi.

Beas and Ravi rivers originate from Beas Kund in Kullu district and from the snout of glacier nearly twenty-five kilometres from Bara Bhangal village respectively. Both these form the boundaries of mighty Dhauladhar that acts as a barrier between Kangra and Chamba valleys. Dhauladhar has many mountain passes and innumerable treks that join Chamba and Kangra regions across it.

Chandrabhaga or Chenab river, formed by confluence of Chandra and Bhaga rivers at Tandi in Lahaul, flows through Lahaul and Pangi valleys of Himachal before entering Jammu & Kashmir at Gulabgarh. Pir Panjal separates Pangi and Lahaul from the rest of Himachal.

Principal Peaks & Passes in Himachal Pradesh

Name	Height (m)	Location/Details
Abi Gamin Peak	7355	In Kullu
Reo Purgil Peak	6816	In Kinnaur
Gya Peak	6794	In Lingti valley, Spiti
Leo Pargial Peak	6791	In Kinnaur
Shigri Parvat	6645	On Barashigri glacier in Lahaul
Parvati Parvat	6632	In Parvati valley, Kullu
Manirang Peak	6597	On Kinnaur-Spiti divide
Rangrik Rang Peak	6553	In Racho Khad, Kinnaur
Jorkanden Peak	6473	In Kinnaur
Papsura Peak	6440	In Kullu
Dharamsura Peak	6420	In Kullu
Gyagar Peak	6400	In Lingti valley, Spiti
Phawararang Peak	6349	In Tirung valley, Kinnaur
Behali Jot	6245	In Lahaul
Indrasan Peak	6223	In Kullu
Phabrang Peak	6172	In Lahaul
Parilungbi Peak	6166	In Lingti valley, Spiti
Shilla Peak	6132	In Lingti valley, Spiti
Kinnaur-Kailash Peak	6050	In Kinnaur
Deo Tibba Peak	6001	In Kullu
Ghunsarang Peak	5800	Near Manirang Pass in Kinnaur
Parang la	5580	Connects Spiti valley to parts of Ladakh
Manirang Pass	5550	Connects Spiti valley with Ropa valley of Kinnaur
Pin Parvati Pass	5319	Links Pin valley with Parvati valley of Kullu
Charang Ghati Pass	5200	Famous pass on Kinner-Kailash Parikrama
Chobu Pass	4750	High pass on the shoulder of Chamba Kailash
Hampta Pass	4885	An alternate to Rohtang pass
Baralacha la	4939	Motorable pass leading from Lahaul to Zanskar
Kunzum la	4550	Motorable pass, gate to Spiti valley from west
Inderhara Pass	4350	On the Dhauladhar ridge
Sach Pass	4414	Popular route to Pangi
Rohtang Pass	4116	Popular motorable pass on Manali-Leh highway
Chandrakhani Pass	3500	In Kullu, leads from Nagar to Malana

Sach, Cheni, Kugti, Chobia and Kalicho passes connect Chamba with Lahaul and Pangi valleys.

Spiti river flows through Spiti valley before it joins Satluj, originating from Mansarovar lake in Tibet, at Khab below Shipki la. Satluj cuts across Zaskar and other Himalayan ranges at Shipki la and enters Himachal. It flows through Kinnaur and separates Kullu and Shimla districts before reaching Bhakra in Bilaspur district where a dam has been made. It forms an artificial lake, Gobind Sagar. Yamuna river forms the eastern-most boundary of the state. Main tributaries of Yamuna are Giri and Bata. Sangla valley in Kinnaur with Baspa river flowing through it is yet another beautiful region.

There are several peaks in Himachal Pradesh that challenge the mountaineers. Main peaks in Dhauladhar range are Mun (4610 m), Toral (4686 m), Dromedary (4553 m) and Riflehorn (4400 m). Kinnaur & Spiti region has Leo Pargial (6791 m), Gya (6794 m), Shilla (6132 m), Shipki (6608 m), Kinner Kailash (6500 m), and Manirang (6597 m). Major peaks in Lahaul are Menthosa (6443 m), Duphao Jot (6100 m), Behali N (6302 m) Behali S (6295 m), Phabrang (6172 m), and Mulkila. However proper training, skill, equipment and guidance are needed to climb these peaks.

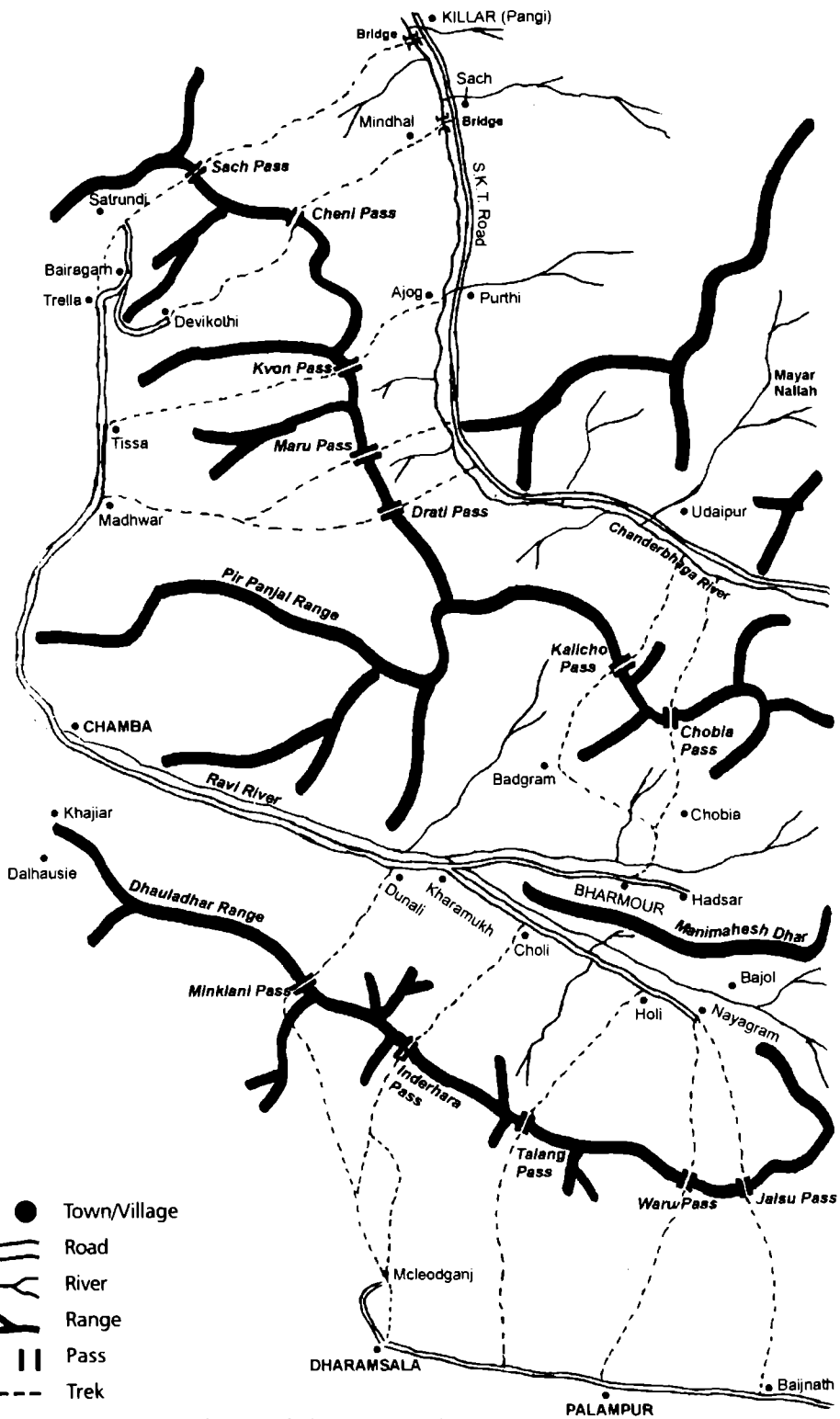
Dicky Dolma of Himachal Pradesh became the youngest woman in the world to climb Mt. Everest in 1993.

Trekkers can leave the technical part to mountaineers while they can enjoy walking on the trails in these hills. The thrill of crossing a mountain pass is comparable to climbing a peak. In fact many travellers prefer simple walking than technical climbing. There are innumerable passes in Himachal that connect different regions. These passes are frequented by local shepherds who cross these at least twice in a year with their flock. Gaddis, the nomadic tribe of Bharmour in Chamba, are regular travellers in the Pir Panjal and Dhauladhar. They travel to higher reaches in the summer with their sheep and goats as far as Zaskar and Ladakh. Before the winters set in they come down to the plains of Kangra valley. Similarly shepherds in other regions of the state travel long distances across high mountain passes.

Crossing a Mountain Pass

Crossing a mountain pass is a life-time experience. The journey is quite testing but the feeling of achievement is overwhelming. Care,

DHAULADHAR AND PIR PANJAL RANGES



Map not to scale. Boundaries are approximate.

courage and determination are required to undertake journey across a mountain pass. The landscape is always interesting with endless variety and limitless charm and the rugged beauty and sheer grandeur of high passes has no parallel.

Generally the last villages in the valleys are located at an average height of about 8000 feet. From these villages the trail rises through forests or curls upward alongside narrow ravine or winds up over steep grassy slopes. After gradual ascent treeline is crossed and the forest clears. Trail then leads to the bare mountainside going up steadily towards the mountain pass.

Normally the trekkers have to spend at least one night at an elevation of about 12,000 feet before crossing the pass. Surrounded by mighty snow-covered mountain ranges with glaciers filling the hollows, the scene is awe-inspiring. The mountain slopes rich in varied flora fascinate as they wear thick carpet of colourful wild flowers in monsoon and post-monsoon months.

The ascent to the pass on the next day is taken up early in the morning. It is usually very steep ascent. Walking over snow at such height may cause breathing problem and exhaustion. Slowly the trekkers reach higher slopes with the towering peaks in close proximity. At times the path is on permanent glacier. No sound disturbs the stillness except that of the falling rock or avalanche and startled voices of birds.

The pass is reached at about 4200 m to 5300 m on an average. Feeling of success overpowers the fatigue. The ambiance stimulates and one feels on top of the world. The view towards the south extends beyond the intervening ranges upto the plains. On clear days even the rivers shining far away in the plains can be seen from some of these passes. The vision is limited towards the north and nothing much is visible except for the snow-peaks in the immediate vicinity. The descent on the northern side is usually more gradual and less interesting than the ascent. The vegetation appears again even though the floral display is scanty and poorer than that which has been left behind. At about 3354 m on the other side of the pass, treeline is again reached. The trail then rapidly descends to other valley. In late summer and before winter has set in, crossing these passes is comparatively easy and it is not so risky and dangerous.

Caution

While crossing any pass extreme care and caution is required. A person has to climb steep mountain slopes over snow at a height much above the zone of vegetation. Air is thinner and one can have breathing problems due to lack of oxygen. Every step is a ritual. Generally people cross in small groups. Extra care has to be taken to follow only the visible beaten treks on the glaciers otherwise even a slight deviation may prove fatal. One must not show over-confidence or carelessness while walking on snow. Deviations and shortcuts should be avoided at all costs. The temptation to save time or distance can be killing. Travellers have to watch for boulders and shooting stones that may roll down the peaks any time.

On most of the trails there is no need to have mountaineering and climbing gear unless you plan to climb a peak on the way. However formal training in mountaineering and climbing is a great help. Familiarity with first-aid and survival techniques is another asset. Most of the treks are easy for those used to walking long distances. But there are several trails that can be attempted by the beginners also. All these are very beautiful and present limitless charm. The effort is worth the difficulties encountered on the way.

Most of the treks across Dhauladhar either originate or culminate in Chamba or Kangra depending upon your starting point. Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal run almost parallel to each other. Chamba valley lies between these two ranges. Trekkers can cross Dhauladhar to enter Bharmour region in Chamba and then continue their journey into Lahaul & Spiti across several difficult, high altitude passes. Kullu valley is another starting point for treks that lead to Lahaul & Spiti region. From Lahaul many trails lead to Zaskar and Leh whereas one can enter Kinnaur from Spiti. There are trek routes leading to Leh from Spiti also. One trail across Parang la (5580 m) in Spiti takes you to Tso Moriri, twenty-four kilometres long lake.

One can trek to beautiful Sangla valley in Kinnaur from Rohru in Shimla district. Another trek leads to Dodra Kwar over Chanshal pass and one can go to Kinnaur over mighty Rupin pass. There are several trails that lead to Sirmaur region from interiors of Shimla district.

Apart from deep wide and open valleys and high passes there are several lakes in high hills of Himachal. Local people revere most of these lakes located in glacial depressions. These are considered sacred and annual fair is held at most of these. Dhauladhar has several lakes

located at high altitudes. The region above Dharamsala is called the area of seven lakes. Lam Dal (Long Lake) at an elevation of 3900 m is the largest in the region and has circumference of roughly two kilometres. This very beautiful lake can be approached from Dharamsala side by crossing Minkiani or Gaj pass. Alternatively one can climb up the valley from Dunali or Dharbala in Chamba district. This ascent does not involve crossing of pass. Other prominent lakes are Nag Dal (Snake Lake), Kali Dal (Lake of Goddess Kali), Chander Koop (Moon Lake).

Chandar Tal and Suraj Tal lakes in Lahaul district must be visited. The approach to these two lakes is comparatively easier than most other lakes. Beas Kund, Dashohar and Bhrigu lakes are located near Solang *nallah* and Rohtang pass in Manali.

Manimahesh and Ghadasru lakes in Chamba, Neelkanth Mahadev in Lahaul, Nako in Kinnaur, Parashar in Mandi, Dehnasar in Chhota Bhangal region of Kangra and Renuka in Sirmaur are other prominent lakes in the state. In addition to these there are several other small and big lakes tucked deep in the Himalaya.

Trekking Season

Generally the trekking season in Himachal is from May to October. It depends upon snowfall in winters. If there is less snowfall in winters high mountain passes are clear of snow even in May and can be crossed till fresh snowfall in October or November, though it is much more difficult to cross these passes in November due to sharp drop in temperature.

Climatically the state has three broad regions. The valleys of Kangra, Kullu, Shimla, Karsog, Mandi and other areas south of Dhauladhar receive good amount of rain in monsoons. These regions are best for trekking before and after monsoon months. May to June and September to October are ideal. The region between Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal can also be trekked during the same period. There is very little rain in Spiti, Lahaul and region beyond these valleys during monsoons. These regions are cold deserts.

Though spring starts in mid-March, high passes are not clear of snow till early June. At times late snow disrupts trekking schedules and blocks access to valleys across the passes. However during this period short treks can be undertaken all over the state.

Monsoons in July and August disturb trekking itineraries but most of the pilgrimages called *yatra* or *jattar* are undertaken in these months. Shrikhand Mahadev in Kullu, Manimahesh and Lam Dal lakes in Chamba, Kinner Kailash Parikrama in Kinnaur and other religious journeys are made in these months.

From mid-June to October it is possible to cross Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal to enter upper Ravi valley and Pangi and Lahaul regions.

Autumn months of September and October are best for trekking as the rains are over and passes are without snow. One can trek throughout the state in these months. Trekking time after October depends on snowfall. In case the snow is not heavy passes like Rohtang, Sach and Inderhara are open till December though it is risky to cross these so late. Many times there is heavy snowfall and the passes get closed early.

It is possible to trek within valleys in winters also. Kinnaur, Spiti, upper Ravi valley and Kullu are accessible in winter months. Trekkers experienced in snow-walking can explore these regions in winters also. One must however be very well prepared to counter the winter chill and snow as minimum temperature drops to minus twenty to thirty degrees centigrade in Spiti.

Apart from trekking, Himachal is an ideal state to study flora and fauna of the Himalaya. There is an increasing interest in the study of wild flowers and wildlife. Forest department of the state is developing and promoting the concept of eco-tourism in collaboration with tourism department. Nature walks are being designed for walkers interested in biodiversity of the Himalaya.

Administrative Set up

Himachal Pradesh is divided into twelve districts. Each district is further divided into sub-divisions. Administratively an officer of Indian Administrative Service called the District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner heads each district. He is popularly known as the D.C. His counterpart in police is called the Superintendent of Police or S.P. In case of any emergency D.C. or S.P. can be approached for help.

The D.C. is assisted by Additional District Magistrate, Additional Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner at the district level. Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Tehsildars are field officers. Lowest level functionaries are known as Patwaris. In police, Additional

Superintendent of Police (A.S.P.) and Deputy Superintendent of Police (D.S.P.) assist the S.P. In the sub-divisions there is Deputy Superintendent of Police who controls certain police stations and police posts. Officer-in-charge of a police station is known as Station House Officer (S.H.O.).

Reaching Himachal

By Road

Almost each and every part of the state is linked by roads. Regular buses are available within the state to reach various destinations. The Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC) runs services to all parts of the state including the interior regions. It also runs deluxe and semi-deluxe buses on many routes within the state as well as to other states. Private tour operators also ply regular bus service to main tourist destinations from Delhi and within the state. Bus service is generally reliable and dependable. For road distances please see appendix 3.

By Rail

Himachal is not very well connected by trains. There are only two narrow gauge railway lines which connect:

Kalka to Shimla (96 kms)—From Kalka there are direct trains to Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and other parts of India. The rail journey from Kalka to Shimla is interesting and engaging and may be preferred if one has time. Alternatively one can take a bus or a taxi from Kalka which takes about three to four hours to reach Shimla.

Pathankot to Jogindernagar (113 kms)—All trains going to Jammu pass through Pathankot. There are direct trains to Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and other parts of India. If the starting point of treks is Dharamsala then it is better to take overnight train from Delhi to Pathankot. The journey from Pathankot to Dharamsala is three to four hours by bus or taxi. One can also take a bus to Chamba from Pathankot that takes five to six hours.

The Northern Railways has computerised reservation counters at Shimla and Mandi for booking throughout India.

By Air

There are three airports in Himachal. These are Jubbar Hatti (23 kms from Shimla); Bhuntar (10 kms from Kullu and 50 kms from Manali); and Gaggal (15 kms from Dharamsala and 25 kms from McLeodganj). There are direct flights to these airports from Delhi.

Accommodation

Besides private hotels and guest houses, government circuit houses, rest houses and guest houses exist in almost all the districts and subdivisions. These belong mainly to the Public Works Department, Irrigation and Public Health Department or Forest Department. Forest rest houses are located in far off places at beautiful locations. Executive Engineers of Public Works Department and Irrigation and Public Health Department, and Divisional Forest Officers who head respective divisions where rest houses are located do the bookings. The Deputy Commissioner does booking for the circuit houses.

Though private accommodation is easily available in main towns, government rest houses and private hotels may be the best places to stay in remote villages. List of Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) hotels is given in appendix 4.

Tourist Offices

Tourism Department of Himachal Pradesh Government and the state-run Tourism Development Corporation offer services to tourists at their offices within the state and at various other places in India. These can be contacted at:

The Director
Tourism & Civil Aviation
SDA Complex, Block-28, Kasumpti
Shimla - 171009
Phones: 0177-2625864

Managing Director
Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC)
Ritz Annexe
Shimla - 171001
Phones: 0177-2658880

For complete list of addresses of Himachal Tourism's offices please see appendix 5. Tourist information is also available on the website of the state government: www.himachaltourism.nic.in

Travel Agencies

Several registered travel agents based in Delhi, Shimla, Manali and Dharamsala organize treks. They take care of camping, food, guides and related details. Rates are generally negotiable, therefore, it is better to crosscheck and verify from more than one agency. Rates vary depending upon the kind of services asked for. Complete package including everything you need on trail costs much more than hiring only a guide and equipment. The trade off is between facilities offered and money involved. Directorate of Mountaineering & Allied Sports at Manali with its branches at Dharamsala, Bharmour in Chamba, Jispa in Lahaul, Narkanda in Shimla is a good place to seek directions regarding good and reliable trek operators.

Alternatively you can plan and organize trekking trip on your own. In case you are travelling in a group it is easier and cheaper to travel without taking the help of a travel agent but it may not be a safer option. An experienced guide is needed on many treks who is a great help when it comes to staying on the right trail. Porters and guides can be hired in the town or village from where trek starts. Government officers posted in that area, local shopkeepers in the market, owner of the lodge or *chowkidar* of the rest house where you stay for the night can be contacted for information. Generally they are all willing to help. At times they will even bargain for you.

Telecommunication

Himachal has a reasonably good network of telephone lines all over the state. Public Call booths (PCOs) and STD/ISD booths are available everywhere. Mobile and wireless in local loop (WLL) services are also available in many parts of the state. Facilities have improved over past few years, thanks to the telecommunication revolution going on in the country. One may have difficulty in connecting long distance calls from small towns at peak hours but it is possible to connect anywhere in the world without much wait. Internet facilities are also available at many places. Postal services are also reliable and good. Private courier service operates from all important towns in the state.

Inner Line Permits

Indians visiting the interior areas of Himachal do not need any permit to travel. However it is advisable to have an identity card handy in case of rare emergency. Foreign visitors need permit for entering certain areas. Inner line permits can be obtained from following offices.

Delhi

Resident Commissioner of H.P. (011-23676574)

Shimla

Deputy Commissioner (0177-2653535)

Additional District Magistrate (0177-2657005)

Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Urban (0177-2657007)

Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Rural (0177-2657009)

Kinnaur

Deputy Commissioner, Rekong Peo (01786-222252)

Additional District Magistrate, Pooh (01786-232222)

Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Rekong Peo (01786-222253)

Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Nichar (01786-22530)

Kullu

Deputy Commissioner, Kullu (01902-222727)

Additional District Magistrate, Kullu (01902-222226)

Lahaul & Spiti

Deputy Commissioner, Keylong (01900-222501)

Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Keylong (01900-222225)

Kaza

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kaza (01906-222202)

Rampur

Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Rampur, Shimla (01782-233002)

Altitude and Distances

Maps of Survey of India and State Gazetteers have been taken as reference for the altitude of the peaks, passes and other prominent destinations. The altitudes of other lesser known places covered in the book are based on personal approximations, comparisons and consultation with maps and judgements by other travellers. There may be slight variations in different books on trekking as far as altitudes are concerned. Distances given in most of the trails are also result of personal approximations and confirmation by fellow trekkers.

The maps of Survey of India have also been consulted as reference to get at the exact distance between two places.

It is important to note that while trekking the distances that appear to the eye may not be correct. Besides the individual judgement about the length of the trek depends upon fatigue, mood, weather and state of fitness. Moreover one person will give different distances between two places at different times.

There is difference in assessment of same trek by locals and trekkers visiting from outside. Terms like very near, far, steep, difficult and easy are subjective. Therefore general description can be different depending upon the person concerned. The book tries to reduce this subjectivity by confirming the time taken between two places from various persons.

Generally one person travelling with a backpack weighing one-fifth or one-fourth of the body weight treks two to three kilometres on an average while climbing up. Weather, kind of terrain, gradient of trek and altitude are important factors as far as speed is concerned. Then there is individual's own body strength that determines fast and slow speed for him or her. One must not tax oneself beyond the point where it becomes a burden to walk. Trekking is for enjoying not for rushing and making records. There is no need to prove any point to anybody. One must adjust to the speed that is easy to manage but this does not mean that one should walk as slow as one can. The destination is important and one must be at the next camping place much before dark. Time is needed to find suitable place to halt and to establish camp.

Golden rule is to start early in the morning. One must start at the day break no matter what the distance is. This is more important when one is ascending the pass. As a rule last leg of journey from the base of pass to the camping ground across the pass must be started at about 5 a.m. In many cases trekkers have to start even earlier. The rule applies to almost all passes except low-lying passes like Jalsu or Baleni. But in these also one should not delay the start.

Important Terms

A mountain pass is locally called *jot* or *la*. In Kangra and Chamba it is called *jot* or *gala*. Low passes are called *jotnu* or *galu*. In Lahaul & Spiti region a pass is called *la*. A camping ground is known as *got*

or *goth*. This is a term used by Gaddis. The base camp at the foot of the pass on both sides is invariably termed *alyas* (*lhais*). And a ridge is known as *dhar*. *Lhai* means a crevasse while *dharam lhai* is the one that has no record of fatal accidents. In Kangra and Chamba the prevalent term for a lake, tarn or pond is *dal* while in Kullu it is *sar*. Thus we have Lam Dal, Manimahesh Dal, Ghadasru Dal, Saryol Sar and Dehnasar.

Gaddis and other shepherd travellers have a distinctive way to mark directions on the trek leading to the pass and on other wilderness treks. They erect a pile of stones at prominent places called *shi* or *shia*. These are wonderful guides that help in finding and staying on the trail. However these are not on exact routes always and are not to be followed blindly. They are only to guide and to direct the trekkers about the route in general. Particularly on the ridgelines they are placed at several prominent places so that the trekkers can guess the directions from miles below. On ridges leading to the pass or on the main ridge where the pass lies, usually there are several *shias* on either side of the pass. They guide the trekkers to stay in between the extreme *shias* on both sides.

In Kullu region the campsites in pastures are known by the name of *thatch* such as Bakkar Thatch, Pando Seo Thatch, Phulan Thatch. *Chikka* is a place where one can camp. It also means the area with bears around.

Food and Fitness

First rule for anyone interested in trekking in the Himalaya is that one must be in good physical and mental condition. Good food is essential part of trekking and here good does not mean costly delicacies but wholesome and nutritious diet. Choice of food is limited once you leave the town and head for wilderness. In many villages there is no *dhaba* and the trekkers have to be on their own.

However, freshly cooked food has no substitute as tinned food loses taste after some time. Ready-to-eat food packets are not available in most of the state so far. Roadside *dhabas* or small hotels in towns and villages offer simple but wholesome food. Rice and *dal* (pulses), *chapati* and seasonal vegetables are the best choice. *Paranths* or *aloo-puri* is ideal for breakfast. Basic dry rations like rice, flour, sugar, pulses, powder milk, tea leaves and vegetable oil (*ghee*) are available in most of the village shops. Trekkers should carry dry fruits, sweets, choco-

lates, soup packets (cubes), coffee powder, biscuits, butter, cheese, noodles etc. from the town markets.

Trekking in the Himalayan regions means that one must be fit physically and mentally to undertake the ordeal. In case of a feeling of uneasiness or minor illness it is better to delay the trip as medical facilities may not be available in the interior areas. Though there is a vast network of primary health centres and community health centres in the state, many times doctors do not join their services in far-flung places and these centres remain without a medical officer. Elementary medicines may be available in far off places but it is better to be self-sufficient as far as medicines and first-aid is concerned. In case of emergencies one should contact local administration.

Travel Tips

- Foreigners who wish to overstay should contact the nearest Foreigner's Regional Registration office.
- If driving, carry essential spares and extra fuel. Unleaded petrol is available at select stations. A sturdy vehicle (jeep or gypsy) is suggested. While planning, check on general road conditions and confirm if high passes are open to traffic.
- Himachal has an enormous range of weather conditions. Do check the type of clothing and other equipment you may require for the region you are visiting.
- In main towns, the rates of porters etc. are fixed. For hiring porters, mules etc. for treks these are negotiable. Contact the nearest office of the Department of Tourism for help.
- For electrical appliances, 220V voltage is standard in Himachal.
- For sightseeing and excursion, contact nearest tourism office or government approved travel agents.
- Some monuments and buildings require permission for photography and filming. Contact the concerned District Administration for guidance and assistance.
- Change money only at authorised banks, hotels or outlets. Always insist on receipt for money changed.
- In case of any emergency, loss of document, etc, contact the nearest police station or the tourism office.

- Dispose all litter carefully. The use of plastic bags is banned in Himachal.
- Keep your valuables in hotel lockers or safe deposit vaults.
- For medical assistance, contact nearest govt. hospital, dispensary or accredited clinic/nursing home/hospital, or your hotel.
- Observe and follow local tradition and customs, specially when visiting religious places.
- Smoking is not allowed in public places.
- For guide maps and information, contact Himachal Tourism office.

Dont's

- Do not leave non-biodegradable material behind.
- Do not get lured by touts, guides, taxi drivers or strangers. Let the Department of Tourism help you.
- Do not buy antiques to carry overseas. The export of such articles is banned.
- Do not disfigure or scribble over rocks, trees or buildings, etc.

General Preparedness

Outdoor adventure activities such as walking, trekking, mountaineering, hiking involve some amount of risk. This risk must be accepted by every one on an outdoor trip. One must be ready for emergencies at all times. Prevention is the best insurance in wilderness. Being cautious, timely assessment of risk and being prepared are some of the elementary rules for survival. To remain cool in difficult times is the biggest test for wilderness lovers. Panic reaction and thoughtless action causes more troubles.

The will power to survive against every odd makes all the difference in crisis situations that may be minor and routine difficulties or a question of life and death. Formal training in basic first-aid, survival skills and proper knowledge of these areas are essential for those interested in trekking.

A number of items are a must for all excursion trips, as these are the keys to survival in the wild. Though there is consensus on the bare minimum list of essentials among almost all the professional climbers and trekkers, the list can be expanded depending on the kind of trip being undertaken. Extra food and clothing, over and above what is being taken as necessary, is also required for forced halts and inclement weather. One must have enough supplies but the weight of the pack should also be manageable.

One must be clear on what is needed for the trip and what can be left. Many times trekkers pack extra things for safety, forced halt, injury or inclement weather. However choice is crucial as extra weight becomes heavy burden and hindrance. It slows down speed making forced night-halt and getting caught in storm or walking in dark much more likely. On the other hand taking too little is as dangerous as taking too much.

Items must be limited to those that are needed to keep one safe, dry, comfortable and fed. Much of this sense comes after experience of many trips. Each trip is a learning experience. It tells what was used, what could be used and what was uselessly carried. Some items are always needed as a margin of safety while others can be avoided.

When purchasing equipment lightweight alternatives must be preferred as a rule without compromising on quality.

Experienced trekkers have, after countless trips and personal experiences, listed certain items that are essential companions. These have come to be called The Ten Essentials.

The Ten Essentials

1. *Flashlight*: Hand-held flashlights (torches) are important. Water-resistant torches are still better. The flashlights that are needed to be rotated half turn to switch on are also good. Make sure to carry spare batteries and bulbs on longer trips.

2. *Map*: Carry a detailed topographical map of the area one is visiting, in plastic covering.

3. *Compass*: A compass is essential tool of navigation and route finding.

4. *Food for Emergency*: A day's supply of extra food is needed in case of emergency, which should be lightweight and easy to digest. Biscuits, dry fruits such as almonds, cashew nuts, groundnuts, raisins, chocolates are ideal as emergency food.

5. *Extra Clothing*: Depending upon the trip, the place and the season it is you who have to decide what would be needed to survive the worst conditions that might be encountered realistically. Extra innerwear is valuable as next to skin layer gets soaked due to perspiration after a long strenuous climb. It is essential to get rid of this wet layer before putting on thicker insulation of sweater or jacket in the evening. A thick hat or woollen balaclava cap would retain much heat in the body. For trips to high altitude, another layer of very lightweight thin synthetic or woollen innerwear may be needed.

6. *Goggles/Sunglasses*: Eyes are prone to damage by ultraviolet rays that are estimated to have fifty percent more effect on eyes at an altitude of 10,000 feet than at sea level. On clear days, sky in mountains is brilliant blue, and sunshine and light reflecting off snow is harmful. Snow blindness can occur easily if the eyes are not

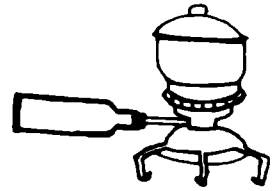
protected, hence sunglasses are a must. While selecting goggles if you can see your eyes, the lenses are too light. The frames of sunglasses should have side shields that reduce light reaching the eyes, yet allowing adequate ventilation to prevent fogging.

7. *First-Aid Kit*: First-aid kit should be small, compact and wrapped in waterproof packaging. It should include basic medicines, band-aids, tapes, soap, scissors, gauze pads, bandages, crapes, glucose, oral rehydration salts.

8. *Pocket Knife/Swiss Knife*: A knife is a multipurpose tool. It is required for food preparation, fire building, first-aid and even rock climbing. Such knives have at least two blades, a can-opener, combination screwdriver and bottle-opener, scissors. A cord attached to the knife and secured to belt allows it to be kept in the pocket for ready access without the danger of losing it.

9. *Match Box*: An emergency supply of matchbox packed in a watertight container must be carried on all trips in addition to the lighter.

10. *Fire Starter*: Fire starters are indispensable for igniting wet wood or starting a fire quickly in an emergency. They can even be used to warm a cup of soup or water, if you have a metal cup to heat it in. Common fire starters are candles or solid chemical fuel.



Other Essentials

Apart from these ten essentials other important items include the following:

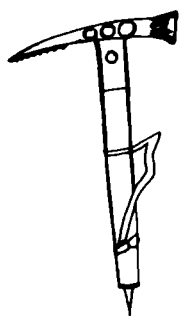
1. *Water Bottles/Pouches*: Water bottles are a must as there is no water higher up in the mountains in many trails or the water sources are few and far between. A variety of water bottles and pouches are available in the market to choose from. Often one has to walk long distances before reaching a water source. Though the water is generally potable yet people can use water purification measures. Tablets of iodine or chlorine are most commonly used for purifying water. Some people prefer boiling water along with chemical treatment. Water filters are another option.

2. *Sunburn Lotion/Cream*: Sunlight at high altitudes has a burning capacity far more than at sea level. Sunburn can not only be a threat

to comfort but also to health. Amount of protection needed for skin varies from individual to individual. Most sunscreens use p-amino benzoic acid (PABA). Reapply the sunscreen occasionally if you perspire a lot.

3. *Insect Repellent*: One must take precaution against insects—mosquitoes, biting flies and ticks as per requirement. Covering the body with clothes is the best practical method. In hot weather insect repellent is a welcome replacement of clothes and there is no harm in carrying a bottle.

4. *Repair Kit*: Small repair kit consisting of wire, tape, safety pins, thread and needles and string is a good idea to carry.



5. *Walking Stick/Ice Axe*: A sturdy walking stick of proper length is essential on longer trails particularly those involving steep ascents and descents. It is of great use while crossing streams and walking on scree or loose soil. It also helps in keeping dogs and other animals at bay. At higher altitude ice axe is indispensable for snowfields, glaciers and snow-covered trails.

Checklist of Equipments

All seasoned hikers and trekkers keep a list of essential and important items so as to avoid missing anything in hurry at the time of packing. Items needed for a trip depend on the type of terrain, kind of trail, number of days involved, time of the year and number of persons.

A. *The Ten Essentials (mentioned above)*

B. *Clothing*

Pants; Shirt; Sweater; Innerwear; Boots; Socks: inner and outer; Poncho/water resistant windcheater; Hat and Cap; Gloves; Wind/rain pants.

C. *Some Other Items*

Sleeping bag (with inner); Ground sheet; Water bottle/purification tablets; Toiletries; Camera (with extra film and batteries); Watch; Transistor; Whistle; Walking stick; Ice axe.

D. *Group Items*

Tent; Repair kit; Food and cooking accessories; Stove, fuel and accessories; Pots; Binoculars; Altimeter.

E. *Additional Gear for Snow, Glacier Climbs and Winter Treks*

Additional warm clothing; Snow goggles; Snow shoes; Gaiters; Snow shovel; Crampons; Carabiners; Slings; Seat harness; Climbing rope; Rescue pulley.

F. *Checklist of First-Aid Kit*

Tablets for: Fever; Nausea; Vomiting; Headache; Sprain; Inflammation; Anxiety; Sleeplessness; Body pains; Pain abdomen; Loose motions; Constipation.

Antiseptic lotion; Antibiotic tablets; Bandages; Dressing; Tape; Gauzes; Sunscreen; Disposable syringes; ORS; Glucose; Sprays and Gels; Safety pins; Thermometer; Water purification tablets.

Some Important Tips

1. Mental and physical fitness is important.
2. Take first-aid courses and learn cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Study wilderness survival books. Talk to trekkers, climbers and walkers besides medicos and other professionals.
3. Choose your partners wisely. They should have skills and mental and physical conditioning similar to yours.
4. Plan your route and leave it with someone. Allow for changes in plan due to route or weather conditions. Stay on established trails.
5. Be prepared to abandon the trip if weather, trail or other conditions are not safe, and watch and re-evaluate continuously weather conditions.
6. Stay within your skill limits and do not take unnecessary risks.
7. Take regular breaks and stay hydrated and nourished.
8. Make sure your equipment is working; repair and replace parts if needed. Change batteries in electronics. Replace first-aid and survival kit components that are outdated. Keep your clothes dry.
9. For safety never be afraid to alter the route, cut the trip short or to turn back.
10. Camp on established campsites wherever available. Do not camp on fragile meadows. Camp on snow or rock when away from established campsites.
11. Use a camp stove instead of building a fire

12. Dispose off human waste away from water, trails and campsites properly.
13. Wash away from camps and water sources. Dispose off waste water properly.
14. Leave flowers, rocks and other natural features undisturbed
15. Keep wildlife healthy and self-reliant by not feeding them.

Accidents and Rescue

Most common causes of accidents in trekking reported world over are: fall or slip on rock, slip on snow or ice, falling rock, boulder or stone. Most of the times negligence, carelessness and casual attitude cause accidents. Leadership and discipline are key elements of success in rescue. It is essential to select a leader to take charge of emergency. The leader should consider suggestions from other members of the party but his or her decisions must be accepted without arguments.

First of all help injured person immediately but move carefully to avoid further harm. On difficult terrain dispatch only one or two rescuers. Stay calm, frenzied activity only complicates the rescue and makes the situation worse.

Urgent first-aid should include stopping the bleeding, restoring breathing, relieving shock, immobilizing fractures. If it becomes necessary to move the victim to another spot, use methods that will not compound the injuries.

After initial demands of safety and first-aid are met the leader and the party must sit down and plan. Everything must be thought out to the very end, including what each person is to do under the circumstances. It is better to have a correct action than a swift one. Short-sightedness and hasty decision can be more harmful and ineffective.

Mountain Sickness

Acute mountain sickness varies in different parts of the world. Differences in mode of ascent, rate of ascent, level of exertion once on foot, absolute altitude reached, cold exposure, risk of dehydration etc. will all interplay in the development of acute mountain sickness. Anyone proceeding to high altitude is at risk of developing acute mountain sickness. Some individuals are inherently more susceptible, for reasons that are not understood. Others are rather resistant.

High altitude is arbitrarily defined as altitude greater than 3000 m (10,000 feet). People with heart and lung diseases may have difficulty at lower altitudes and, rarely, a healthy person will develop some form of mountain sickness as low as 2500 m (8200 feet). Most commonly acute mountain sickness is seen above 3000 m.

The spectrum of illnesses observed at high altitude include acute mountain sickness (AMS), high altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE), and high altitude cerebral edema (HACE or just CE). The three categories overlap considerably and dividing lines are necessarily arbitrary.

Types of Mountain Sickness

1. Mild Acute Mountain Sickness

In case of this sickness symptoms are more of a nuisance than a threatening illness. For example a mild headache, some insomnia and anorexia and shortness of breath when exercising. Most people with mild acute mountain sickness are able to continue their ascent, however it should be taken as a warning that one needs more time to acclimatise. It is best to stop and spend an extra day or night acclimatizing.

2. Moderate Acute Mountain Sickness

Where symptoms reach a point when one is quite uncomfortable and uneasy. The headache is severe. In addition there is often lassitude, weakness, loss of appetite with perhaps nausea and difficulty with coordination. There may be some breathlessness at rest.

The urine output is reduced. Persons with moderate mountain sickness must stop ascending. Although one may be strong enough to continue, judgement and coordination are often impaired and rugged terrain becomes hazardous to the sick person as well as to his companions. If descent is done early in the course of moderate acute mountain sickness, re-ascent after the recovery in two or three days is possible. If for some reason the descent is impractical or impossible, oxygen, if available, should be administered.

3. Severe Acute Mountain Sickness

There is essentially the presence of fulminant pulmonary edema and/or cerebral edema. This category obviously overlaps with moderate acute mountain sickness. Headache, vomiting, ataxia, lassitude and

reduced urine output dominate the clinical picture. In as many as two-thirds of cases there is also evidence of fluid in the chest and some pulmonary symptoms such as breathlessness or cough. A victim is sometimes completely disoriented and confused. There may be hallucinations. He may lie quietly not getting up for the meals, not speaking, not even going out to pass urine or have a bowel movement.

Descent is the only definitive therapy. It should be done as rapidly as possible and as down as possible. Taking someone down in the middle of night instead of waiting until morning may save a life or prevent long term brain damage.

Symptoms and Treatment

1. Headache

Headache is one of the most common single symptom. In a study of 200 trekkers at Pheriche (Hackett and Rennie, 1978), 65 percent reported headaches. It can vary from a minor nuisance to a severe pain. A mild headache that comes on after a hard day's walking can also be due to exertion or sun, or heat or cold, rather than altitude. This kind of headache usually disappears with a rest, a cup of tea or coffee, or disprin. It invariably disappears with a night's sleep. The morning, on awakening, is a good time to judge symptoms from a viewpoint of acute mountain sickness. A headache that develops during the night and is present on waking is probably due to altitude and should be taken more seriously.

If there are no other symptoms of mountain sickness and the person continues to ascend there will usually be other symptoms shortly. A severe headache in itself may cause nausea and even vomiting. Such a headache, even if a solitary symptom, should be an indication to stop ascending and to descend if it is still present after a second night at the same altitude. Sometimes climbers notice a headache as they descent. This may be due to altitude (delayed in onset because of a lag period) or exertion.

2. Insomnia

Insomnia is the inability to sleep. Seven to eight hours sleep is a must if not more. Altitude insomnia is characterized by difficulty in falling asleep and frequent waking during the night, all of which result in a lack of adequate sleep and a tired feeling in the morning. It is most noticeable the first week at altitude and improves during

the second week. If it interferes with daytime functioning and treatment is necessary and a mild sleeping medication may be needed. All sleeping medication should be used with caution at altitude. At extreme altitude oxygen is helpful.

3. *Periodic Breathing*

Irregular breathing is a common complaint at altitude above 3000 metres. It is almost always noticed at night often by the person's tent mate or camp mate. It is characterised by what is called periodic breathing. Typically there are four breaths or so and then no breathing at all for as long as ten or fifteen seconds. The pattern then repeats and can go on for hours at a time. The longer the period of no breathing (apnea) the more likely it is the person will awaken usually to panic because he notices that he is not breathing.

4. *Pulmonary Symptoms*

Cough can be dry or wet. The cold, dry air of the mountains in itself is irritating and can cause a deep, hacking cough, especially on exertion. The mucous membranes of the throat become very dry and cause an irritating, tickling sensation that makes one cough. Throat lozenges or hard toffees and adequate hydration usually help in such a case. A frequent cough in association with severe breathlessness on exertion or even mild breathlessness at rest as compared to one's companions should alert one to the possibility of high altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE). A feeling of fullness in chest is described by persons with congested lungs that is early pulmonary edema.

5. *Gastrointestinal Symptoms*

Loss of appetite (anorexia) is subjective but a symptom to be noted. As an isolated symptom it is important and can be due to a variety of things. In combination with headache, insomnia or other symptoms, it helps establish the diagnosis of acute mountain sickness. Rarely does a person with acute mountain sickness have a good appetite and the better the appetite at high altitude the better that person is acclimatizing. Prolonged anorexia can lead to a state of weakness and poor nutrition, which is aggravated by strenuous exercise. Nausea is quite common and usually subsides as the person becomes better acclimatized. In combination with diarrhoea and perhaps fever and chills it is usually gastroenteritis or dysentery, not acute mountain sickness.

6. *Fatigue*

Weariness, indifference, fatigue are often difficult to differentiate from exhaustion, but most easily done by its time course. Exhaustion will respond to a day or night of rest, fluids, food etc. Lassitude of altitude typically progresses over 24 to 48 hours. Sure symptoms of fatigue are when a person can not get up for meals, will not talk to anyone and refuses to drink sufficient fluids.

Prevention of Acute Mountain Sickness

Acute mountain sickness is better prevented than treated. Following things may be kept in mind while climbing.

1. *Liquid Intake*

Dry air of the mountains along with rigorous exercise and decrease in relative humidity of the cold lead to insensible fluid losses. One to two liters of water can be lost this way each day at moderate altitudes. It is much worse at extreme altitudes (greater than 6000 metres or 20,000 feet). Sweating also takes place more freely in dry air. It is essential to drink water to maintain balance of fluids. Best way to gauge dehydration is by monitoring urine output. Scant amounts of dark yellow urine indicate dehydration. The lighter the colour and more frequent the urination, the better the state of hydration.

The Himalayan Rescue Association has been recommending that all trekkers and climbers drink whatever amount is necessary to maintain a clear and copious urine. Indeed some of the symptoms of acute mountain sickness may be due to dehydration.

2. *Gradual Ascent*

Faster the rate of ascent the more likely one is to develop the symptoms of AMS. Some of the points to be taken into consideration are:

- Avoid flying or driving straight to high altitude. Start below 3000 metres and walk up. In case you can not do that, do not exert yourself or move higher for the first 24 hours.
- Once above 3000 metres, limit your net gain in sleep altitude to 300 metres per day (1000 feet).
- Carry high and sleep low. It is best to go a little higher than

the sleeping altitude, and then descend, instead of sleeping at the maximum altitude reached that day.

- Take an acclimatization night for every 1000 metres gain in elevation, starting at 3000 metres or so (thus every three days while still ascending). This means sleeping at the same altitude for two consecutive nights.

3. *Avoid Over-Exertion*

Do not over-exert at altitude. Load should be lighter than one's usual lower altitude load. Rest at intervals when moving up steep hills.

4. *High Carbohydrate Diet*

Higher blood oxygen levels are achieved during the first few days of altitude exposure with a diet of 70 to 80 percent carbohydrates. Such a diet reduces symptoms of acute mountain sickness. Also many expeditions and studies have reported that fatty foods become unappetising at altitudes above 5000 metres.

Surviving in Wilderness

Always be prepared for unwanted situations. After accident assess situation and make initial plan. Life-threatening situations must be dealt with. This may include rendering first-aid, initiating search or performing rescue. Above all safety of uninjured or unaffected persons is paramount. Do not risk additional injury.

Discuss with the partners, assess equipment and skills available, evaluate the supplies of food, water and clothing, evaluate mental and physical condition of everyone in the group. An important thing is to stay calm and avoid panic, anxiety, fear and guilt. It is better to have a leader. However it has to be a team work with mutual decisions. Prioritize the tasks right away.

Immediate priority should be given to evaluating and treating injuries, procuring water if supply is low, making sure that everyone has adequate, warm and dry clothing, and creating a evacuation plan, if necessary. Other priority tasks include finding your way if lost, following through with an evacuation plan, finding and building shelter, preparing for travel and using cell phones, if available. Lower priority tasks are all other tasks that can wait.

Plan for Evacuation and Help

There are basically three options after the accident has taken place. One is to continue with the trip, second is evacuating or staying put and third is getting help. In most survival situations you will have to abort the trip. However first you should decide weather to stay put or evacuate. A major injury may require the injured person to stay put while others go for help. In case you are caught in foul weather and become lost, it may be better to stay in one place until weather subsides. However, basic problems such as running out of food or water may require you to abandon the trip and go home.

Other factors to be considered when making a decision include:

- injuries sustained by the group members.
- time and distance needed for evacuation, condition of the route and feasibility of reversing it.
- time left until nightfall.
- available equipment and clothing, quantities of food and water.
- available materials for shelter.
- survival skills of the group members.
- current weather conditions and forecast.

In case you decide to abort the trip, do it quickly but safely. Do not take unnecessary risks. Do not risk injury. If necessary you may need to stay for the night and then evacuate in the morning. Be wary of the shortcuts, you can get lost easier if you are off the route. If you decide to stay put, begin procuring water and building a shelter. If needed gather firewood before dark. Organize your equipment.

An injured person has to be evacuated with caution. If the injured person can walk, it is safest and fast method of evacuation. In the group of two, if the injured person can not move you should go for help after leaving extra food, water, clothing, sleeping equipment and a cooking set with the injured person. Only trained persons should move the injured person with head or spine injury.

Getting Lost

Getting lost can be frightening and harrowing experience. In some cases you can reorient yourself quickly while other times it may just be a short backtrack to find your trail. However if you are totally lost keep the following points in your mind.

1. Keep your cool and do not panic.
2. Take a break for food (snack) and water.
3. Use your map, compass, and altimeter to locate your position and then plot your route.
4. In case of foggy weather proceed with extreme caution.

Setting Camp

The three important things in case of emergency survival as well as routine camping are water, shelter and fire.

1. *Water:* Camp at a point where water is easily available. Camping too near a water source is also not recommended as wild animals come to drink water at night. Best way is to procure sufficient water and then camp at suitable place at safe distance.

2. *Shelter:* Like procuring water, shelter is high priority area. Generally find shelter in a dry protected area such as a stand of heavy timber, a cave or a cliff base. If in the mountains, try to get below timberline to minimize exposure.

3. *Fire:* Fire has multipurpose functions. It is useful for warmth, cooking, boiling water and signaling. Gather dry wood, make a low impact fire pit by clearing away brush or use a dry riverbed. Find a sheltered area out of wind and rain. Once you are finished douse fire with water or dirt. Scatter cold wet ashes.

Health and Fitness

When trekking in the mountains you have to be your own doctor. Casualness towards health can even result in loss of life. You are the best judge on how fit you are feeling and if there is a problem what action should you take—either abort the trip or rest till condition improves. As far as health is concerned do not overestimate your strength. You may be in a group or trekking alone, accordingly decide on a plan.

You must always carry the first-aid kit the size of which will depend on the duration of the trip, your personal skill level, size of group and how far from help you expect to be.

Cold Injuries

In trekking in the mountains two most common cold injuries are Hypothermia and Frostbite.

1. Hypothermia

Hypothermia is lowering of body's inner core temperature (normal body temperature is 37 degrees Celsius or 98.6 F). It is important to immediately recognize hypothermia and reverse it. If you feel cold and are shivering, this is an early sign that should immediately be heeded. Treatment of hypothermia is similar to prevention. Hypothermia is of following three kinds.

Mild Hypothermia 35-33°C (95.0-91.4 F): Uncontrollable shivering. Cool pale skin. Stiff muscles. Slowing of pace. Fatigue and poor coordination, difficulty with completing tasks. Poor judgement, confusion, dizziness, sluggish speech, irritable mood, nausea, increased pulse and breathing rates.

Moderate Hypothermia 32-27°C (89.6-80.6 F): Shivering decreases, then stops. Decreased breathing and pulse rates. Shock develops. Gait is rigid and erratic or patient is unable to walk. Feeling of warmth. Thinking is unclear and patient becomes unconscious.

Severe Hypothermia Less than 26°C (78.8 F): Shock, unconsciousness. Cardiopulmonary arrest, low pulse and respiration. Skin turns blue and cold. Near death.

Body heat is lost due to following reasons:

1. *Respiration.* Heat escapes when warm, moist air is inhaled.
2. *Evaporation.* Evaporation of perspiration from the skin contributes greatly to the amount of heat lost by the body.
3. *Conduction.* Sitting on the snow and touching cold equipment are examples of how heat can be lost as a result of conduction via direct contact with cold objects.
4. *Convection.* The body continually warms a thin layer of air next to skin. If the air is removed by wind or currents, the body is cooled.

2. Frostbite

Freezing of tissues also known as frostbite most commonly affects fingers, toes, ears and face. It occurs when loss of heat is faster than it can be replaced by circulating blood or it may result from direct exposure to extreme cold or high wind as happens with nose, ears and hands. Damp feet may freeze because moisture conducts heat rapidly away from skin and decreases the insulating value of socks

and boots. With continued cold or inactivity blood circulation to the extremities is steadily reduced, accelerating the freezing process. Initially frostbite is red, painful, numb, swollen and white or grayish. Later the affected area is hard, cold and insensitive, blisters may form.





Treatment for frostbite is immersion in hot water, 40 degrees C (104 F) for rapid rewarming and should only be attempted by skilled persons. Rubbing skin, breaking blisters or putting the injured area close to fire is disastrous.

Preventive Measures for Cold Injuries

1. Use layers of clothes, including underlayer of fleece, put on extra outer layer and wind gear before you start shivering.
2. Use rain gear before you are wet. If you are wet change to dry clothes without delay.
3. Wear a hat, scarf, gloves, mitten and goggles.
4. Use comfortable good quality socks and boots.
5. Seek shelter from rain, wind and snow immediately.
6. Insulate yourself from ground using a sleeping pad or backpack and get in a sleeping bag.
7. Remain active to ensure adequate heat production and eat lot of carbohydrates.
8. Drink plenty of fluids including an electrolyte solution.
9. Build fire for warmth.

KANGRA-CHAMBA REGION



-  Town/Village
-  River
-  Pass
-  District Boundary

Map not to scale. Boundaries are approximate.

Treks in Kangra–Chamba Region

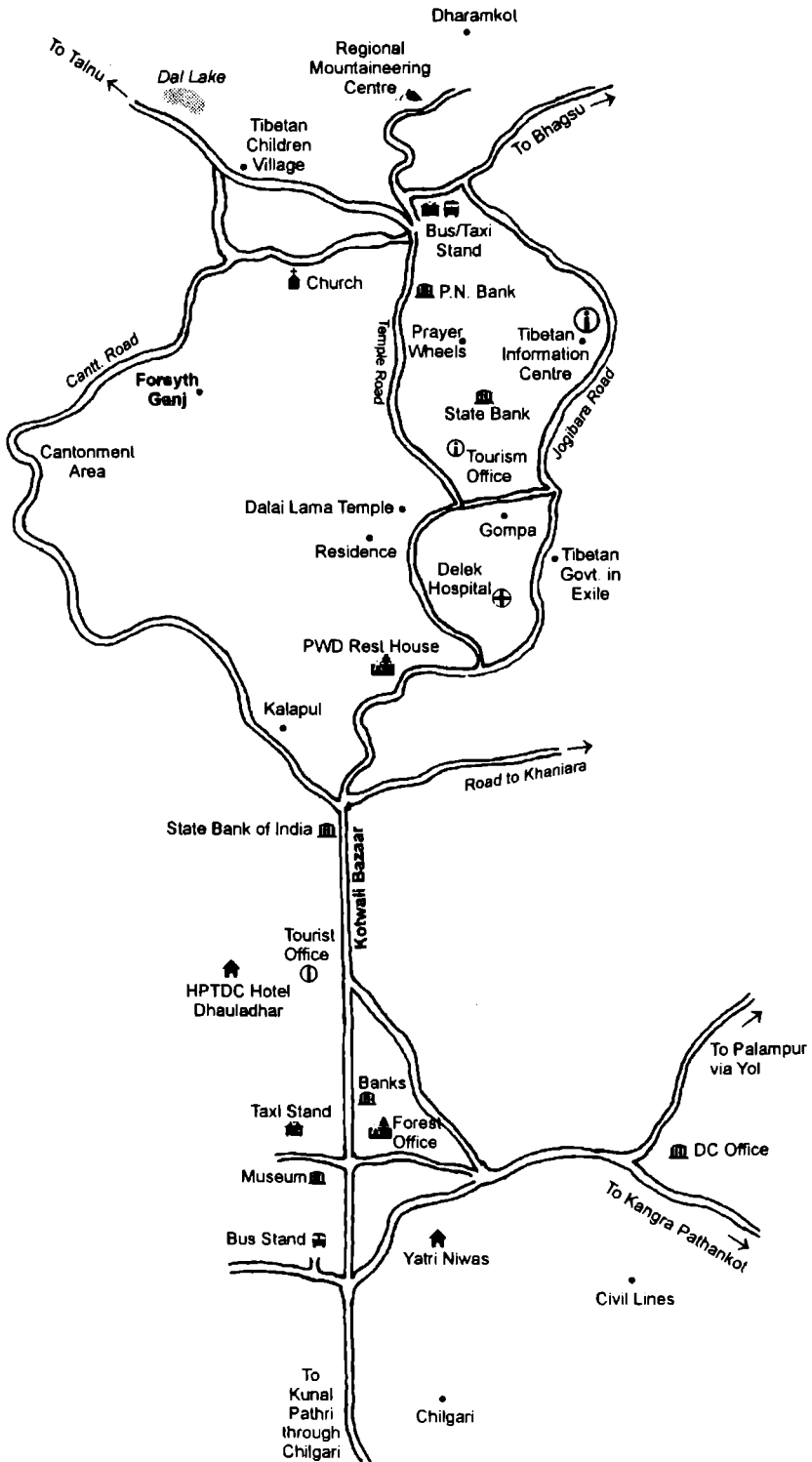
KANGRA

Kangra valley extends towards southeast roughly from Pathankot in Punjab to Mandi district. Pathankot–Manali national highway passes through the valley almost parallel to the Dhauladhar range. With the mighty Dhauladhar to the north and beautifully spread terraced fields, tea gardens and small sleepy villages on both sides the roads criss-crossing Kangra valley are a pleasure to travel on. Refreshing spirit of the valley brings both mind and body to life. Beas river flowing through Kullu district enters Kangra near Mandi and then meanders through the valley. Innumerable streams flow down the Dhauladhar slopes irrigating fertile plains of Kangra and bringing joy to the heart with their laughing sound.

Kangra—General Information

Area	: 5739 sq km (10.31% of total state area)
Headquarters	: Dharamsala
Climate	: Mild summers, cold winters
Population	: 13,38,536 persons
Density	: 233 persons per sq km
Sub-divisions	: 8
Main river	: Beas
Nearest Airport	: Gaggal (11 km from Dharamsala)
Nearest Railhead	: Kangra (17 km from Dharamsala)
Road Distances from Dharamsala	: Delhi 526 km; Chandigarh 239 km; Shimla 278 km; Manali 270 km; Pathankot 90 km; Palampur 40 km.

DHARAMSALA GUIDE MAP



Map not to scale.

Kangra valley as far as scenic beauty is concerned is a paradise on earth. Dharamsala, Kangra, Palampur and Baijnath are main towns in Kangra. Approach to the valley can be from Pathankot or Chandigarh. Nearest railway station on broad gauge is Pathankot. However narrow gauge train runs between Pathankot and Jogindernagar. Regular bus service is available from Pathankot or Chandigarh to various destinations in Kangra. Dharamsala (1280 m) is the district headquarters. McLeodganj (1860 m) located further up at a distance of 10 km by road can be called a separate town. It is the seat of the Dalai Lama and the headquarters of Tibetan Government in exile.

Temples at Jwalaji, Kangra, Baijnath, Kangra fort and rock-cut temples of Masroor are main attractions. Andretta, a small village near Palampur is worth a visit. Famous painter Sardar Sobha Singh and artist Nora Richard made it their home. Famous Kangra School of Painting flourished in this valley. Dal lake, Bhagsunag temple, Dharamkot village and Triund are other attractions.

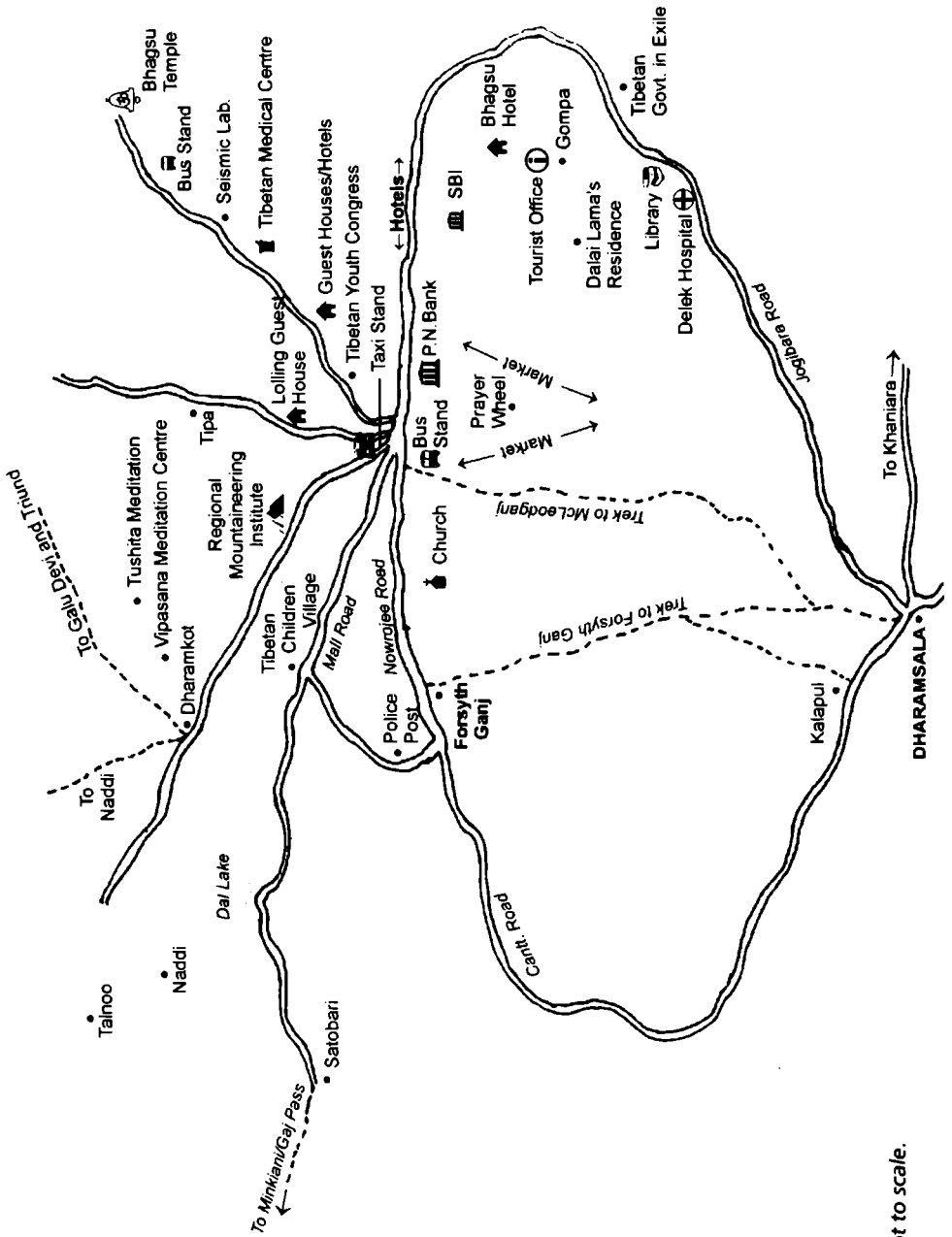
Dharamsala, with an average rainfall of 3400 mm, receives the highest rainfall in the state.


Dharamsala is connected by direct and regular bus service to Pathankot (90 km), Chandigarh (239 km), Delhi (526 km) and Shimla (278 km). Nearest airport is Gaggal in Kangra district, 11 kilometres away. The other airports are Jammu and Amritsar, 175 and 200 kilometres away respectively. Pathankot is the nearest railway station for the broad gauge trains. Narrow gauge train from Pathankot comes upto Kangra, 17 kilometres from Dharamsala.

Dharamsala is the starting point for most of the trails that lead the trekkers across Dhauladhar into the upper Ravi valley and Chamba district. There are many peaks in the Dhauladhar range overlooking Dharamsala. Prominent among these are: Dhauladhar Matterhorn or Gauri Junda (4850 m), Riflehorn (4500 m) and Mun Peak (4650 m). Climbing these requires technical skill and proper equipment.

The region that comprises present-day Kangra district was part of kingdom of Jalandhara or Trigarta in ancient times. Later the region was known as Nagarkot or Bhimkot. Alexander Cunningham records that the earliest references to the region are found in the works of Ptolemy, the Greek geographer. During Mohammedan invasions the foothills of Shivaliks were invaded by Mahmud of Ghazni in A.D. 1009 and later by Muhammad Tughlaq in A.D. 1337. Thereafter the

MCLEODGANJ GUIDE MAP



 Road
 Trek
 Map not to scale.

region was ruled by succession of local chiefs and *ranas* who were controlled by the Mughal rulers through their officers. Guler, Jaswan, Siba, Datarpur and Nurpur were other small states in the region but the most prominent and important was Kangra.

One of the important ruler was Sansar Chand (A.D. 1775). Kangra Painting School flourished during his time. Gorkhas defeated him and captured Kangra Fort. In A.D. 1809 the Sikhs occupied the fort.

Kangra came under the direct control of the British in 1846. They established Dharamsala like other hill stations during the Raj as a cantonment for troops stationed at Kangra. Dharamsala is located at latitude $32^{\circ} 15' 42''$ North and longitude $76^{\circ} 22' 46''$ East. Army moved in here in the year 1849 and in March 1855 it was recognised as the headquarters of Kangra district.

The European settlement higher up the slopes of a spur of Dhauladhar was named McLeodganj. One and a half kilometres away lies Forsythganj that has a church dating back to 1852, and a Tibetan settlement with Tibetan children school.

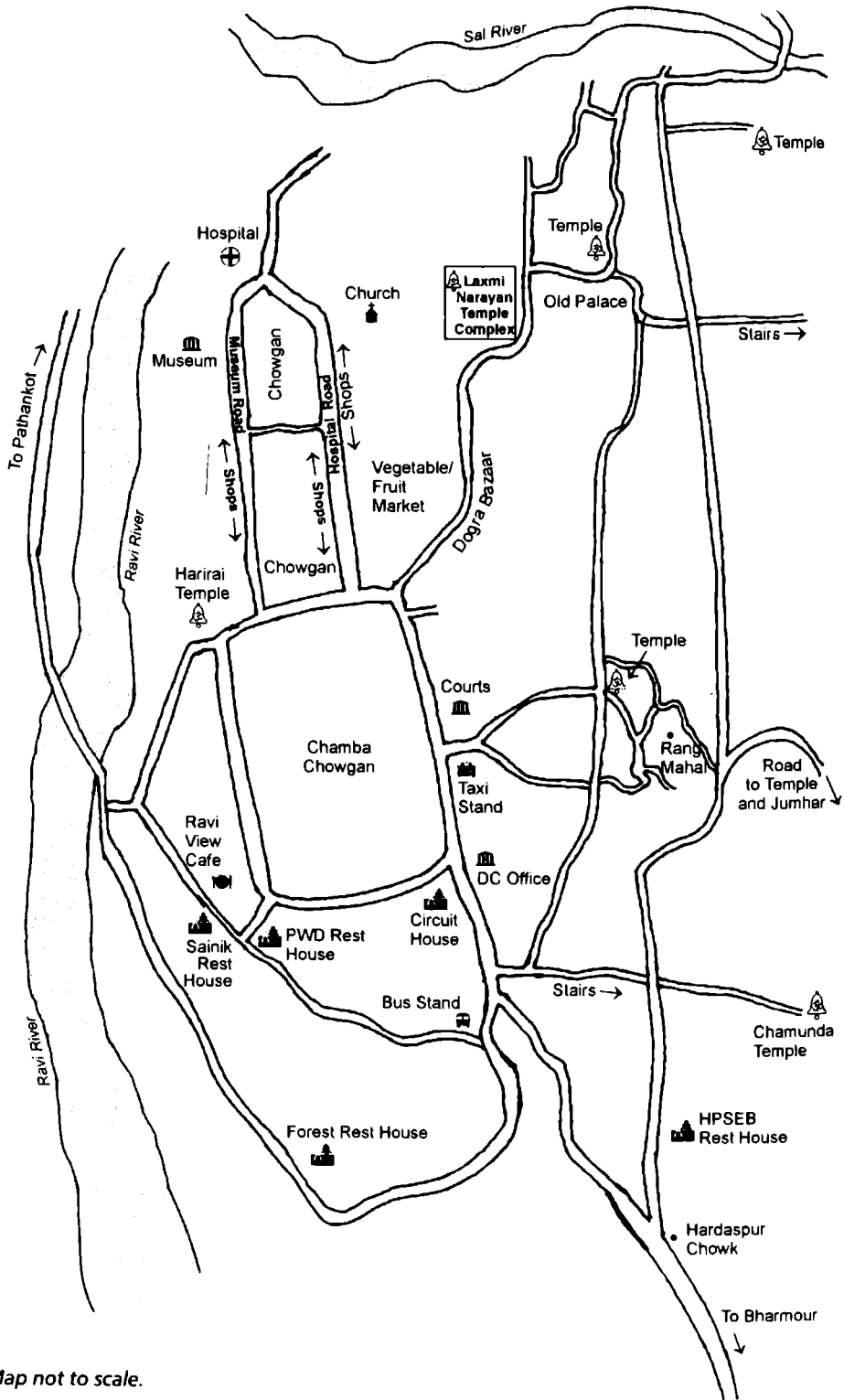
The Regional Mountaineering Center is located at McLeodganj. It conducts training courses in trekking, mountaineering and skiing. It also conducts trekking expeditions in Dhauladhar. Trained guides and porters can be hired from here.

CHAMBA

Chamba is an old, small, sleepy town resting on a plateau and a hill slope overhanging river Ravi. Pathankot, the nearest railhead from Chamba (996 m) is 122 km away and linked by direct trains from Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai and Amritsar. Frequent buses are available to Pathankot from Delhi and Chandigarh. There is regular bus service between Pathankot and Chamba.

Visitors come to Chamba via Dalhausie also. Located at an altitude of 2039 m this hill station was established by British Governor General Lord Dalhausie in 1854. Built around five hills it retains old charm even today. There are wonderful walks around the hills with thick growth of *deodar* and oak trees surrounding Dalhausie. Khajjiar (1851 m), Kalatop (2440 m), Dainkund (2745 m) are some of the places to be visited around Dalhausie. From Dalhausie one way to reach Chamba is via Khajjiar, a grassy meadow also known as mini Switzerland.

CHAMBA GUIDE MAP



Map not to scale.

Chamba—General Information

Area	: 6528 sq km (11.72% of total state area)
Headquarters	: Chamba
Climate	: Warm summers, moderately cold winters
Population	: 4,60,499 persons
Density	: 71 persons per sq km
Sub-divisions	: 6
Main rivers	: Chenab and Ravi
Nearest Airport	: Gaggal (180 km)
Nearest Railhead	: Pathankot (122 km)
Road Distances	: Pathankot 122 km; Shimla 378 km; Dharamsala 169 km; Bharmour 65 km; Dalhousie 41 km.

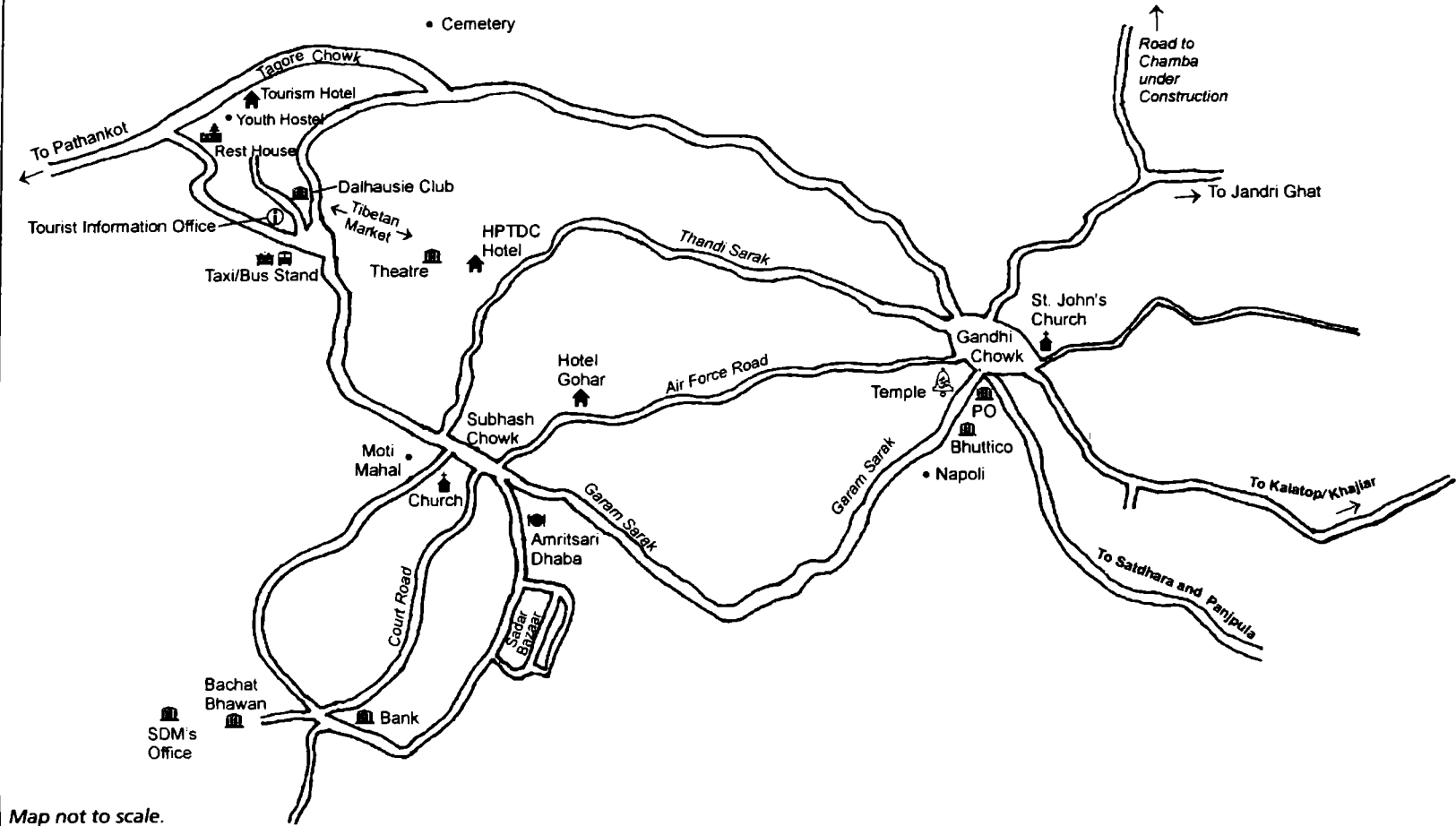
There are several old temples that date back to tenth and eleventh century. Lakshmi Narayan temple complex, Champavati temple, Hari-rai temple, Brajeshwari Devi temple, Narsingh temple and Chamunda temple are the main temples of Chamba town. Other attractions are Chaugan (a grassy meadow), Bhuri Singh Museum and Ravi river flowing by. This town is also famous for Basholi and Chamba schools of painting, Chamba *rumaal* and leather footwear.

Maru is said to have founded the kingdom with capital at Brahm-pura (present day Bharmour) in sixth century. Chronological records are available from the reign of Aditya Verman (A.D. 620). Raja Sahil Verman founded Chamba in A.D. 920. Due to its geographic isolation it remained out of bound for various invaders. That is why much of the heritage is still preserved and temples dating from seventh century can be found.

Meru Verman (A.D. 680) is credited with construction of temples at Bharmour and Chhatrari. Sahil Verman (A.D. 920) shifted the capital from Brahm-pura to present day Chamba. Legend has it that 84 *yogis* (saints) and nine *naths* visited Bharmour during his reign. Pleased with his service and devotion they granted him a wish. The raja was issueless hence he asked the saints for a son. The saints blessed him and as a result he had ten sons and a daughter. The saints had also advised him to shift his capital. Therefore Sahil Verman started downstream Ravi, his daughter

Lakshna Devi temple built by Raja Meru Verman is made of *Ashtadhatu*. Gugga was the master craftsman.

DALHAUSIE GUIDE MAP



Map not to scale.

Champavati liked the place where Chamba town is located. So, he established his new capital here and named it Champa (later corrupted to Chamba) after the name of his daughter.

There is another interesting story about Chamba. A channel was made to supply water to the town from a stream but due to some inexplicable reason the water did not flow through the channel. The raja was advised to sacrifice his son or rani. The rani volunteered to be sacrificed. It is said that she was buried alive near the source of water. As she was buried the water started flowing. A memorial was built in her honour that is known as Suhi ki Marhi. This is the site of an annual colourful fair in the month of March or April.

Gaddis

Across Dhauladhar lies the shepherd country '*Gaddairan*', the land of Gaddis, a nomadic tribe. Gaddis migrate with their livestock to the high altitude grasslands of Chamba, Pangi and Lahaul in summers and spend their winters in the plains of Kangra. Most of them own land on both sides of Dhauladhar hence they belong to Chamba as well as Kangra district. Gaddis have been allotted pastures in the Shivaliks, Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal where they can graze their permitted and specified number of livestock. Their life is hard and full of uncertainties. Now most of the youth do not prefer to continue the age-old profession, government job is considered a better option.

Gaddis who travel with the livestock are called *Puhals*. They are the best guides in mountains. They have discovered most of the routes connecting different valleys lying on either side of mighty mountain ranges. They know their areas of operation inside out. Most of the *Puhals* have the ability to predict weather and use of wild plants and herbs to cure common ailments. They are the storehouse of information about the folk wisdom and practices besides knowing in detail about the mountains. They are simple, hard working, religious and superstitious people.



TRAILS FROM KANGRA VALLEY TO CHAMBA VALLEY**Dharamsala–Lam Dal–Chamba Across Gaj Pass**

Highest altitude	—	4243 m
Duration	—	Five days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Moderate

There are several beautiful, high altitude glacial lakes in the Dhauladhar. Lam Dal at an altitude of 3900 m is one of the biggest and the most prominent. It is situated in the area of seven lakes. Lam Dal spreads in L shape with a circumference of nearly 2.5 km. The lake can be reached after crossing either Minkiani (4250 m), Baleni (3710 m) or Gaj pass (4243 m) from Kangra side. Out of these Gaj pass is the most suited pass to reach Lam Dal as ascent from Dharamsala ends on the ridge just above the lake. On Krishna Janamashtmi and Radha Ashtami (in August and/or September) many local people visit the lake for holy dip both from Kangra and Chamba side. It is easier to trek during these days as local people are of great help.

Dharamsala–Satobari–Khari Bahi (5-7 hrs)

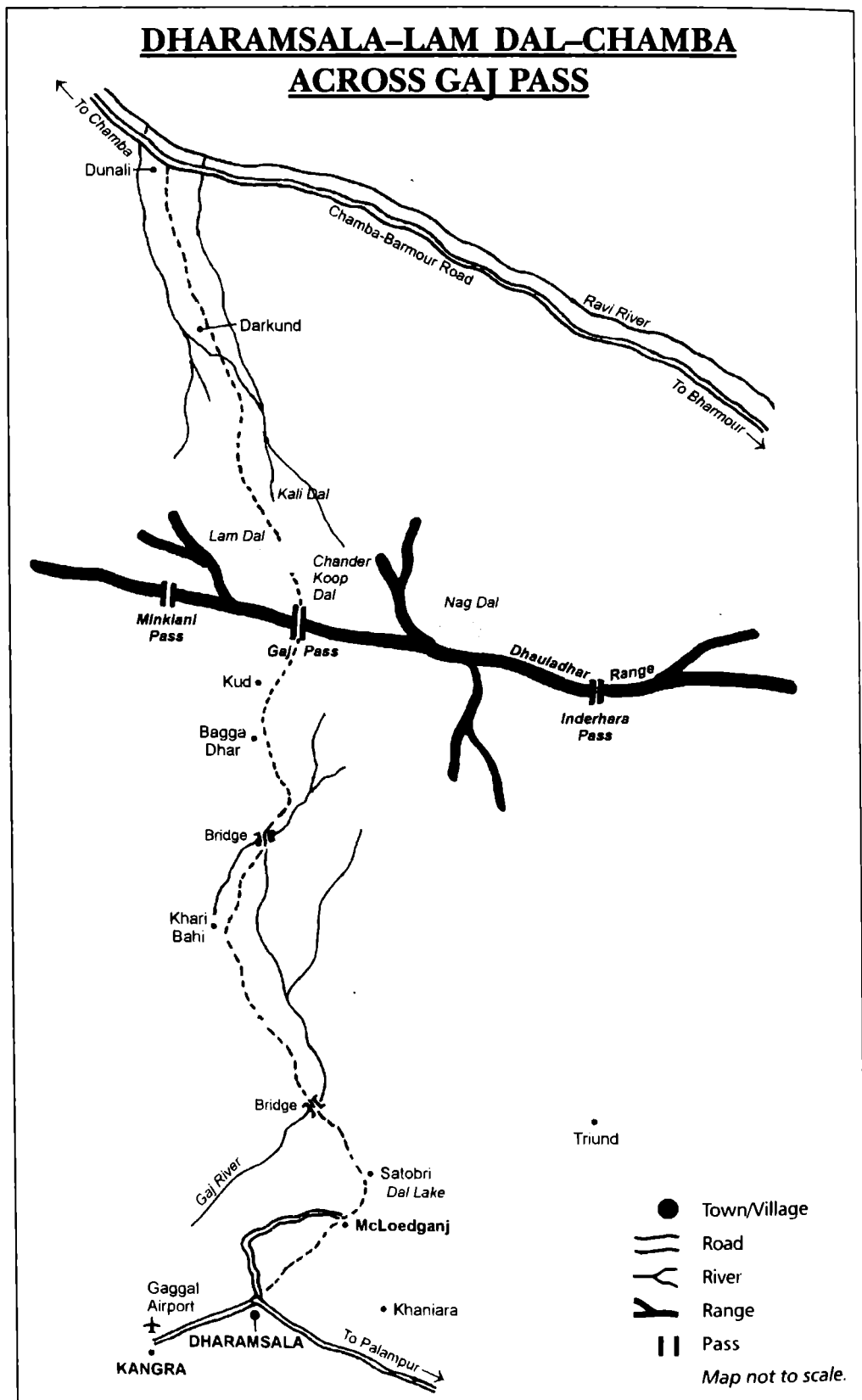
Dharamsala to McLeodganj is nine kilometres by motor road and just two and a half kilometres on foot on a steep road called Khara Danda curling upward through a good forest. There are several shortcuts in this short road also. McLeodganj to Satobari is proper road that passes through popular tourist destination—Dal (lake). Taxis can be hired up to Satobari.

A mule path descends from Satobari to Gaj river. There is a wooden bridge over the river and a small teashop on the other side of the river. Steep climb up to Khari Bahi village starts from the bed of the river. Nearly four to five hours walk at moderate pace leads to this last village on Kangra side. There is a good campsite near the village. Village people are friendly and accommodating. There are a couple of small provision shops. It is preferable to hire a guide. Any local youth who has trekked upto the lake may do the job.

Khari Bahi–Bagga Dhar (4-5 hrs)

Bagga Dhar is the pastureland of villagers of Khari Bahi. A rickety

DHARAMSALA-LAM DAL-CHAMBA ACROSS GAJ PASS



bridge just below the village is crossed on way to Bagga Dhar. After steep climb for about four hours through thick forest and a couple of crossings of streams one reaches Bagga Dhar. There is a small *sarai* for pilgrims going to Lam Dal. Trail up to Bagga Dhar is more or less defined and well-marked.

Bagga Dhar–Lam Dal (8 hrs)

It is a steep, tough and tiring climb to the pass even though the defined path reduces the danger of losing way. There is no place to pitch tents near the lake as boulders surround it. One must go down to Chamba side to find good campsite. To make it to the campsite across the pass after starting from Bagga Dhar is not easy. Early start at about 5 a.m., steady pace without very long rest periods is recommended. After Bagga Dhar there is no vegetation, therefore, trekkers must carry their own provisions including dead wood.

Other option is to stay in a rock cave shelter called *kud* below the pass on Dharamsala side. There are at least two such shelters but travellers can not find these on their own. Only a guide or local person who is acquainted can lead to these.

Staying for the night in the rock shelter is a unique experience. To see the lights scattered all over in the valley below that extends to the plains of Punjab on a clear star-studded night is heavenly. Full moon night stay here is equally breathtaking. If you have tents, provisions and adequate protection from cold you must stay for the night below the pass on Kangra side to enjoy the beauty of the place.

It takes about two hours at the most to reach the pass from these shelters. View from the top of the pass is wide and panoramic. On clear rain-washed days in monsoons entire Kangra valley and the plains of Punjab are visible. Lam Dal can also be seen on the other side of the pass. The sight of this beautiful lake removes all tiredness. Descent from the pass to lake is over big boulders and moraine that needs to be negotiated carefully.

People worship the lake as the abode of Lord Shiva. They believe that holy dip in its ice-cold water washes all the sins. There is a small open temple with Shivlingam and iron *trishuls* (trident) put by the pilgrims as a mark of respect and devotion. After a short descent from Lam Dal is Kali Dal. There is space to pitch tents.

Lam Dal–Drakund (4-5 hrs)

Trek descends from Lam Dal up to Drakund village on Chamba side. It is long but easier journey of nearly fifteen kilometres. The *nallah* coming down from Dhauladhar is to be crossed, the locally improvised bridges get washed off during heavy rains and crossing icy-water becomes difficult. Altitude drops fast as the path descends to reach a small, beautiful forest rest house in an apple orchard just short of village. The stay here is most relaxing after spending days in wilderness.

Drakund–Dunali (the roadhead, 3-4 hrs)

Proper mule path leads to Dunali nine kilometres from Drakund. It passes through many small villages. Dunali is a bus stop on the Chamba–Bharmour road. A couple of teashops are there on the road. Bharmour is 40 kilometres from here and Chamba is 25 kilometres. Buses are available for both sides.

Dharamsala–Chamba Across Inderhara Pass

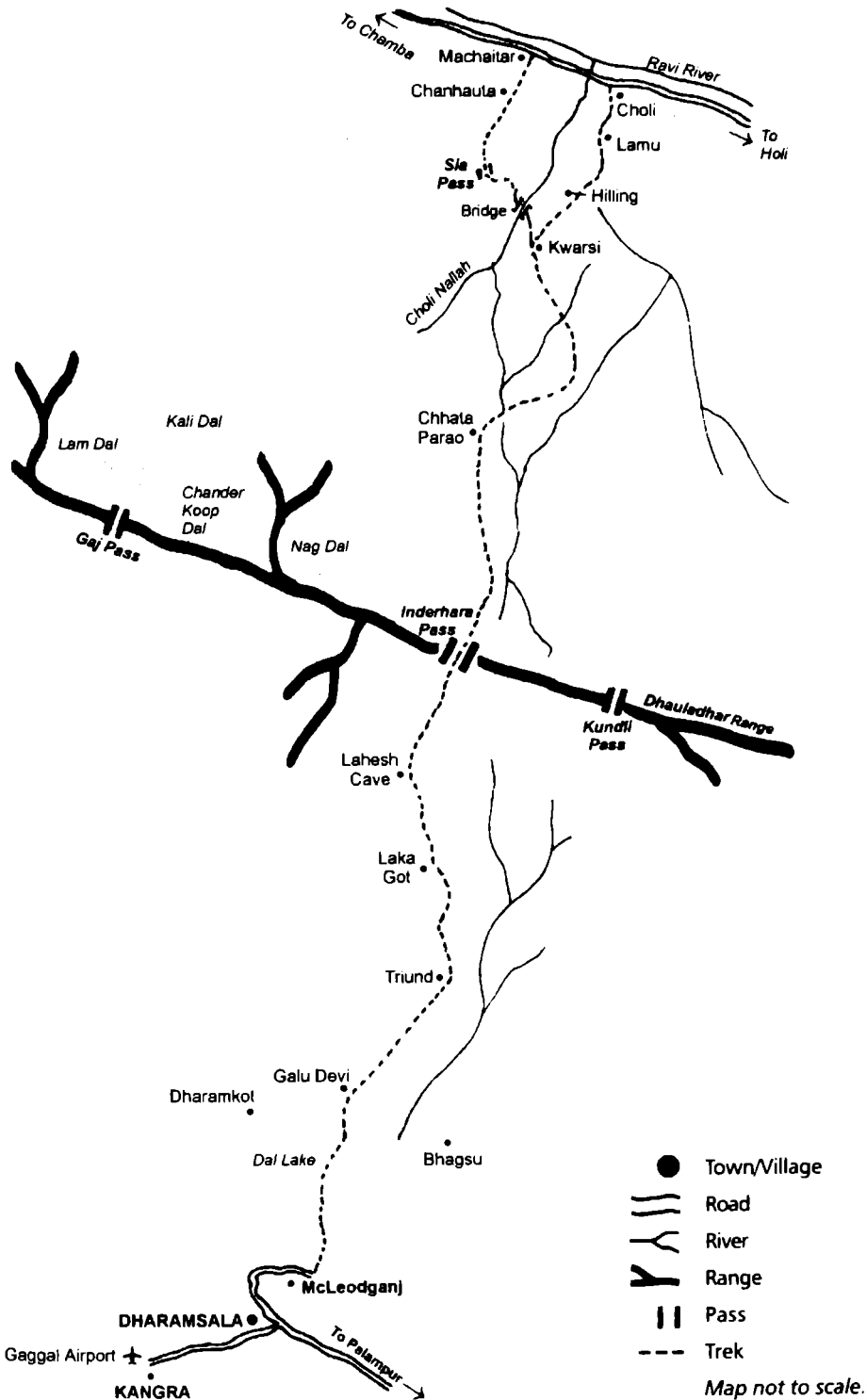
Highest altitude	—	4350 m
Duration	—	Five days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Moderate




McLeodganj to Triund: 2975 m (3-4 hrs)

It is a gradual climb of nine kilometres on a well-defined trek that passes through Dharamkot and Rakkar villages. In fact several trails lead to Triund from Dharamsala. These treks branching off from Rawa, Dal Lake, Dharamkot and Bhagsu meet at a place known as Galu Devi (2130 m) that has a small temple and a water point. There are a few guest houses and teashops. From Galu Devi onward the trek ascends through a mixed forest consisting mainly oak and rhododendrons. It winds up through the ridges overlooking Dharamsala and Kangra valleys. The last climb after a snow *nallah* rises abruptly with steep ascent and the trek weaves through trees to the ridge. On way to Triund there are teashops at couple of places that have been imaginatively named Magic View, Scenic View and Snowline Cafe.

Triund area is rich in wildlife. Monals, black bear, leopards, pigs

DHARAMSALA-CHAMBA ACROSS IDERHARA PASS



-  Town/Village
 -  Road
 -  River
 -  Range
 -  Pass
 -  Trek
- Map not to scale.

and wild goats can be spotted. Triund is a subsidiary ridge of Dhauladhar with forest rest house and good campsite. Booking of rest house can be made at forest office at Dharamsala. View from here is spectacular and panoramic. To the north of Triund is mighty Dhauladhar with towering peaks of Mun (4610 m), Slab (4570 m), Riflehorn, Aurthur Seat and many more. And to the south lie Kangra valley and Punjab plains. Triund is favourite place for bird-watchers and star-gazers. Triund is also popular skiing resort. The Britishers started skiing here in 1930s.

During post monsoon months there is scarcity of water. The source of water is one kilometre below Triund Ridge to the other side and the route is risky. Trekkers should not go to the water point in late evening as wild animals visit it. There are a few seasonal shops at Triund but these are expensive, it is better to purchase all provisions from Dharamsala itself as nothing is available after Triund till one reaches Kwarsi village on the other side of the pass.

Triund to Lahesh Cave: 3500 m (3-4 hrs)

There is a beaten trek of nearly six kilometres used frequently by trekkers and Gaddi shepherds. It has a moderate ascent. It is risky in May end or early June due to hard snow and landslides. Vegetation comes to an end near Illaqa Got (3350 m), grassy meadow below Inderhara pass. You can pitch your tents here too for the night.

Lahesh Cave, a natural cave shelter, is further up about one and a half kilometres from the Illaqa Got. The cave can accommodate twenty people in emergency. Night stay in the cave makes the next day's climb to the pass much easier. However early start is recommended and experienced trekkers can make it up to Kwarsi village in one day. Deadwood is to be carried from Triund or Illaqa as the cave is surrounded by boulders and rocks.

Lahesh Cave to Chhata Parao: 3700 m Across the Pass (6-8 hrs)

Steady climb to the pass takes nearly three hours. The trek climbs up on the steep rock face of Dhauladhar. It involves very steep climb at certain points. Crossing icy streams is a challenging task during monsoon months. Post-monsoon, most of these are dry and present no difficulty. If weather gets foggy reducing visibility considerably, it is better to stay put and wait for weather to clear. There is danger of losing way or falling into a gorge at such times. If the foggy weather

persists then it would be proper to find a secure shelter. Many travellers have lost themselves and unfortunately perished due to foggy weather.

The pass provides wide and scenic view of Kangra valley and the plains of Punjab. Mountain ridges are generally free of snow from July to October. *Trishuls* put up by the travellers mark the pass.

Descent to Chhata Parao is no less taxing. The path goes down sharply on a trail that is not clearly visible in thick growth of grass during monsoon months. Chhata Parao is a small flat camping portion with a rock serving as a *Kud*. There is a big lake, Nag Dal, towards the left if we look towards Chamba side from the pass, but a guide is needed. Otherwise one can lose precious hours trying to locate it.

Chhata Parao to Kwarsi: 2730 m (4-6 hrs)

This is a long but more or less defined stretch of nearly 14 kilometres that can be tough till early June due to snow. Slippery trail and slushy portions make it risky in rainy season.

Kwarsi is big village surrounded by thick pine and *deodar* forest. There is a trekker's hut and forest rest house. Forest rest house is at a distance from village and has not been put to use for many years but it is a beautiful place to camp if trekkers have sufficient provisions.

Kwarsi to Lamu and Choli (4-6 hrs)

It is again a long journey of about 14 kilometres from Kwarsi to Lamu and Choli. Some portions on this stretch are dangerous as these are carved out on vertical rock faces. Descent is not steep, however it is tiring. Hilling village that lies on way to Lamu and Choli has been linked with a vehicular road but buses are available only at Choli, the point on Chamba–Holi road. From Choli one can go either to Holi or Bharmour or Chamba. There is an alternative route from Kwarsi that crosses Sia pass to Chanhauta village. From there well-defined trek drops down to Machaitar on Chamba–Holi road. Chanhauta has also been linked with vehicular road.

Dharamsala–Chamba Across Kundli Pass

Highest altitude	—	4550 m
Duration	—	Seven days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Difficult

Kundli pass stands between Mun peak (4610 m) and Toral pass (4575 m) facing north from Dharamsala. It is a difficult pass and generally trekkers do not frequent it. The ascent from Dharamsala side is very steep but moderate from Kwarsi side. The shape of the pass is like snake coil hence the name Kundli pass. This pass was very much frequented in the past but it has fell in disuse now.

Dharamsala–Khaniyara: 1450 m (2-3 hrs)

Khaniyara is eight kilometres from Dharamsala. There is regular bus service. There are temples of Lord Shiva and other deities here. There are boulders with inscriptions half way between Dharamsala and Khaniyara. Legend is that a Brahmin *chela* tamed a *bhoot* (spirit) and made him till his land. He used to give pretty bad food to the *bhoot*. Once in his absence, his wife treated the *bhoot* lavishly. After this the *bhoot* went mad and sat on a big boulder (now called *bhootshila*, boulder of the ghost) and began eating everyone. The Brahmin on his return nailed the *bhoot* to the stone. People say that the words engraved on the stone is the *mantra* used by the Brahmin. At presently a shrine of Indru Nag stands here who is believed to bring rain besides being a protector.

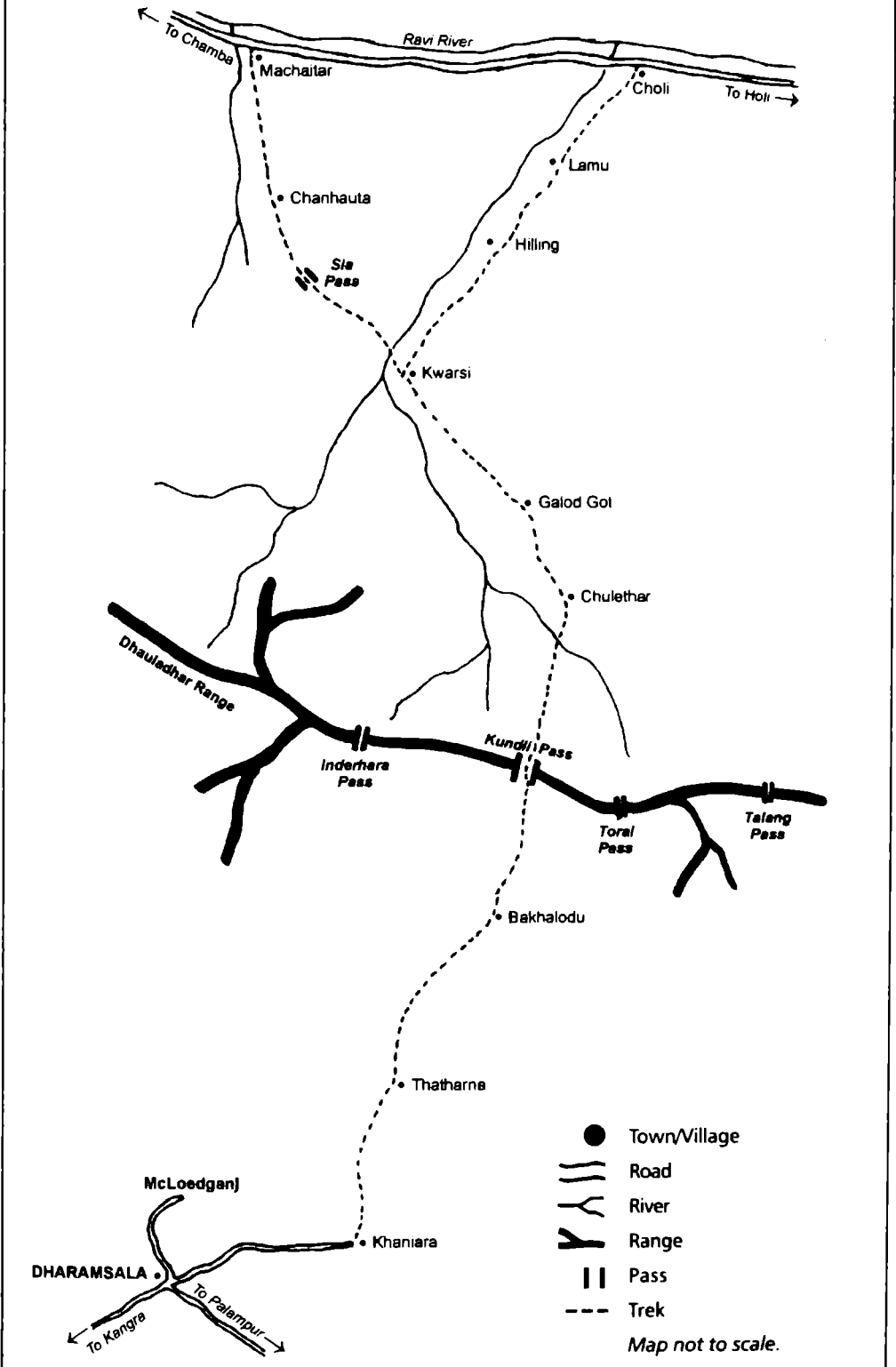
Khaniyara to Thatharna: 2600 m (3-4 hrs)

This nine kilometres trek starts from Khaniyara and involves an easy to moderate climb. It passes through Katuhi village and then climbs to reach Thatharna, located on a spur. These are pastures and temporary shelters of Gaddis.

Thatharna to Bakhalodu: 3690 m (3-4 hrs)

The trail climbs gradually at first but the final ascent is steep. Many people do not frequent this trek therefore it is not a very well-marked trail. From Thatharna, the route heads up to Haudi Ka Kanda and then to Bakhalodu. During summer and autumn months Gaddis

DHARAMSALA–CHAMBA ACROSS KUNDLI PASS



can be seen camping here. Route guidelines can be had from them. Bakhalodu is a camping ground. There are rock shelters as well. Water and deadwood is available. Bakhalodu is nearly nine kilometres from Thatharna.

Bakhalodu to Chulethar: 3700 m Across the Pass (4-5 hrs)

The four kilometres climb from Bakhalodu to the pass is steep. The trek ascends through massive boulders and steep vertical ridges. At the top of the pass are a few *trishuls* where shepherds offer prayers. The pass affords a panoramic view of the valleys on both sides of Dhauladhar. From here the trek initially descends and then passes from a snow-bed to a camping place called Chulethar. About three kilometres below Chulethar is a place called Galod Got that has a rock shelter for about ten persons. It is better to camp there after trekking about ten kilometres.

Chulethar/Galod to Kwarsi: 2730 m (4-5 hrs)

This is a tiring trek of nearly ten kilometres. The trail is not marked and one has to descend at a steep grade to a wooden temple of Bangeri Mata in *deodar* forest. From the temple to Kwarsi the path is reasonably defined. From Kwarsi one can go to Lamu and Choli (roadhead on Holi-Bharmour road). The other option is to trek to Chanhauta village.

Kwarsi to Chanhauta: 2245 m (5-6 hrs)

From Kwarsi to Sia pass (2800 m) is a moderate ascent and from the pass to Chanhauta the descent is steep but the path is defined. Path first descends to the wooden bridge over Choli *nallah* and then climbs up to the pass. Chanhauta is at a distance of about thirteen kilometres from Kwarsi village. After the pass the trek passes through a forest of pine and oak. Chanhauta is a big village with a forest rest house. Two kilometres below is Machaitar, the bus head.

Machaitar to Bharmour via Garima (4-5 hrs)

Those interested in walking to Bharmour can climb up to Garima on this thirteen kilometres long trek. The journey can be broken at Garima village linked by a jeepable road to Bharmour or one can reach Bharmour on the same day.

Dharamsala–Chamba Across Minkiani Pass

Highest altitude	—	4250 m
Duration	—	Five days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Moderate

Kareri lake was one of the most beautiful lakes in Dhauladhar but sadly it has dried up over the years. Now it is a dry pond with lot of overgrowth. But the trek to Chamba across Minkiani pass is still worth the effort. The trek affords the opportunity to study the life-style of hill people. One can start walking from Dharamsala or McLeodganj or Satobari.

McLeodganj to Kareri: 1900 m (4-6 hrs)

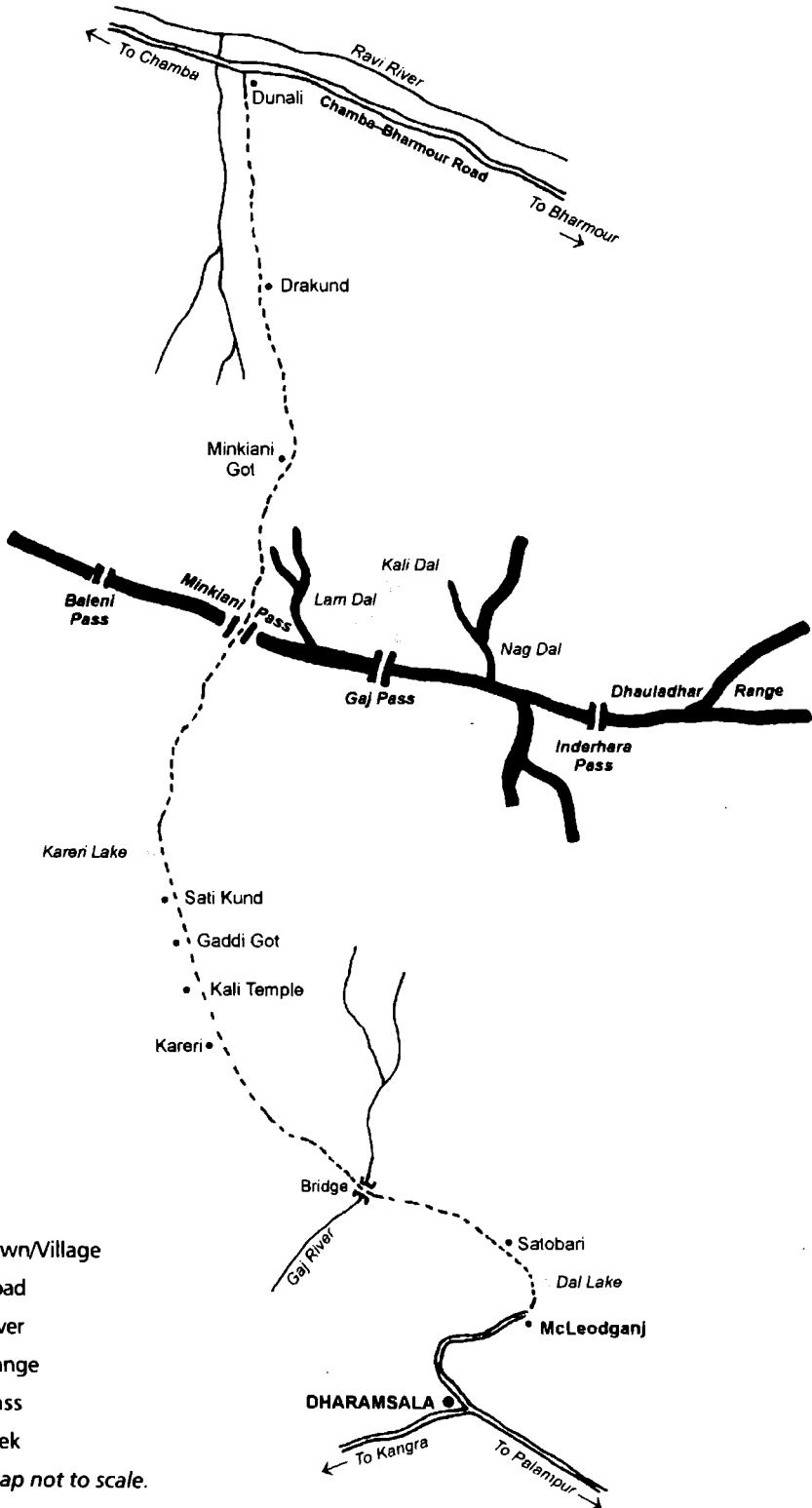
After McLeodganj, Dal lake surrounded by a mixed forest of *deodar* and rhododendrons, locally called *brass*, trees presents a beautiful site. There is a temple by the lake where travellers pray for safe journey. Annual fare is held at Dal lake at the same time when Manimahesh *yatra* takes place in Chamba. The road then leads to village Satobari. McLeodganj to Satobari is two and a half kilometres and from Satobari Kareri village is nearly eleven kilometres.

After Satobari a proper trail goes down through forest up to a wooden bridge over Gaj river. Gehra village is located above the confluence of Gaj and Kareri streams. A steep climb leads to Kareri village that overlooks the plains of Kangra and Punjab. There is a forest rest house for stay. People of the village are helpful and accommodating.

Kareri Village to Kareri Lake: 3200 m (3-5 hrs)

After Kareri there is no habitation on Kangra side. From Kareri village Kareri lake is at a distance of thirteen kilometres. Path climbs abruptly from forest rest house to a small hillock with a temple of goddess Kali. The trek then drops to Gaddi Got, the campsite of shepherds, about three kilometres from Kali temple. It climbs up along Kareri *nallah* after that. Two kilometres short of Kareri lake is another pond, the Sati Kund. It is said that a Gaddi woman whose husband did not return from Lam Dal immolated herself here. The lake has virtually dried up but one can make out its boundaries and guess its splendour. Kareri lake is base camp for crossing Minkiani pass.

DHARAMSALA-CHAMBA ACROSS MINKIANI PASS



Kareri Lake to Minkiani Got: 3500 m Across the Pass (5-6 hrs)

It is tiring and taxing climb uphill to the pass. The trail appears steeper as one makes his way to the top. Weather is generally unpredictable and one must not venture ahead in foggy conditions. The pass, like all other passes, has tiny temple. Initial descent is on boulders and moraine. This eight kilometres long trek finishes at Minkiani Got with a couple of rock shelters, and a camping place. No deadwood is available, therefore, trekkers must carry wood and other provisions.

Minkiani Got to Lam Dal (3900 m) and Back to Drakund (8 hrs)

Lam Dal, the biggest lake of Dhauladhar range, is considered the abode of Lord Shiva. One must not miss the lake. The distance of nearly ten kilometres to the lake and back from Minkiani Got is really worth the effort. Kali Dal, another small lake, lies short of Lam Dal. There is a difficult trek to other lakes like Chander Koop (moon lake), Nag Dal and Nag Chhatri Dal to the left of Inderhara pass but these should be attempted by experienced trekkers only with the help of a guide. From Minkiani Got to Drakund is further walk of ten kilometres. Stay for the night at forest rest house Drakund.

Drakund to Dunali (3-4 hrs)

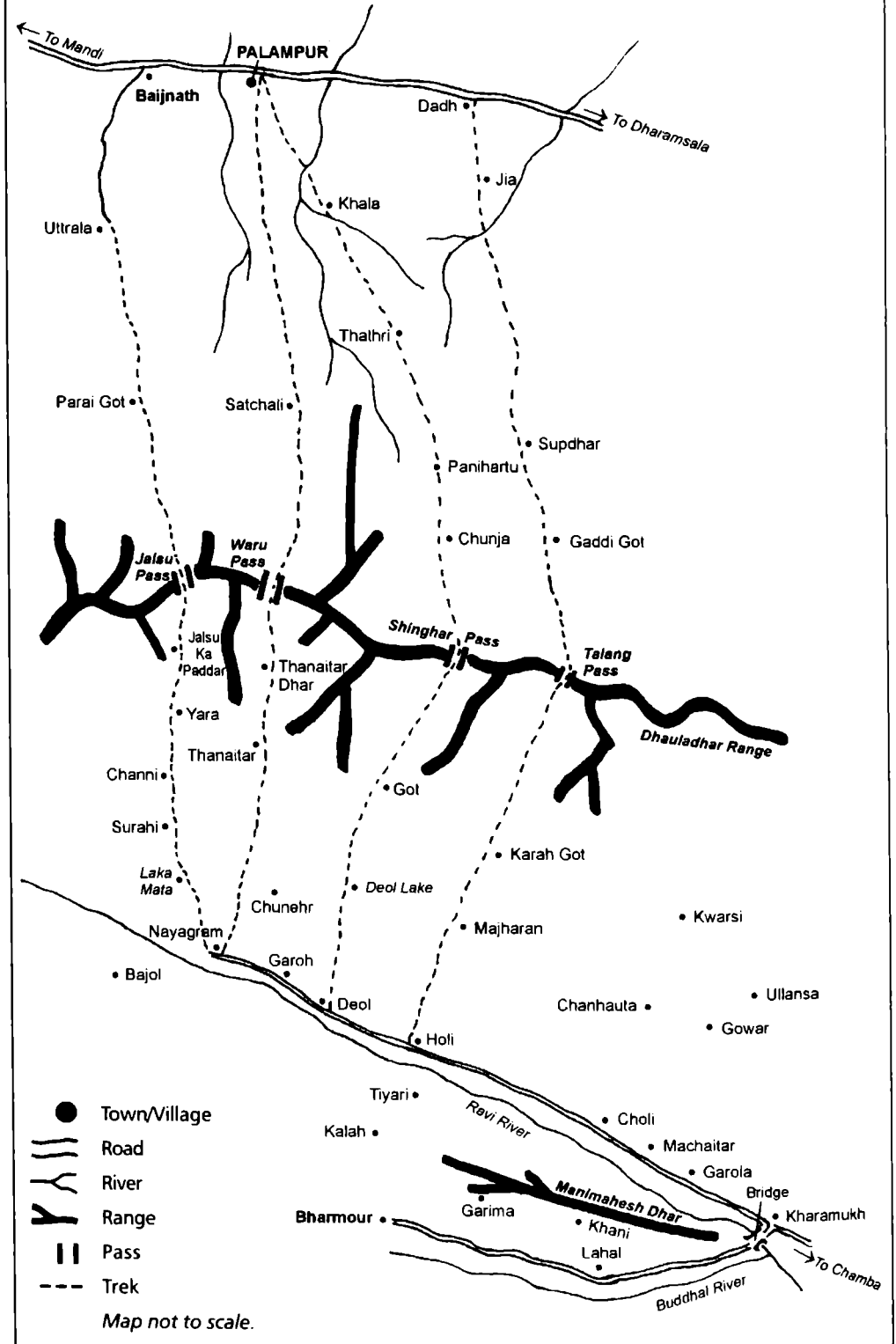
Well-defined trail that passes through many villages leads to Dunali, the roadhead on Chamba–Bharmour road.

TRAILS FROM CHAMBA VALLEY TO KANGRA VALLEY

Bharmour is sixty-two kilometres from Chamba. The road travels along Ravi upstream till Kharamukh fifty kilometres from Chamba. From there it drops down to cross Ravi on a bridge and then curls up towards Bharmour. At Kharamukh the road to Bharmour leaves Ravi and follows Budhal river upstream. Road from Kharamukh passes through a risky portion up to Lahal village. Honey growers of Lahaul produce very good quality white honey. Bharmour is located on the sloping ridges above Budhal *nallah*. Regular buses and taxis are available for Bharmour from Chamba.

Holi, twenty-four kilometres upstream along Ravi from Kharamukh, is the main halting station for all the trails leading to Kangra valley across Dhauladhar. There are direct buses to Holi from Chamba.

TREKS FROM CHAMBA TO KANGRA



Bharmour–Baijnath Across Jalsu Pass

Highest altitude	—	3600 m
Duration	—	Three days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Easy

Jalsu pass is perhaps the easiest in Dhauladhar connecting upper Ravi valley with Kangra. Since altitude is less and grade is moderate it is most frequented by locals crossing over to Kangra. People from Bara Bhangal cross Jalsu pass with their cattle when Thamsar pass closes. The pass opens up very early. Those used to walking in snow can cross it even in May and November.

Bharmour–Holi/Chamba–Holi

Holi is a separate sub-valley of Bharmour. Located at a distance of 36 kilometres from Bharmour it is more open and picturesque than Bharmour. Administratively it is a separate sub-tehsil. There is small bazaar and a couple of offices. Accommodation is available in government guest houses. Trout fish farm is worth a visit. Rainbow trout is available for hundred and fifty rupees a kilogram.

Holi–Nayagram–Laka Mata Temple–Surahi–Yara (8-10 hrs)

A motor road links Nayagram, twelve kilometres from Holi. Well-defined path starts from Nayagram that first goes down from the village and then climbs up through thick forest of pine and *deodar* up to the temple of Laka Mata. Local people hold this temple in great reverence. Issueless women spend days and nights in the temple till the goddess blesses them. There is a small *sarai* for pilgrims.

After the temple the trek drops steeply to a wooden bridge over a *nallah* and then spirals up sharply towards Surahi village. Bridge point is known as *patal puri* (hell) and the Laka temple is known as *swarg puri* (heaven). Surahi is small village with a primary school and forest guard hut. There is a good camping site near the forest guard hut.

Trek to Jalsu (Surahi) pass goes from below the village and continues at a comfortable grade. A couple of seasonal teashops spring up in the months of June to October. The trek then goes down to Surahi *nallah* and to a place called Channi. There are teashops with *dal* and

rice. *Nallah* is crossed over wooden bridge and the path starts climbing up gradually towards Yara. The climb is tiring and it becomes very taxing on sunny days. Water is scarce on the trail. Forest hut at Yara is visible from quite far. It is in bad shape as the shepherds use it as a comfortable place to rest with their flock. As a result the *sarai* is bug-infested. A few *dhabas* spring up during the summers. Good campsite is not available near the shops.

It is possible to reach Jalsu ka Paddar (plain of Jalsu) by evening after early start from Nayagram. Couple of *dhabas* cater to bare minimum needs though it is better to be on your own. Gujjars and Gaddis camping here can provide milk and butter but at times they charge exorbitant prices. Jalsu ka Paddar is good camping place, however deadwood is not available. It is better to collect the firewood after Yara and carry it along with other provisions.

Jalsu ka Paddar–Jalsu Pass–Baijnath (8-10 hrs)

Jalsu pass is visible from the plain of Jalsu. It is better to start early in the morning as there is long and tiring journey to Baijnath. An easy climb of about an hour takes to the top of the pass. Two options are available to descend. One is the mule trek that drops suddenly from the pass to the side stream coming from Dhauladhar range. The other traverses the right side ridge from the top towards Kangra side and then drops sharply through the pastures and moves through temporary shelters set up by the shepherds.

The mule path is a bit lengthy but more clearly defined. Several crossings of streams are involved. There are no bridges or *tarangris* to cross. During the rainy season or on rainy days local people prefer the other route as water level increases suddenly and there is danger to get stranded. Both the paths meet at Uttarala, a sleepy little village located beautifully at the foothills of mighty Dhauladhar. There is a rest house of the State Electricity Board and a small bazaar. Buses and taxis ply to Baijnath regularly.

Baijnath, one of the sub-divisional headquarters of Kangra district, is well connected by regular bus service to all parts of the state. It is on Pathankot–Manali national highway. The old Shiva temple located in the heart of the town is worth a visit.

Chamba–Dharamsala Across Talang Pass

Highest altitude	—	4643 m
Duration	—	Four days
Season	—	June end to early October
Grade	—	Difficult

Talang pass is one of the very difficult passes of Dhauladhar range. It is higher in altitude than most other passes. From Kangra side the trek rises abruptly making it very difficult pass. The path from Holi in Chamba is no less easy. Even the local people do not prefer crossing Talang pass. They choose easier Jalsu pass.

The route from Holi takes off from Majharan village, involves steep ascent and long walk on snow. Mules can not cross this pass. To the northwest of this pass is the highest peak of the region, Matterhorn or Gauri Junda (4946 m).

Holi to Karah (7-8 hrs)

Holi with rest houses and provision shops is the bus head. From Holi, a well-defined trail, takes off to Majharan village. Work on motorable road to Majharan is in progress. Thereafter, trek passes through green fields, dense forest and alpine grasslands before it reaches the campsite called Karah (3600 m), a bowl between the ridges. Sixteen kilometres distance from Holi to Karah is tiring to say the least.

Karah to Gaddi Got (3800 m) Across the Pass (8-10 hrs)

From Karah to Gaddi Got across the pass is nearly fourteen kilometres. Trail from Karah goes up along hard, steep and snowy slopes that require ice axe which is needed to negotiate tricky portions. Trail follows a snow gully and ascends sharply through boulders. After a climb of about four to five hours one makes it to the top of the pass. Descent on the other side of pass is steep and difficult. Many confusing trails criss-cross the slope that lead to a col with an open view of the valley below. Gaddi Got, the camp ground is reached after a walk of nearly three hours. There is water but firewood is not available at Gaddi Got.

Gaddi Got to Sup Dhar (2 hrs)

Sup Dhar is a pastureland with summer camps of Gaddis and Gujjars. Firewood and water is available. Trekkers can descend to Sup Dhar from the top of the pass if they have time and energy. Gaddis and Gujjars camp here in summers who sell butter and ghee.

Sup Dhar Base Camp to Jia (5 hrs)

An easy, defined but long trail of nearly sixteen kilometres follows Talang stream coming down the slopes of Dhauladhar. Jia is nineteen kilometres from Dharamsala. It is located three kilometres from Dadh, on Dharamsala road near Chamunda temple. The village has rest house, shops and school.

Chamba–Dharamsala Across Waru Pass

Highest altitude	—	3850 m
Duration	—	Three days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Easy

Holi to Nayagram: 12 km

Follow the motor road. Regular bus service and taxis are available. There is enough space to pitch tents near the school or just on the road as Nayagram is the last point on the Chamba–Holi–Nayagram road.

Nayagram to Thanetar (3 hrs)

Thanetar village is at a distance of twelve kilometres from Nayagram. This is an easy trail used by villagers daily and passes through a Kali temple and Chunehar village.

Thanetar to Satchali (2575 m) Over the Pass (6-8 hrs)

Satchali is at about sixteen kilometres from Thanetar across the pass. Thanetar is the last village on Chamba side below the pass. Trek climbs sharply from the village through thick forest and reaches Baoli Got (3485 m). There is a rock shelter at Baoli. From there trek climbs up steeply to the pass. Waru pass is at comparatively low altitude but it is windy. It takes about 3-4 hours to reach Satchali at

the foothill of the pass on Kangra side. It is moderately steep descent through rugged terrain with many small streams. Satchali gets its name from seven different water sources mingling here. There are summer camps of Gujjars and Gaddis at Satchali.

Satchali to Palampur: 2879 m (4 hrs)

Thirteen kilometres trek goes down along Awe khad, a stream flowing from the base of Waru pass up to Chandpur village four kilometres short of Palampur town. It passes through a mix forest and winds its way through various ridges.

Palampur

Palampur located on the Pathankot–Mandi main National Highway, is 140 km from Pathankot and is linked with direct buses. It is forty km from Dharamsala. This small and beautiful town is at an elevation of 1219 m. Famous for tea gardens it lies at the foot of Dhauladhar range.

The tea plantation was started in Kangra valley in 1850. There is a tea processing factory at Bir near Palampur. The green tea of Kangra is very famous for its medicinal properties.

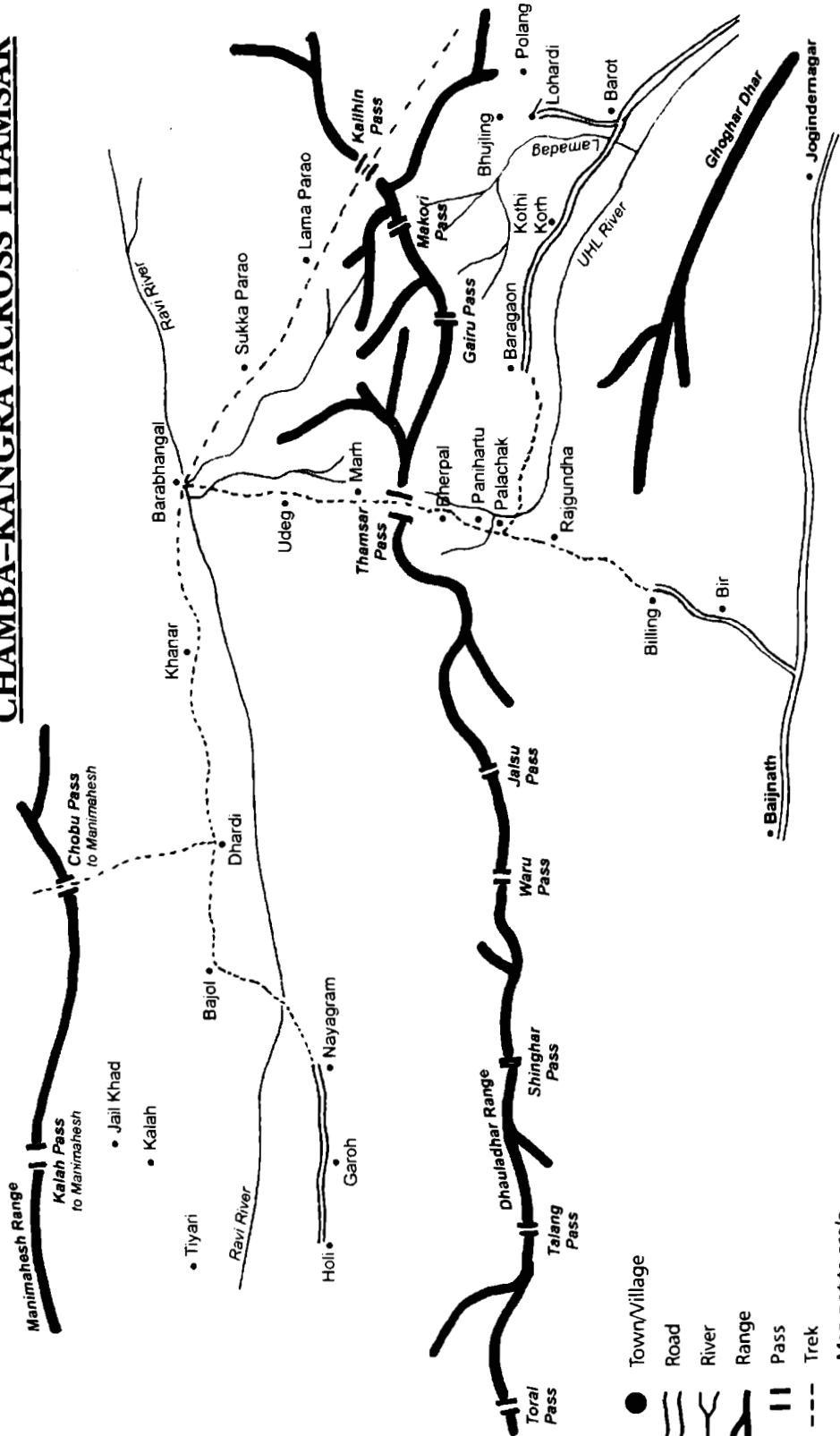
Chamba–Kangra via Bara Bhangal Across Thamsar Pass

Highest altitude	—	4665 m
Duration	—	Seven days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Very difficult

Chamba–Holi–Nayagram

Holi has rest houses and provision shops. Road link to Uttarala (Bajinath) in Kangra across Jalsu pass is under construction. On the right bank of Ravi opposite Nayagram is Bajol panchayat of Bharmour sub-division. Bara Bhangal is further upstream Ravi river. The trek to Bara Bhangal is long, tiring and risky. Certain portions are very dangerous as the path traverses on very steep rock faces. There is direct fall of hundreds of metres into the river or deep gorge. At many places only half foothold is possible. Many trekkers return to Holi abandoning hope. Work has been started on mule road to Bara Bhangal in 2002 by the Public Works Department Bharmour.

CHAMBA-KANGRA ACROSS THAMTSAR



- Town/Village
 - Road
 - ~ River
 - ▬ Range
 - || Pass
 - - - Trek
- Map not to scale.

Nayagram–Dhardi–Khanar (6-8 hrs)

This is a long haul of nearly twenty-six kilometres. The path involves many ups and downs that are tiring. The trail goes down to Ravi after crossing Nayagram village and then climbs sharply towards Bajol village. There is a steep hard rock face at Khurdu below Bajol village. Work is in progress on jeepable road to Bajol and a trace is being carved out through this rock face. The trek turns right below Bajol towards Dhardi. After many ups and downs Dhardi village is seen on a ridge. The trek drops down to the *nallah* below the village and then spirals up. Dhardi is a small village with enough camping space near a water source.

It is a long, tiring stretch from Dhardi to Khanar, the last village of Bharmour and Chamba district. Trek involves many ups and downs and there are a couple of risky portions. Though it is better to stay for the night at Dhardi and then start early to reach Bara Bhangal, the distance to Bara Bhangal can be cut short by reaching Khanar from Nayagram.

Khanar is a small village located precariously on the hillside. There is a small temple in the village. Almost entire population from Bajol panchayat—Bajol, Dhardi, Graunda and Khanar villages—migrates to Kangra during winters.

Khanar to Bara Bhangal (6-8 hrs)

Again a hard day for the walkers with a distance of nearly eighteen kilometres to be covered. The trek is not only long but also dangerous at several points. Certain patches need to be negotiated with great care. Extreme concentration is required as one careless step can be fatal. Trek passes through many sharp ridges over steep rock faces and deep gorges. Straight fall of hundreds of metres is frightening. People pay respects to gods before a unique temple made in the trunk of a tree after they cross the risky portion.

After a long haul that seems unending the fields of Bara Bhangal village are seen. The village located at the confluence of Ravi river and Kalihini *nallah* along a thick grove of *deodar* trees looks beautiful yet so far away. Bara Bhangal is a solitary village at the lowest point of the valley at an elevation of 2541 m. People coming from Manali reach Bara Bhangal after crossing Kalihini pass.

It is a well-deserved rest day at Bara Bhangal after covering a

dangerous trail safely. Beautifully located rest house is another temptation to stay for the day. Bara Bhangal is an interesting village. Almost everyone migrates to Kangra in winters. People live on primitive means. There is no electricity and people do not use even kerosene. Not that they are not aware of it, but it is difficult and costly affair to carry it over Thamsar pass so they use *jagni* instead. *Jagni* is the root of pine tree that illuminates as well as warms them. People of Bara Bhangal dehydrate boiled potatoes and use these as staple food.

Bara Bhangal to Marh (4 hrs)

An easy, well-defined mule path from Bara Bhangal village starts to the pass. Ravi and Kalihini *nallah* are crossed over wooden bridges before the path starts climbing up at a moderate grade. On way to Marh, a flat land near the snout of glacier, is Udeg. There is a campsite with a rock shelter and seasonal *dhaba* at Udeg but people prefer to stay at Marh as it becomes easier next day. Marh is a small camping area with a rock shelter. In fact Marh is a temporary stone shelter made by Gaddis. Trekkers must carry everything as nothing is available here.

Marh to Panihardu Over the Pass (7-8 hrs)

An early start around 4.30 a.m. from Marh is most suited. It is three to four hours climb to the top. Fast trekkers reach Rajgundha or Baragaon in a day. From Marh to the pass is gradual climb with some steep portions. It is taxing but not difficult. Thamsar is a beautiful pass to cross in Dhauladhar range. Depending upon the month of crossing trekkers may have to walk long distances on snow on either side of the pass. The pass appears much easier when compared with tough and dangerous portions between Khanar and Bara Bhangal.

There is a beautiful glacial lake below the pass. Two other small lakes are nearby formed by glacial depressions. The locals, Gaddis and trekkers frequent the pass. After the pass there is steep and risky descent on a sharp rock face on Kangra side. After that the path goes down up to Bharpal or Bherpal Got, the camping ground of Gaddis. From there it descends further to Panihardu where seasonal *dhabas* provide food and shelter. Panihardu is the base camp for people starting from Kangra side as they generally camp here before crossing the pass.

Panihardu to Palachak (2-3 hrs)

The trek is easy and defined. It is a pleasure to walk down from Panihardu to Billing or Baragaon. Palachak is the base camp just like Udeg on Bara Bhangal side, for crossing the pass early in the morning. A seasonal *dhaba* caters to the travellers. One can stay at Palachak and relax for the day by lazing around. From Palachak one can go to Rajgundha, Billing and then Baijnath. The other option is to go to Baragaon and then Barot.

Palachak–Billing–Baijnath

This is a proper mule trek. It takes about two hours to reach Rajgundha village from Palachak. There is a camping ground and a few provision shops. Further walk of two hours takes to the world famous paragliding site of Billing. There is well-located rest house with plenty of space to pitch tents on the ridge overlooking Kangra valley. During post-monsoon months Billing is a busy and happening place. One can reach Billing in four hours from Palachak.

Billing is one of the best sites for hang gliding in the world. From Billing (2600 m) there is 14 kilometres jeepable road to Bir. Bir to Baijnath is about nine kilometres by bus. One can choose to walk on the established trails that cut short the distance to Baijnath to nearly one-half.

Baijnath, 56 km from Dharamsala, is on the Pathankot–Mandi National Highway, has an ancient Shiva temple. While the old temple is said to have been built by the Pandavas, the new one dates back to A.D. ninth century.

Palachak–Baragaon (2 hrs)–Barot

Those who wish to take different route can go to Barot. From Palachak instead of following main trek to Rajgundha a trail dropping to left is followed that takes to Baragaon village with terraced potato and kidney bean fields. A motor road links Baragaon and Barot. Baragaon is part of Chhota Bhangal area of Kangra district whereas Barot falls in Mandi district. There is a beautifully located rest house, trout fish farm, reservoir of Shanan hydroelectric project and a small bazaar at Barot. Buses are available to Mandi and Jogindernagar from here. Alternatively one can walk up the ridge overlooking Jogindernagar and then climb down to Harabagh village near Jogindernagar town on a well-marked forest path.

OTHER TREKS IN CHAMBA

Manimahesh

Manimahesh (4115 m), a beautiful lake situated at the base of Mount Kailash or Chamba Kailash (5775 m) is considered to be the abode of Lord Shiva and is held in great reverence by people.

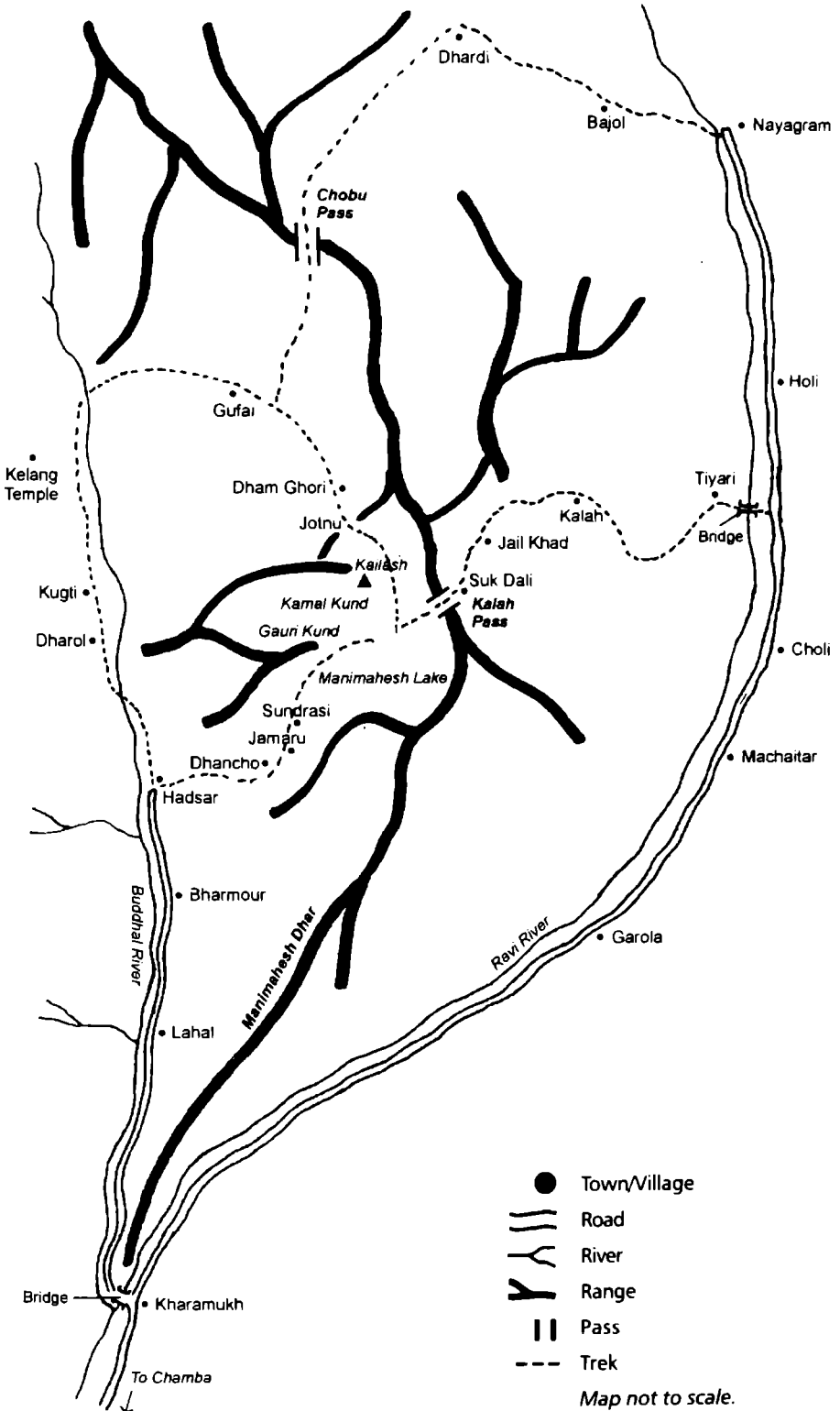
Chamba Kailash and Manimahesh lake are located in Bharmour sub-division of Chamba district. Bharmour or Brahmpura (2199 m), capital of erstwhile Chamba state for over 400 years, is home of nomadic tribals Gaddis. It has many old temples, some about 1300 years old. The temple complex at Bharmour is known as Chaurasi (meaning eighty-four).

Legend says that 84 *yogis* (saints) came to Brahmpura during the reign of Raja Sahil Verman. Pleased with the hospitality of the king they blessed him with ten sons and a daughter. Due to this the temple complex came to be called Chaurasi. Sahil Verman later founded Chamba on the name of his daughter, Champavati.

There is another tale related to Chaurasi temple complex. Legend is that Chaurasi was the seat of Devi Bharmani where Lord Shiva came one day and sought permission of Devi to stay for the night. Devi said that she did not trust him but Lord Shiva assured the Devi that he would leave in the morning. Devi allowed Shiva to stay. Next morning the Devi woke up to find eighty-four Shivlingams all around the place. She was further annoyed when she saw people worshipping Lord Shiva more than her. She was angry and she decided to leave the place. She said that she would shift to an area from where Bharmour was not visible. Therefore, she went up on the hill above Bharmour and settled at a place from where Bharmour could not be seen. On this Lord Shiva also decided to leave Bharmour, but he blessed the Devi that whosoever would like to see him at Manimahesh and Kailash should first visit her. Even today people going to Manimahesh go to the temple of Bharmani Devi located three kilometres uphill from Chaurasi temple.

In the months of August and September thousands of people from all over the country undertake holy pilgrimage to Manimahesh lake. During the *yatra* tented accommodation and food is available beyond Hadsar but at other times one must carry camping equipment and other provisions. There is a government rest house and a few hotels/guest houses at Bharmour. STD/ISD facility is available.

THE MANIMAHESH TREKS



Three different routes lead to Manimahesh. The most popular one is thirteen kilometres walk from Hadsar village. This is a proper mule trek and thousands of people follow this route to the holy lake every year.

The other two trails are difficult and tough. One starts from Kugti village while the other takes off from Tiyari village near Holi in Bharmour.

Bharmour–Hadsar–Manimahesh

Highest altitude	—	4115 m
Duration	—	Three days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Easy

Hadsar–Dhancho (3-4 hrs)

From Bharmour a motor road leads to Hadsar, 13 kilometres away. The trek to Manimahesh starts from Hadsar and a climb of about 13 kilometres takes the pilgrims to Manimahesh Lake.

The path leading up to the lake is well-maintained and involves gradual ascent. The devotees march up chanting the name of Lord Shiva. Almost halfway through (six kilometres) is an open, flat plateau with green meadows. This place is known as Dhancho.

Tented accommodation and food are available at Dhancho during August-September. Many devotees put up free *langars* all the way up from Hadsar during the *yatras*. After days of trekking it is better to stay here for the night and start for the lake in the morning but more adventurous can walk up to the lake and pitch the tents right on the bank of the lake for a blissful sublime experience. There is a huge waterfall on Gauri *nallah* called the Dhancho fall.

Dhancho to Manimahesh (4-5 hrs)

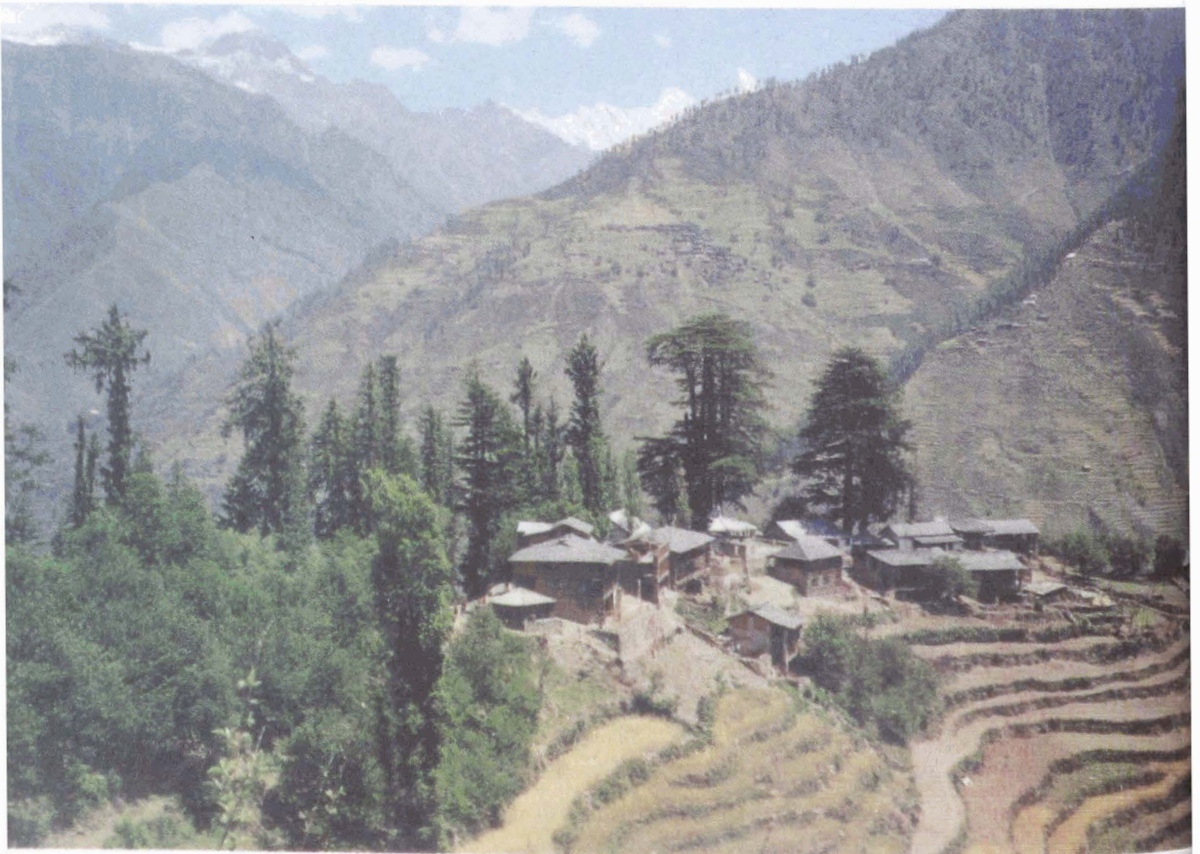
A stiff climb starts from Dhancho on a proper foot path. Many years back first ascent from Dhancho used to start after crossing Gauri *nallah*. It was so tough that at places one had to crawl like a monkey, that is why it was called Bandar Ghati (monkey valley). Now even this path has been improved. Though most of the people follow the newly constructed path, some still take on the challenge and take the trek through original Bandar Ghati. Next trail is the trek through



1. Rangrik, 2. Gauri Kund, 3. Chandar Tal lake



4. Inderhara



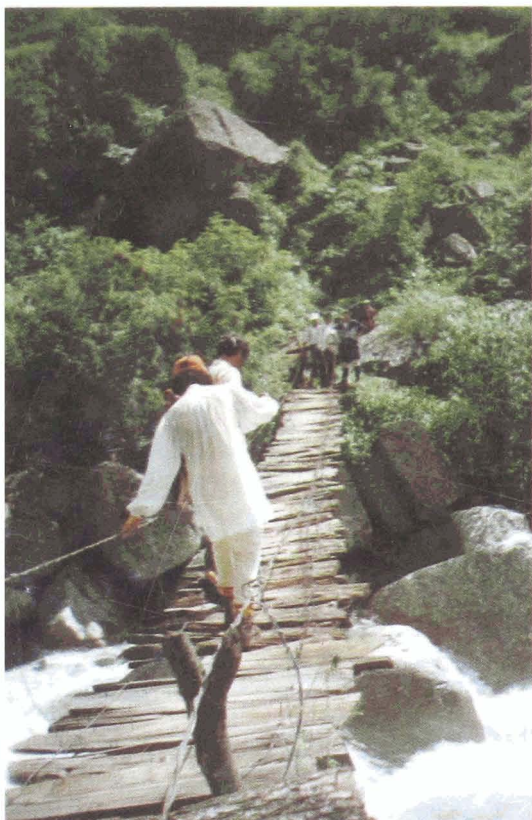
5. Tunda village

7. Kugtu village

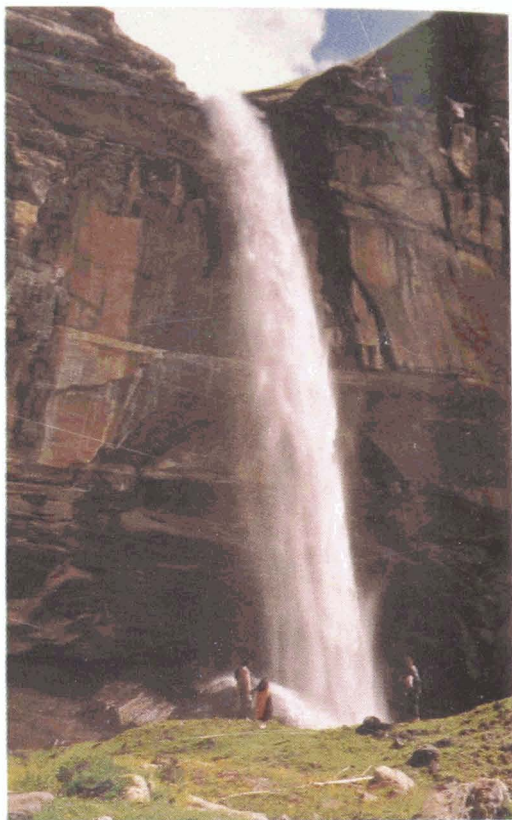


6. Kibber village

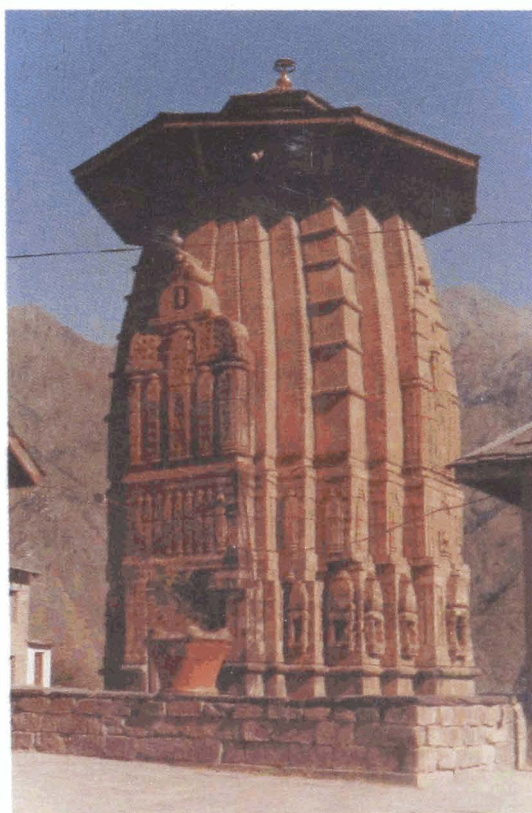




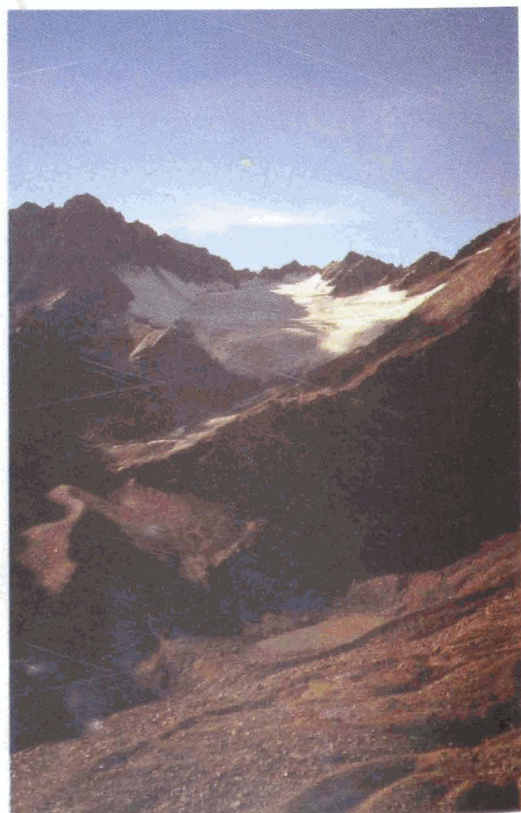
8. Bridge to Bagga Dhar



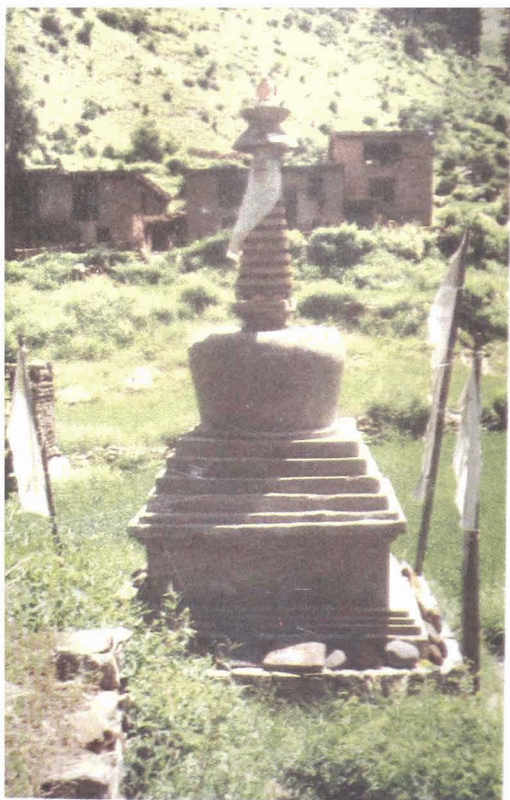
9. Waterfall in Sural valley



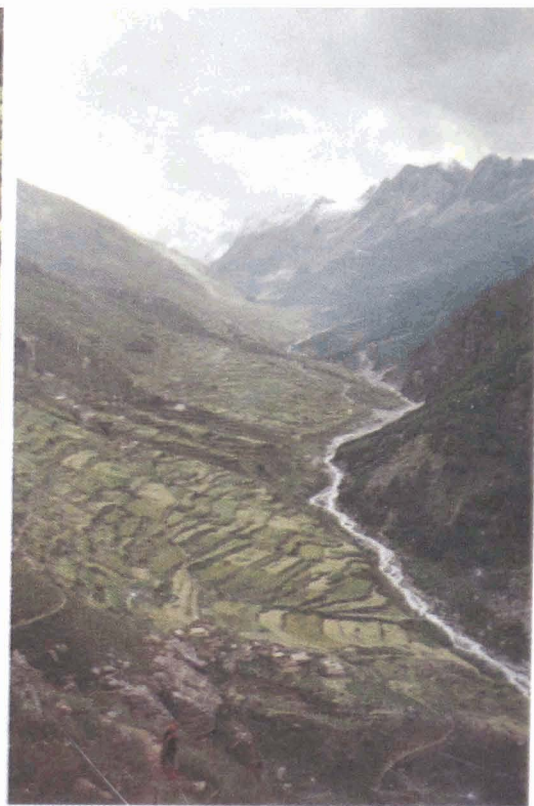
10. Chaurasi temple, Bharmour



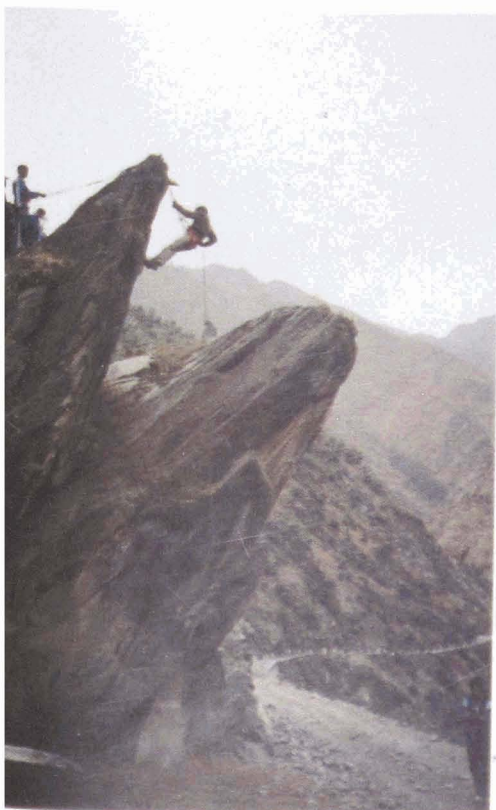
11. Chobu pass



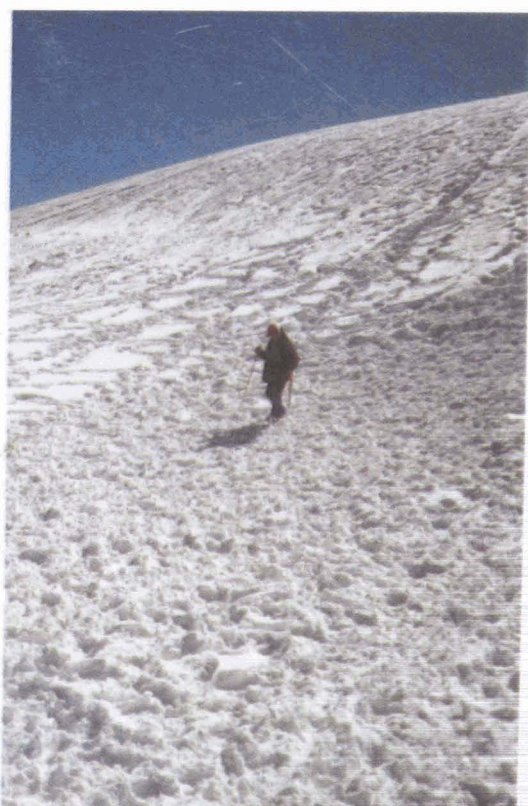
12. Bhot Chorten



13. Sural valley



14. Rappelling



15. Snow-walking



16. Manimahesh Kailash



17. Parashar lake, Mandi



18. S.K.T. road near Shour



Bhairo Ghati (valley of Lord Bhairo) where the path leads through boulders and involves almost vertical climb through a rock face. Here again an easier, broader path has been carved out to make it easy for the pilgrims.

Short of Manimahesh is Gauri Kund where ladies take holy dip before going to Manimahesh. It is said that goddess Parvati used to take bath in this *kund*. A dip in the ice-cold water is said to wash all sins. On *Radha Ashtami* day one of the spectacular feat is to watch the *chelas* crossing the lake. They walk through the lake in freezing cold. But everyone cannot do this. People tell about some adventurous persons who tried to emulate but got drowned.

From Dhancho to the lake and back to Hadsar is easily possible in a day. Some persons start in the night from Hadsar, reach the lake in the wee hours, take the holy dip and are back at Hadsar before noon. There is a frequent bus service from Hadsar to Chamba during the *yatra* days.

Holi–Manimahesh Across Kalah Pass

Highest altitude	—	4720 m
Duration	—	Three days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Very difficult

This is an adventurous and difficult trek and is recommended for experienced persons only. A guide who has actually climbed up the path is needed.

Bharmour/Holi to Jail Khad (6-8 hrs on Foot)

Tiyari village is located about five kilometres short of Holi on Bharmour–Holi road. Reach Tiyari bridge over Ravi that connects lower and upper Tiyari villages located on the right bank of the river. Early start is recommended. The path climbs sharply to upper Tiyari and then to Kalah, the last village. A steep climb after upper Tiyari takes to the ridge overlooking Ravi valley. Villages located on slope high up on the left bank of Ravi are seen. After that the path is gentle up to Kalah.

Kalah is a small village with a provision shop, a primary school and a temple. Though one can camp here for the night but it is

better to carry on the march up to Jail Khad, a camping place with rock shelter. Trekkers must have all the provisions to camp at Jail Khad. The path from Kalah to Jail Khad is more or less defined and well-marked. There are two rock shelters on the right bank of the *nallah* at Jail khad.

Jail Khad to Manimahesh (6-8 hrs)

The trail from Jail Khad is on the right bank of the *nallah* and it turns steep after a small temple at the base of a huge rock face. After that it is very sharp climb on rock face, loose boulders and moraine. There are some footholds carved out on the rock at critical places. The tiring climb eases a bit nearly half way through at a place called Suk Dali, the dry lake. In fact there is no clear path after Jail Khad and much depends upon judgement and skill of the trekkers. Therefore, an experienced person is needed to guide along the climb.

After Suk Dali, it is the same story. Steep climb on sharp rock faces and loose boulders without any path. It is a taxing journey. After much effort one is at the top of the ridge. The downward journey is on big boulders but not that difficult. It takes nearly one and a half hours to reach Manimahesh lake from the top.

Return to Hadsar the next day via Dhancho.

Bharmour–Kugti–Manimahesh Across Jotnu (Chobu Pass)

Highest altitude	—	4750 m
Duration	—	Four days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Difficult

Bharmour to Kugti (4-5 hrs on Foot)

Hadsar 13 km from Bharmour is linked with motor road. After that there is a walk of 13 km to Kugti, the last village of Chamba district on this side. A jeep road to Kugti is under construction on the right bank of Kugti *nallah*. Traditional foot path is on the left bank. The foot path involves many ups and downs. The travellers have the option of following the jeep road to avoid the sharp ascents and descents in the first part of the trail. Half way to Kugti is Dharol with small resting place and seasonal teashops. Kugti forest rest house

is located short of village. Kugti is a beautiful village with old houses that take you back by centuries.

Kugti to Gufai, Cave Shelter (6-8 hrs)

Trail drops to cross wooden bridge over Kugti *nallah* and then climbs sharply upwards through a thick forest. It reaches a flat pasture. Gaddis camp here with their flock. Thereafter, the path descends sharply through thick grass. It is a slippery and risky portion particularly during monsoon and post-monsoon months as grass is waist-high and wet. The trail drops down to the *nallah* coming from the mountains ahead. After crossing the *nallah* it climbs up again through the pastures where Gaddis can be seen camping. Terrain changes as grass also disappears leaving boulders and moraine.

Last ascent on these stones and boulders leads to the campsite called Gufai after the small cave shelter that is basically an overhang. Deadwood is not available here. It should be carried from below near the pastures.

Gufai to Manimahesh (6-8 hrs)

The climb to the top of the ridge which is to be crossed over to Manimahesh is long, tiring and tough. Early start is recommended. After Gufai there is no respite. Trail continues to rise very sharply on loose boulders and moraine. It is climb, climb and climb. There is no water on the trail after Gufai. After a steep climb that drains out the energy, a flat portion filled with moraine telling the tale of a vanished glacier gives little consolation.

The climb starts through boulders and rises up towards a huge hanging rock called Dham Ghori. After great ordeal one reaches Dham Ghori, a huge rock hanging precariously. It can be seen from quite far and continues to frustrate the climbers, as it appears to be unreachable. The last leg to Dham Ghori is on slippery scree and loose pebbles.

At Dham Ghori it is time to have well-deserved long rest. It is ideal to have packed lunch. It is a long haul over boulders and snow before Manimahesh lake is reached. The downward journey to the lake is as difficult as the climb. One can trek down to Gauri Kund after visiting Kamal Kund, a small lake in glacial depression. It takes three to four hours long battle with moraine, boulders and slippery

slopes to reach Gauri Kund. Alternatively one can descend to the Manimahesh lake by following a spur. But before that one must cross the glacial stream that has freezing water, or traverse a glacier to start the journey to the lake on the spur.

Ghadasru Mahadev Trek

Highest altitude	—	3484 m
Duration	—	Five days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Moderate

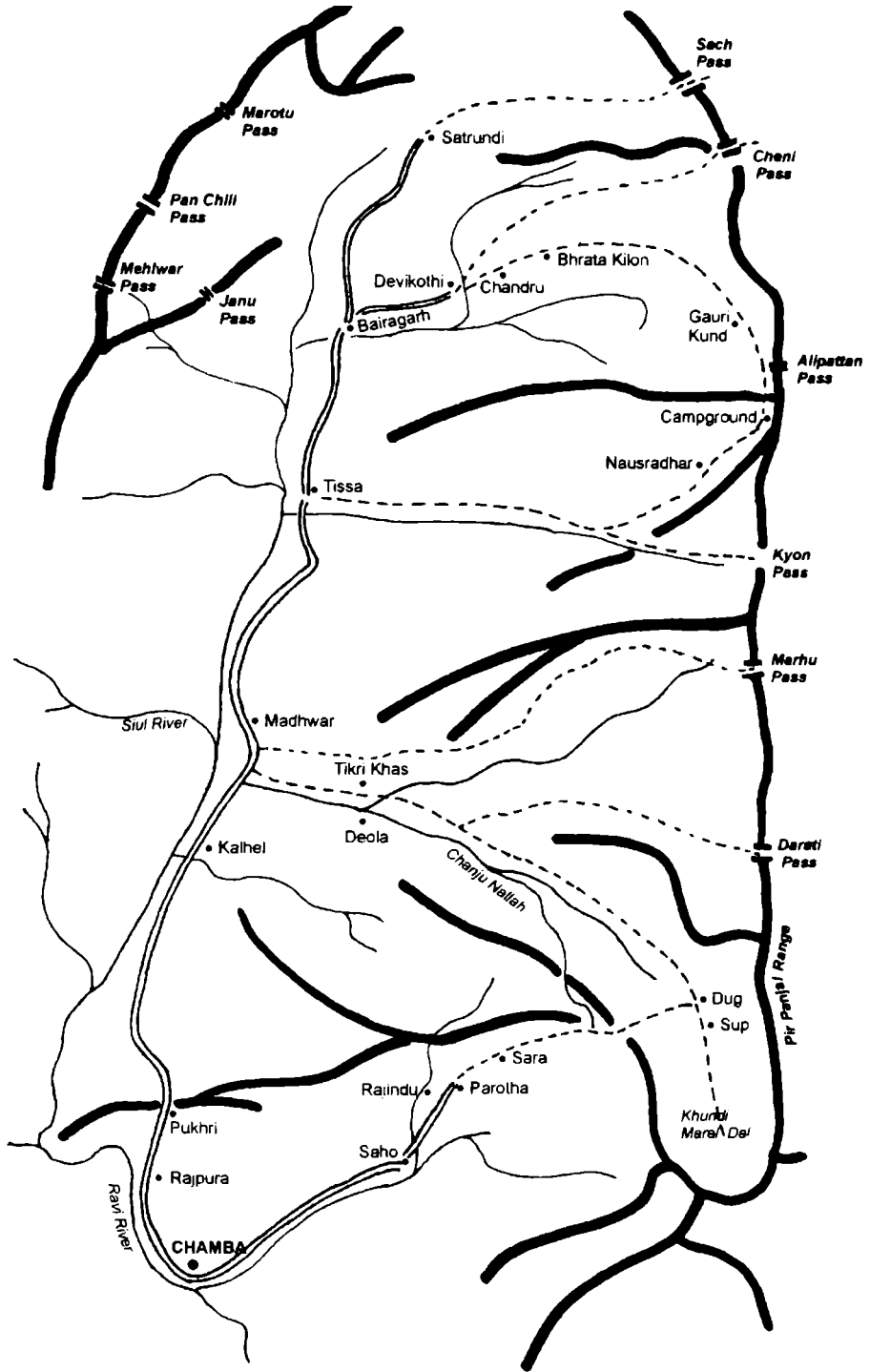
Ghadasru is another high altitude lake dedicated to Lord Shiva in Chamba district. It is located in Tissa area of Chamba. Tissa is located at a distance of about sixty-five kilometres from Chamba. It is connected by motor road. Tissa, called Churah, is the sub-divisional headquarters of Chamba. All the offices are higher up at Bhanjraru. Tissa borders with Jammu & Kashmir. Devi Kothi temple and Bhadra Kali (Bhalei) are famous shrines of this area. Rajas of Chamba built various resting stages called *kothis* at different places in Churah area. Besides Ghadasru Mahadev lake the other lakes in Churah area are Mahakali Dal and Mehalwar Dhar Dal. Pilgrims going to Mahakali Dal observe complete silence near the lake. Even devotional songs and *mantras* are not chanted.

There are two paths that lead to the lake and people generally go from Bairagarh and Devi Kothi side and come down to Tissa. Trekkers can take the route in reverse order also as there is no restriction on it. The pilgrimage to Ghadasru is held in August and people take a dip in the lake on *Janamashtmi* day.

Bhanjraru (Tissa) to Devi Kothi (by Vehicle)

Devi Kothi village is forty-two kilometres from Tissa on a motor road. The village has a revered temple built in eighteenth century by Raja Umed Singh of Chamba. The temple is dedicated to goddess Bairwali Chamunda. The temple is a typical example of hill architecture with beautiful wood carving. Pilgrims to Ghadasru pay respects to the goddess and camp in and around the temple for the night.

GHADASRU MAHADEV & OTHER TREKS IN CHAMBA



- Town/Village
- ≡≡≡ Road
- Y River
- Y Range
- || Pass
- - - Trek

Map not to scale.

Devi Kothi to Bhratta Kilon Camp (8-10 hrs)

From Devi Kothi the village path leads to Chandru village, the last habitation on way to the lake. Chandru village is about four km from Devi Kothi. After Chandru, trek gains height gradually through a mixed forest and grasslands. The climb is tiring and quite taxing before one reaches the campsite called Bhratta Kilon. There are some rock overhangs and vast pastures to camp. Pilgrims stay the night in the open with elementary provisions to guard against cold. The trek up to Bhratta Kilon is well-marked and defined.

Bhratta Kilon–Lake–Camp Ground (8-10 hrs)

The climb on second day is very steep and tiring. Trek leads to a place called Gauri Kund. Ladies wash themselves here also as water from Ghadasru Mahadev mixes in this *kund*. It takes half an hour to reach the lake from here. The lake is circular in shape with a small temple on one side. The circumference of the lake is two-third of a kilometre. After taking bath in the lake people start return journey. One can return from the same route or can descend to Tissa from Nausra Dhar, the beautifully spread alpine meadows. After the lake, path is through moraine for quite some time. After about three hours it reaches a portion called Bandar Ghati where there are vast pastures that serve as camp ground.



Pilgrims stay at a place called Kali Kund having a *nag* temple. The other option of descending is through Bari Forest. People following this path stay the night at Goyya. Tissa is thirty-two kilometres from Goyya.

Camp Ground to Nausra Dhar (8-10 hrs)

It takes about ten hours to reach Nausra Dhar from the campsite at moderate pace. Nausra Dhar is vast pastureland where Gujjars stay in summer months. They move down with their herd that consists mainly of buffaloes besides goats, sheep and horses in post-monsoon months. Between campsite and Nausra Dhar several small passes called *galu* in pastures are crossed, the main one being Odan Galu.

Nausra Dhar to Tissa (8-10 hrs)

It is a steep climb down to Tissa on a well-defined forest path.

Chamba-Lahaul Region

LAHAUL

Lahaul is part of Lahaul & Spiti district. In fact both Lahaul and Spiti are two distinct geographical regions separated by high rising Kunzum pass. Not only this, these two regions are entirely different units socially and culturally also.

Lahaul lies to the south of Tibet and the name Lahaul comes from Lho Yul meaning the south country. Broadly, Lahaul can be divided in two regions of upper and lower Lahaul. Upper Lahaul region comprises the valleys of Chandra and Bhaga rivers respectively. Lower Lahaul is the valley formed downstream by the river Chenab (Chandrabhaga) after the confluence of Chandra and Bhaga at Tandi. This valley is also called Pattan valley. It is fertile and productive compared

General Information

Area (Lahaul & Spiti):	13,835 sq km (24.85% of total state area)
Headquarters	: Keylong
Climate	: Cold summers, severe winters with minus temperatures, heavy snowfall
Altitude (Keylong)	: 3348 m (from mean sea level)
Population	: 33,224 persons
Density	: 2 persons per sq km
Sub-divisions	: 3
Main River	: Chandrabhaga (Chenab)
Nearest Airport	: Bhuntar (165 km from Keylong)
Road Distances from Keylong	: Manali 165 km; Kaza 187 km; Leh 360 km; Shimla 396 km.

to the valleys in upper Lahaul. Mayar is a sub-valley in lower Lahaul formed by Mayar *nallah*. The Tibetan influence over upper Lahaul was quite distinct in the past and the region was a province of Tibetan kingdom. In later years upper Lahaul was taken over by Raja of Kullu and the lower Lahaul from Triloknath to Pangi and Gulabgarh came under Raja of Chamba. Lahaul also remained under the Sikh rule for some time when Maharaja Ranjit Singh either annexed or controlled most of the hill states. After the fall of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the British controlled these areas.

Lahaul is the largest producer of potato in terms of per hectare production.

Lahaul has always remained an important center as it is on the Manali-Leh trade route that passes through high passes.

Keylong (3348 m) the district headquarters of Lahaul & Spiti district is 117 km from Manali across Rohtang pass.

Bharmour-Keylong Across Kalicho Pass

Highest altitude	—	4990 m
Duration	—	Five days
Season	—	July, September-October
Grade	—	Very difficult

It is one of the most difficult passes leading to Lahaul from Bharmour. Mainly Gaddi shepherds who are well-versed with the path cross it. Trekkers must take a local guide. Even shepherds cross this pass after animal sacrifice to the goddess Kali in an elaborate ritual. The *gur* or *chela* who presides over the ritual commands the crossing. He directs the event by declaring the time of crossing the pass called *langha*. Generally there are only three crossings (*tin langhe*) and goats are sacrificed at each.

Bharmour-Badgram (by Vehicle)-Banni Devi-Bhadra (4-6 hrs)

Travel by vehicle to Badgram and then reach Bhadra after paying respects to Banni Devi. There is a jeep road up to Badgram village out of which eighteen kilometres stretch up to village Harchu is motor road. Bus plies up to Harchu. Taxis can be hired at Bharmour but the portion between Harchu and Badgram is risky. It will take couple of years before the road improves. The trekkers may follow the road

from Harchu to Badgram on foot. Badgram is a big village. Forest rest house is ideally located after crossing the village. There is good campsite around the rest house.

One can break journey at Badgram or travel further for about two hours on a well-defined forest road to Bhadra, the last village on way to Kalicho pass. There is a good campsite near the village. Alternatively one can take the trail to Banni Devi temple from Badgram and stay there or reach Bhadra for the night.

Banni Devi is famous temple and the goddess is held in great respect. Shepherds pay respect to Banni Devi before proceeding to Kalicho pass. Trekkers should also visit the temple before starting off to the pass. Local belief is that goddess takes care and protects the persons going to Lahaul over Kalicho pass.

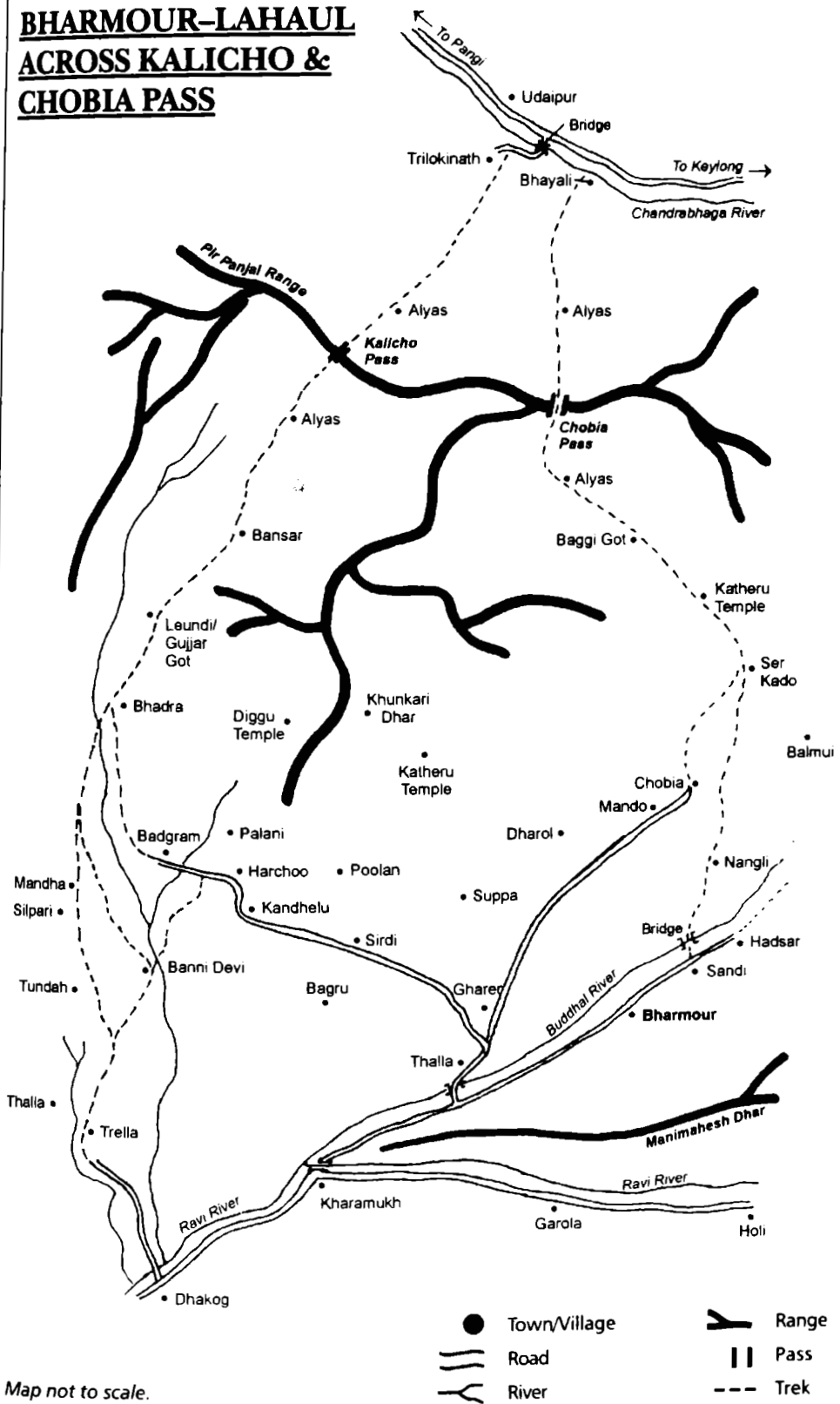
Bhadra–Leundi/Gujjar Got (5–6 hrs)

It is a march of fifteen kilometres to Leundi. There are good meadows for camping. Trekkers can make it to Bansar Got after a really early start from Bhadra but that makes the journey of about thirty-five kilometres in a day. Therefore better option is to call it a day at Leundi half way to Bansar. There are *kothas* of Gujjars at this place and a temple *sarai*. From Bhadra there is a distinctively-marked forest path. Temple at Leundi is dedicated to Banni Mata, it is also called Leundi Mata temple. This part of the trek is relatively easy though the climb is steep at places.

Leundi to Bansar (5-6 hrs)

After Leundi there is steep climb to Bansar Got, believed to be the place where Banni Mata incarnated. Altitude rises sharply. Many streams are to be crossed between Bhadra and Bansar that do not have any bridge. Many of these *nallahs* can be very difficult to cross. Temporary *tarangris* get washed away, therefore, it is better to start early in the mornings. Water level rises in the afternoons in these *nallahs*. There is a huge rock on which stands the temple dedicated to Diggu Wajir and Banni Devi. *Trishuls* (tridents) mark the place. This is a sacred place and Gaddis treat it with great respect. They offer prayers before starting further. There is a campsite to pitch tents. During summers Gaddis camp here for days before undertaking journey to Lahaul.

BHARMOUR-LAHAUL
ACROSS KALICHO &
CHOBIA PASS



Map not to scale.

Bansar to Alyas (2-3 hrs)

One can reach Alyas after starting from Leundi on the same day. However even if one stays at Bansar for the night Alyas is the proper stage to halt. The distance between Bansar and Alyas is only five kilometres but it makes the next day's journey much lighter. The climb from Bansar is on moraine and grass alternatively. There is good place to pitch tents. No deadwood is available at this place, it must be carried from below.

Alyas–Kalicho Pass–Triloknath (10-12 hrs)

Alyas is at the foot of the pass and the mighty Pir Panjal range towers vertically up above like a frightening barrier. The pass is just two kilometres up from Alyas but it appears that it takes ages to reach it. The climb is vertical, risky and very taxing. It takes nearly six hours to climb nearly two kilometres long stretch. The route is not defined at all and a slip or accidental fall is fatal. Thin air, hostile terrain and steep rock face to climb make it a gruelling effort. Trekkers must start at least at 4 a.m. from Alyas. That means they should be climbing at 4 a.m. after packing, eating and getting ready. Only then the pass can be reached at about 10 a.m. There is a small temple dedicated to the goddess Kali, the presiding deity of the pass.

Descent on Lahaul side is also tough but comparatively easy. It is long trail down to Triloknath, famous temple village in Lahaul. Village is nearly eighteen kilometres from the top. But drop in altitude and the feeling of crossing the most difficult pass of Pir Panjal make it possible to reach Triloknath by evening. Those tired can camp on the way in pastures and start for Triloknath the next day. Enough campsites and *gots* are there on the way.

Bharmour–Keylong Across Chobia Pass

Highest altitude	—	4966 m
Duration	—	Four days
Season	—	June, October
Grade	—	Very difficult

Chobia is difficult pass to cross. Gaddis of Bharmour cross it with their flock in June. But they do not return by same route, as it becomes risky in post-monsoon months. They usually return from

Kugti or Kalicho pass. On both sides of the pass long distance is to be covered on snow. There are crevasses on Lahaul side that open up in monsoon months. These are difficult to negotiate. In June the region on both sides of the pass remains covered under deep snow making it easier to walk. These portions are exposed in monsoon months making it very difficult for trekkers. Therefore June is the best month to cross the pass.

Bharmour–Katheru Temple (6-8 hrs)

There are many ways to reach Chobia from Bharmour. A motorable road has also come up till Chobia. People can hire taxi to reach Chobia in the morning and then reach Katheru temple or Baggi Got for night stay. Reaching Chobia by vehicle reduces distance on foot to the temple or *got* as the case may be.

Others can walk from Bharmour on this long trail of nearly twenty kilometres. It is lengthy but an easy trail. From Bharmour follow motor road to Hadsar upto Sandi (8 km). The trek descends to Budhal *nallah* that is crossed over wooden bridge. Thereafter a moderate climb leads to Ser Kao village. There is no need to go to Chobia if this route is followed and one can head to Ser Kao and then to Katheru temple. It is a defined trail that needs three crossings of Chobia *nallah* after Ser Kao. There are temporary *tarangris* that get washed away in rains. The path gains altitude moderately along the *nallah*. Temple is located near the *nallah*. Deadwood and water are available on this trail.

Katheru to Alyas (6-8 hrs)

From Katheru a more or less defined trail climbs up and reaches Baggi Got, the campsite of shepherds. It takes two to three hours to reach Baggi Got where vast pastures and alpine meadows welcome the trekkers. Thereafter gradual ascent leads to Alyas where a rock overhang serves as shelter for people. From Katheru this place is about thirteen kilometres.

Alyas–Chobia Pass–Alyas (8-10 hrs)

Distance to be covered in the day up to the campsite across the pass is not more than fifteen kilometres but it is the most taxing, tiring and challenging part. The climb is tough and risky. It takes nearly four hours to reach the top that is about five kilometres. Climb

involves walking on snow for a couple of kilometres depending upon snowfall in winters. In post-monsoon months there is ice film on top of snow and boulders that makes it a risky climb. There is steep climb near the pass that ends on a flatter portion covered by snow and then the pass is nearly twenty metres ahead. The top is reached after much effort. There is a temple at the top of the pass.

There is steep descent across the pass on moraine and boulders. There is no proper path on Lahaul side and one can waste precious time in locating right trail without a guide. Being a crevasse area across the pass, the trekkers must be very careful in this stretch. Nearly four kilometres are to be trudged either on snow or boulders. The path is easier in June as heavy layer of snow makes sliding down easier. The campsite called Alyas is reached after a tiring descent. This place is used by the Gaddis from Ravi valley to halt as rich pastures surround the campsite.

Alyas–Bhayali (5-6 hrs)

The climb down to Bhayali village of Lahaul twelve kilometres from Alyas is much better as there is an identifiable trail that is free of boulders. The trek down to the village goes through the gorge formed by huge mountains on both sides of Chobia pass. Once out of the gorge the view is splendid. Bhayali is typical Lahaul village, beautiful and sleepy with sturdy, hard working and friendly people. It is located near the bridge over Chandrabhaga. One can cross over and board a bus to Udaipur, nine kilometres from here or walk up on the left bank itself to go to Triloknath.

Bharmour–Lahaul Across Kugti Pass

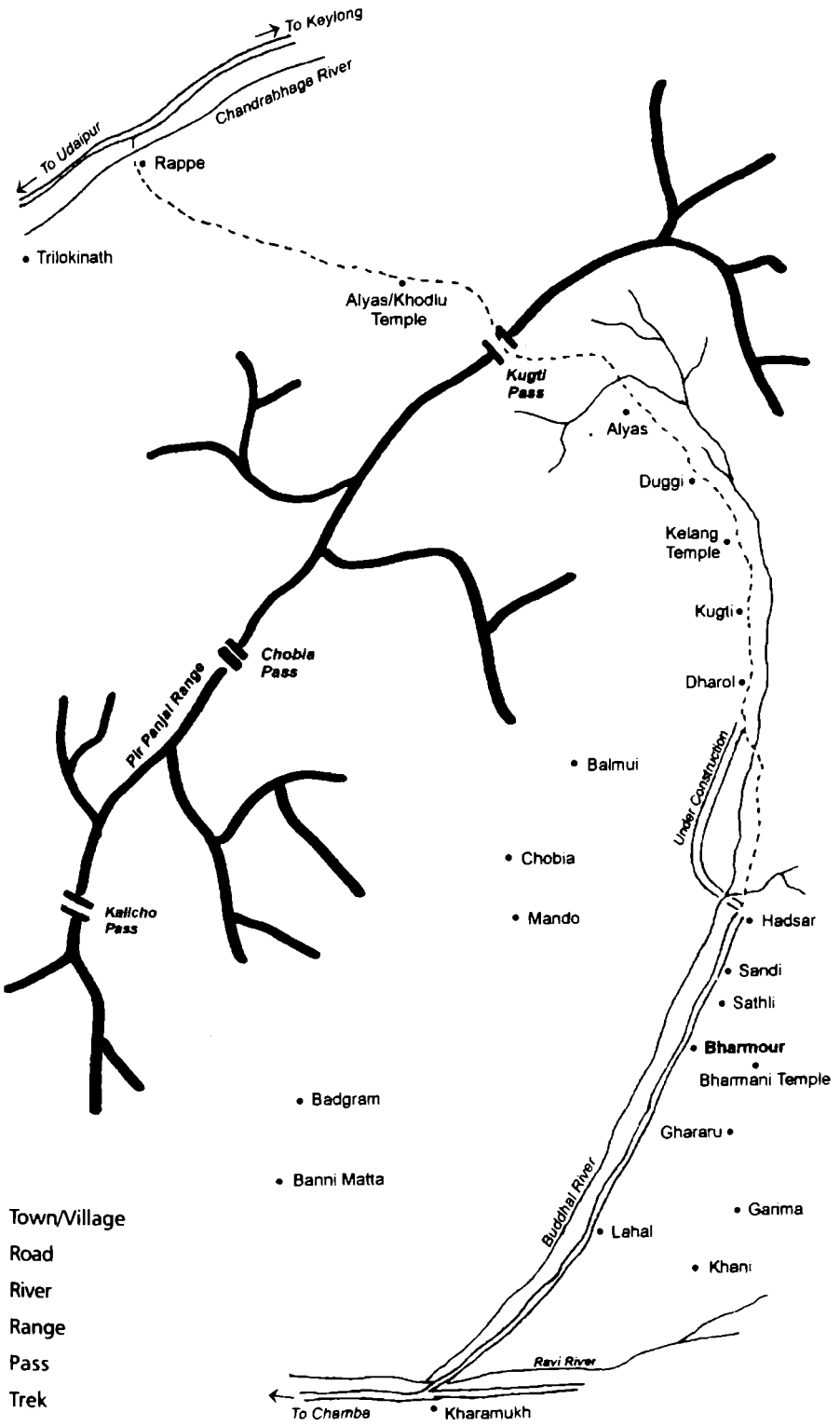
Highest altitude	—	5040 m
Duration	—	Five days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Very difficult

Bharmour to Hadsar is thirteen kilometres on a motor road. Shared taxis are available at Bharmour.

Hadsar to Kugti (4-5 hrs)

Well-defined trail with ups and downs on the left bank of Kugti

BHARMOUR-LAHAUL ACROSS KUGTI PASS



- Town/Village
- ||| Road
- Y River
- Y Range
- == Pass
- - - Trek

Map not to scale.

nallah leads to a point where the *nallah* is crossed on a wooden bridge and then winds up on the right bank up to a place called Dharol. Seasonal *dhabas* function here during summer months. There is a small hut for emergency shelter. Road link on the right bank of the *nallah* is under construction after which the ups and downs would be eliminated.

Kugti is the last village of Chamba on way to Lahaul across Kugti pass. It is a thickly populated village, in fact there are two villages Upper Kugti and Lower Kugti. There is an ayurvedic dispensary, middle school and a couple of shops. The civil supplies department also has its fair price outlet in the village but it is advisable to carry the provisions from Bharmour itself. There is a forest rest house located before the village with two rooms. Bookings are done at Bharmour.

Kugti to Duggi Cave (6-8 hrs)

This is a thirteen kilometres stretch on an identifiable trek. From Kugti the trail leads to the famous temple of Kelang Wajir or Kartik Swamy, five kilometres from Kugti village. Local people hold the temple in great reverence. The trek is defined and easy with a steep climb towards the end. There is a *sarai* for shelter. Trail to Duggi cave climbs moderately through pastures along a *nallah*. The *nallah* is to be crossed before Duggi. There is a temporary *tarangri* that gets washed away in heavy rains. Generally it must be crossed before noon when water levels are low. The trail goes on further in open valley to Duggi. There is splendid campsite with water and deadwood and a big overhang as cave shelter that can accommodate many people.

Duggi to Alyas (7-8 hrs)

This too is a defined trek that traverses sloping pastures and involves steady climb along the *nallah*. Trek follows the *nallah* upstream on the right bank. The campsite called Alyas is at a distance of nearly thirteen kilometres from Duggi. This is the place where Gaddis camp in summer months on their journey to and from Lahaul. This is the most frequented pass as far as trekkers and Gaddis are concerned. There is enough space to pitch tents but deadwood is not available.

Alyas to Alyas (Khodlu Temple) Across the Pass (9-10 hrs)

It is a very steep ascent to the pass most of which is over snow. The weather deteriorates all of a sudden and the temperature drops sharply. At times thick fog reduces visibility so much that it becomes difficult to locate the trail.

The climb to the pass from Alyas takes nearly five to six hours. Trekkers must start at around 4 a.m. The climb is very steep and risky. Initial stretch of about two kilometres after Alyas is prone to shooting stones. The climb is along a *nallah* called *Chor nallah* by Gaddis. The trail leads to a flat moraine after two hours climb from where it turns to your right and generally the walk on snow starts from this point. It then heads straight up on very difficult last stretch.

Depending upon the month of crossing trekkers may need to cut steps on hard snow or ice. Ice axe is valuable while crossing this pass. Though the climb to the top is nearly five kilometres it takes nearly six hours. Small temple, prayer flags and *trishuls* on the pass complete the picture.

The descent is no less tiring. One has to tread on snow for quite some time on this side too. Steep slope is to be negotiated for nearly four kilometres before it becomes easier. The trail does not descend straight down after the pass on Lahaul side. It takes a detour to your left and then charts a gentle curve downward to avoid crevasses. Thereafter the path is not very tough.

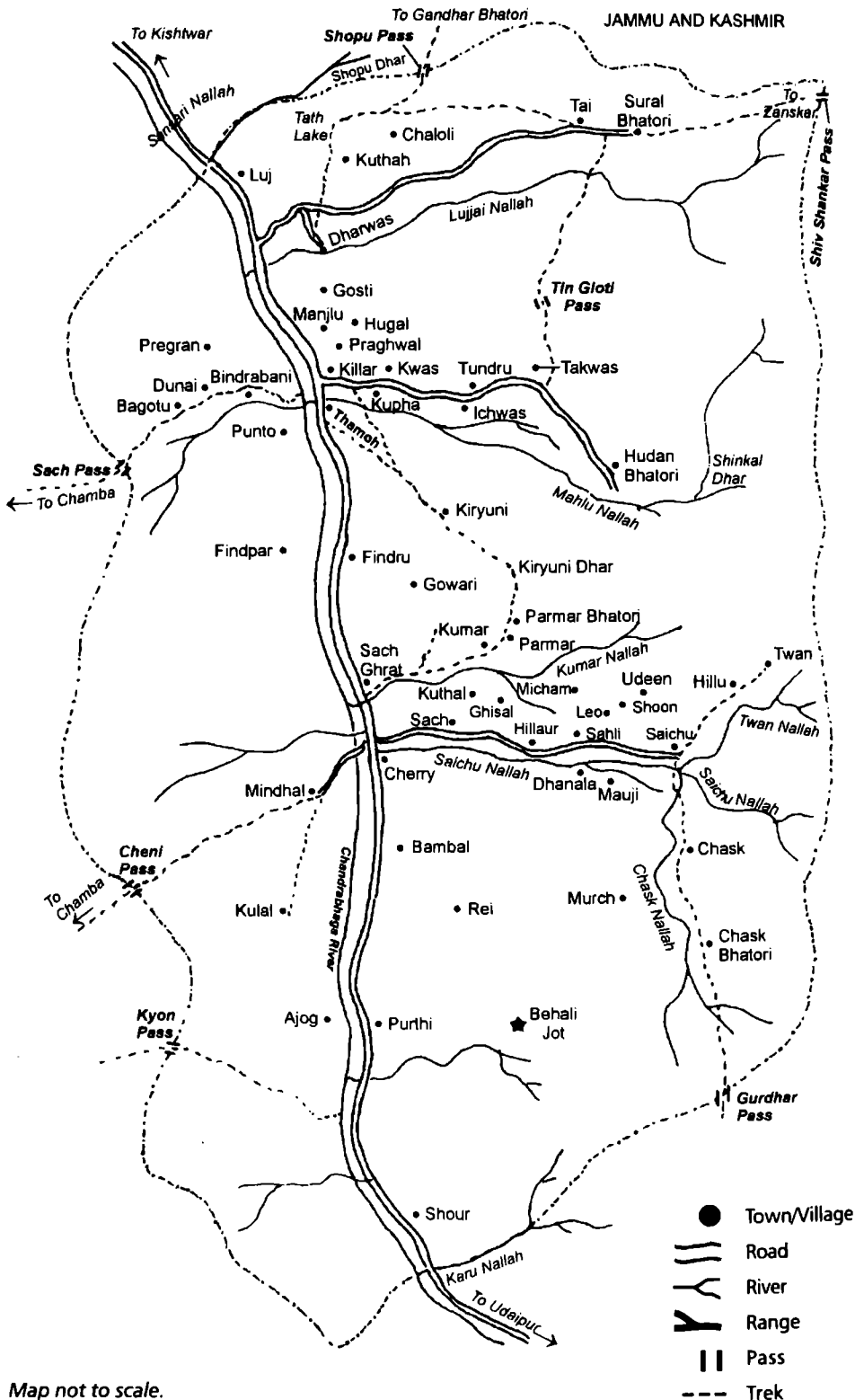
The trail winds its way down to a camping place called Alyas or Khodlu. There is a temple and good campsite. Here too Gaddis camp for many days in summers.

Alyas (Khodlu) to Rappe (4-6 hrs)







The trek after Khodlu is comparatively easier and follows a *nallah* that flows through Rappe village. Rappe provides first open view of Pattan valley of Lahaul famous for green peas, seed potatoes and hops. A motor road connects Rappe village and one can board a bus to Udaipur or Keylong after crossing the bridge on Chandrabhaga.



PANGI VALLEY



Map not to scale.

-  Town/Village
-  Road
-  River
-  Range
-  Pass
-  Trek

Pangi Region

Pangi, one of the administrative sub-divisions of Chamba, lies between mighty Pir Panjal and Zanskar ranges. It is indeed a forlorn world where time and space acquire a new dimension. It remains snow-bound for nearly six months. Approach to the valley is across high mountain passes of Sach, Cheni or Rohtang.

So forbidding was this valley that Raja of Chamba paid “funeral expenses” to the state officials proceeding on duty to Pangi, as their return, alive or dead, was not sure. It is also said criminals and political offenders were banished to Pangi.

There are beautiful side valleys in Pangi namely, Sural, Saichu, Kumar-Parmar and Hudan. All these valleys are connected with Zanskar area of Ladakh through old trade routes. Local people used to go to Zanskar for barter trade. People are mainly Hindus with a few Buddhists. The Buddhists with Mongolian features, called the Bhots, inhabit the villages in higher reaches. There are five such villages called *bhatories* in the valley namely, Sural Bhatori, Hudan Bhatori, Parmar Bhatori, Hillu Twan Bhatori and Chask Bhatori.

Approaches to the Valley

Pangi valley is approachable through Sach pass (4414 m), Cheni pass (4385 m) or Rohtang pass (4116 m). Out of these Sach pass is most frequented by the local people, officials serving in Pangi and also by shepherds. Both Sach and Cheni passes link Pangi valley with Churah area of Chamba district. Other than these passes, the valley is accessible by road through Jammu & Kashmir via Doda and Kishtwar along Chenab river.

Work on motor road to link Pangi across Sach pass is going on and a tunnel is proposed under Rohtang to link Kullu and Lahaul valleys.

Climate

The shade temperature at Killar (2591 m), the headquarters of Pangi does not exceed 25-28° C in summers but drops much below zero degree centigrade in peak winters. The temperature of Killar is recorded to be as low as 20° below zero. Snowfall is heavy. Snow usually begins to fall on the passes in October and closes them in early November. The passes reopen in May, though the snow lasts on them till July, and some of the higher elevations remain perpetually covered. The region on the whole is subject to severe winters, heavy snowfall, strong winds and frequent avalanches.

The Chenab (Chandrabhaga) River

The Chenab is believed to be the river mentioned in the *Rigveda* as *Asikni*, and *Akesines* is considered to be the Greek version of the *Rigveda* name. The two rivers Chandra and Bhaga join to make river Chandrabhaga or Chenab. These two sister branches meet at Tandi in Lahaul & Spiti district. The total length of the course of the river through Chamba district is approximately 96 kilometres and its width is estimated to be 150 feet on an average.

Chenab is the largest river of Himachal Pradesh in terms of volume of water.

Tandi onwards, the river valley is somewhat open upto Mudgraon village after which it contracts to a narrow gorge with precipitous cliffs as far as Tindi where again there is a bit of an open expanse on the left bank for several kilometres.

From Tindi to Shour (in Pangi) the valley is wild and rugged. At Shour and at Purthi, six kilometres beyond, there are villages on the right bank and the valley again becomes narrow as far as Mindhal village on the left bank and Sach village on the right bank. From here onwards the valley spreads out and the river flows in a north-westerly direction through picturesque area past Killar and Dharwas where it leaves Pangi valley and enters Jammu & Kashmir through Paddar, Kishtwar and the outer periphery of Jammu and emerges on the plains of Akhnoor.

Flora and Fauna

Thick growth of *deodar* forest exists on the right bank of river Chandrabhaga. It extends in fairly pure and continuous belts up to elevation of about 2700 metres where it becomes stunted and gives a sparse cover to the otherwise barren arid slopes.

Walnut, chestnut, apples, poplar, elm, alder, willow and ash are commonly found in moist and shady depressions. Oaks do not occur at all in the valley. While *bhojpatra* trees are found in the upper reaches of valley, shrubs of many varieties form undergrowth in more open forests. This undergrowth is not so dense as to interfere with the production of *deodar*. *Neozsa* and hazelnut trees are also found near Luj and Dharwas villages.

The thick and inaccessible forests provide suitable and safe habitat for a variety of animals and birds. Black and brown bears, tahr, ibex, bharaal, snow leopard, musk deer and goral are found in Pangi. Monal or nilgur, Himalayan snow peacock, the common hill partridge, koklas, snow pigeon and the ram chakor are the main birds.

Saichu Twan wildlife sanctuary was established in 1962.

APPROACHES TO PANGI VALLEY

Chamba–Pangi Across Sach Pass

Highest altitude	—	4414 m
Duration	—	Four days
Season	—	May end to October
Grade	—	Moderate

Sach pass is the most popular and the oldest trek route to enter Pangi valley. Journey across the pass is adventurous and thrilling. In fact Sach pass was the main feeder route to the snowbound valley and all supplies were routed from this pass till road link over Rohtang became a reality. Road link to Pangi over Sach pass is also turning into a reality slowly. On Chamba side buses ply up to Satrundi, the base camp. A helipad has been constructed here and the jeep road extends for about two kilometres from Satrundi towards the pass. If one takes a vehicle to the last point then it is a walk of only one hour to the top of the pass. Work is in progress on the road from Pangi also. The jeep road reaches up to Dunai at present. This means

that one can easily reach Killar in one day from Chamba if vehicles are arranged till the last points on both sides of the pass.

Chamba to Tissa (65 km by Bus)

Motor road to the headquarters of Churah sub-division takes the travellers to Tissa (Bhanjraru). Government rest houses and a few hotels provide food and shelter. Basic provisions for the trip can be procured here also though it is better to arrange supplies at Chamba.

Tissa to Trella or Bairagarh (by Bus)

Bairagarh is located at a distance of twenty-seven kilometres from Tissa. Both Trella (twenty km from Tissa) and Bairagarh are connected with a motor road. The walk can be started either from Trella or from Bairagarh. Both trails meet at Satrundi, the base camp. It is better to start the walk from Trella or Bairagarh to condition the body for climbing the pass.

Earlier Trella was the main business center for Pangri. Being the last bus terminus all supplies were taken on headload or on the backs of sheep and goats. Mules crossed the pass for first time in early eighties.

Trella to Satrundi (5-6 hrs on Foot)

This seventeen kilometres long trail is largely well-defined and offers gradual climb up to Hazappad glacier, which is very difficult to cross in May end or early June. After the glacier the path ascends at steep gradient up to Satrundi. After Trella the first halting station is known as Bhanoodi. Located at an elevation of 2591 m, it is inhabited by Bhots. There are a couple of seasonal hotels and teastalls at Bhanoodi offering food and shelter.

After Bhanoodi, the trek goes up through the thick oak and pine forest till it descends to Hazappad *nallah* that is covered by a glacier for the larger part of the year. There are a few critical points in this section. It is a bit difficult in early May and after October as the water turns into ice.

After that there is steep climb to Satrundi. It is tiring and taxing. In case the pass is crossed in the month of May or early June, the entire journey from Hazappad glacier up to Marthalu (across the pass) is on the snow.

Satrundi

Satrundi (3354 m) is the base camp for crossing the pass. Several seasonal *dhabas* provide food and shelter. There is a shabby hut known as the Rest House. This rest house is the modified version of cave-like space under an overhang. There are two beds and a fireplace. A *chowkidar* is present for about four months when the pass is open.

In July and August fresh milk, cheese, butter, *khoya* and *burfi* are available as the Gaddis and Gujjars graze their cattle in the pastures around Satrundi. There is no vegetation at Satrundi except for grass. Fuelwood is to be carried from the forests below. The mountain slopes are full of wild flowers of every hue. Travellers rest in this serene environment and prepare themselves for the next day.

Satrundi–Sach Pass (3-4 hrs)–Bagotu (3-4 hrs)

Four kilometres ascent to Sach pass is undertaken early morning from Satrundi. Normally, pass is not crossed in the afternoon. Beyond Satrundi, the region remains under snow almost throughout the year though the path is clear of snow in post-monsoon months. Journey to the top takes time as walking on snow or moraine is not easy.

There is small temple at the top of the pass. Travellers offer a piece of red cloth and tie it to the *trishuls* affixed at the temple. Usually they also tie a piece of cloth on their wrist or stick it in their garments for the rest of the journey. Teashops function at the top for about three months. They serve tea, boiled spicy black grams, noodles, biscuits and light snacks.

The descent of eight kilometres to Bagotu is also tough. Immediately below the pass is an open space known as the *bhoot* (demon) ground. There is a heavy rock lying on one side of the ground, which is said to represent a *rakshas* (demon). People believe that before the pass opens for travel the goddess turns the demon into rock to avoid any harm to travellers. When the pass closes she brings him to life to serve her. In support of this belief, it is argued that every year this rock changes its position.

Nearly four hours' descent takes one to Bagotu. Bagotu is a base camp just as Satrundi. It is an open space surrounded by very high cliffs and glaciers. There is a *dhaba*, pre-fabricated structure and a couple of tents. People stay at Bagotu after crossing the pass.

Bagotu to Killar (6–8 hrs)

Killar is at about twenty kilometres from Bagotu. There is steep descent from Bagotu upto Dunai at a distance of five kilometres. After Dunai (3049 m) journey becomes less arduous. One hits jeepable road at Dunai. This road is part of the Tissa–Alyas–Killar road.

This path is on the left bank of the *nallah* coming from Sach pass. Old path on the right bank has now been discarded. The journey up to Killar is tiring and involves ups and downs. Trekking of about five hours takes one to the bridge at river Chandrabhaga below Killar. After that one has to climb upto Killar which takes about one and a half hours.

Manali–Killar Across Rohtang Pass

Highest altitude	—	4116 m
Duration	—	Seven days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Moderate

Killar, the headquarters of Pangi valley, can be accessed from Kullu valley after crossing Rohtang pass. There is a motor road up to Killar and regular bus service operates between Kullu and Killar in summers. Road follows Chandra river from Koksar to Tandi after crossing over Rohtang pass. Then it goes downstream along Chandrabhaga river.

The trekkers can cross Rohtang pass on foot after starting from Manali or Marhi and board a bus between Koksar and Udaipur. After Udaipur one can reach Killar in five days on foot in comfortable stages. The trekkers have a choice to cut short the distance to be covered on foot by boarding the bus or hiring the taxi at any stage.

The following stages are recommended to enter Pangi valley from Lahaul side.

Manali to Keylong (by vehicle)

Keylong to Udaipur (by vehicle)

Udaipur to Tindi (19 km)

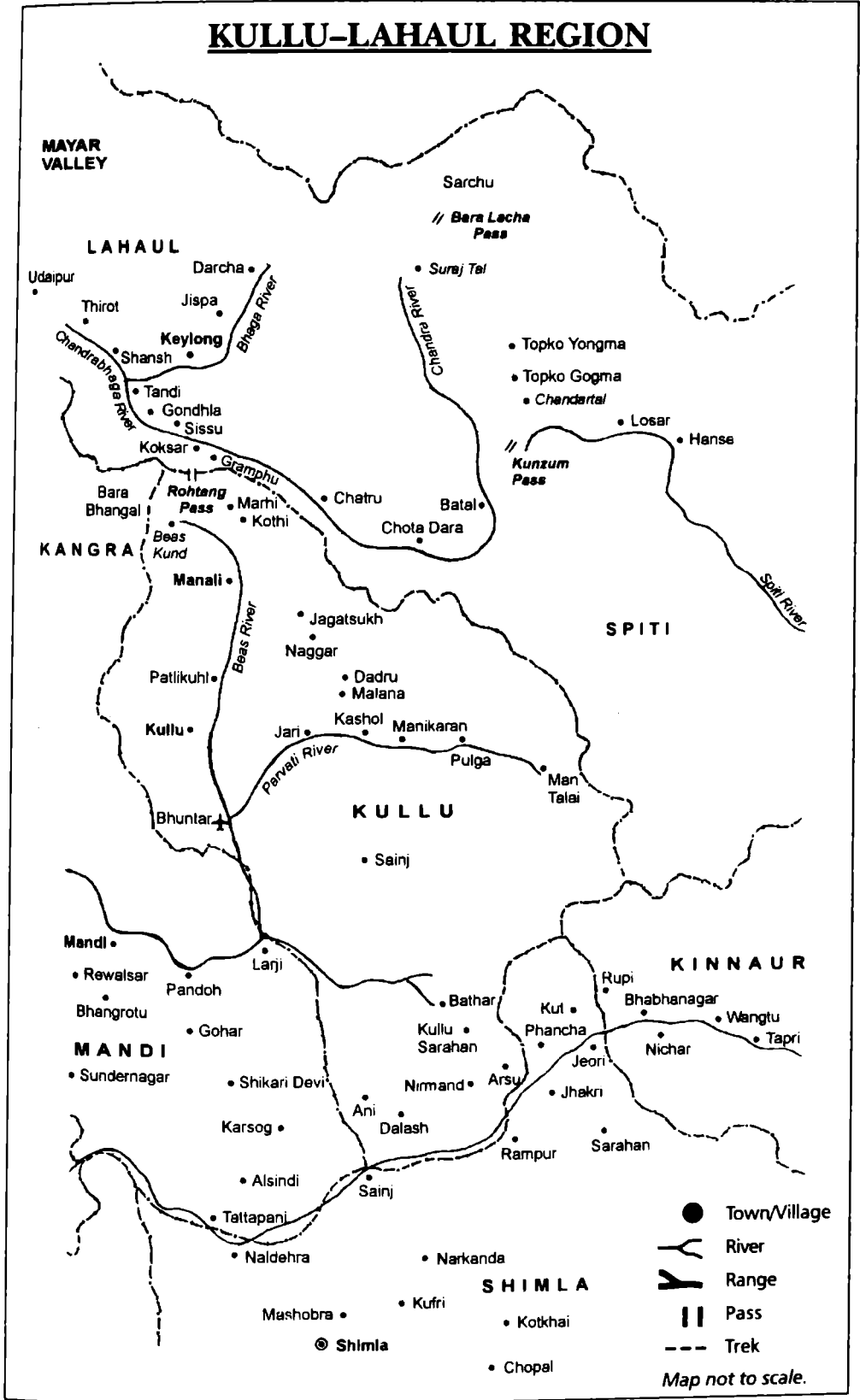
Tindi to Rohli (13 km)

Rohli to Purthi (19 km)

Purthi to Cherry (13 km)

Cherry to Killar (13 km)

KULLU-LAHAUL REGION



Manali to Keylong (by Vehicle)

Manali (1896 m), at the end of Kullu valley below the natural wall of Himalayan ranges of Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal, is the last place to see the world as we know. In earlier literature Kullu has been described as *Kulant Peeth*, meaning the end of world. Early Rajas of Kullu did not venture beyond upper Beas valley on the other side of mountain ranges. Manali is a buzzing tourist destination with thick forest cover. More than one hundred hotels, lodges, guest houses and resorts have come up between Kullu and Manali and in Manali town. These are located on both sides of Beas river. Hidimba temple, Vashisht hot water springs and forested walks are the main attractions here. Directorate of Mountaineering and Allied Sports is located in Manali. It conducts courses and training in trekking, skiing, water sports, rock climbing and mountaineering. There are several travel agencies offering services to trekkers.

Beyond Rohtang lies a different world with different landscape, customs and climate. From Manali the road goes upto Kothi village after passing Bhang and Palchan. There is a rest house at Kothi. From Kothi starts the climb upto Rohtang pass as the road curls upwards in loops. The road is well-maintained under the Project Deepak of Border Roads Organization. Then comes Marhi, another famous tourist destination. In summers hundreds of tourists come to Marhi everyday. Several *dhabas* offer boarding and lodging facilities at Marhi. It acts as base camp for people crossing the pass. In winters rescue post is established at Marhi to help locals who cross the pass on foot.

Rohtang is a very wide pass. It is one of the most beautiful passes in Pir Panjal. Rohtang means, "*Ground of the Dead*" in Lahauli dialect. Perhaps it derives its name from the horror it must have inspired in olden days. Even when there was no road across the pass, local people and traders used to cross the pass on foot.

Rohtang pass is not only the gateway to Lahaul & Spiti district but it is also the first pass on the Manali–Leh road that goes through some of the very high mountain passes. Bara Lacha La (4939 m), Taglang La (5366 m), Ka Lung La (4878 m), La Chul Lang La (5122 m) are the other passes to be crossed. Of these Taglang La is the second highest motorable pass of the world after Khardung La (5579 m).

From Rohtang, the road goes down in loops upto Koksar (3354 m) located at the foothill of the Rohtang on Lahaul side. Koksar used to be the base camp when travellers had to cross the pass on foot. Now the vehicles stop at Koksar for food and snacks. Koksar is on the left bank of river Chandra and it is windy and cold place. From Gramphu, a point six kilometres short of Koksar, the road from Rohtang bifurcates and goes to Spiti valley.

From Koksar to Sissu (15 km) the road remains in bad shape due to sliding zone. The soil is continuously eroding, as there is nothing to hold it, not even grass. Then comes Tandi, the meeting point of both Chandra and Bhaga. After the confluence, the river is known as Chandrabhaga. Tandi is a small place with a few shops. There is a petrol pump at Tandi, the first and last across Rohtang in Lahaul and Pangi valley. The next petrol pump is in Leh more than three hundred kilometres from here. Every vehicle going beyond Rohtang has to carry enough reserve fuel.

From Tandi the road bifurcates. One follows Chandrabhaga and travels towards Udaipur and Pangi and other goes to Leh. Keylong, the district headquarters of Lahaul & Spiti, is located at a distance of seven kilometres from Tandi at a height of 3201 m on Manali-Leh road. Keylong is a small town with hotels, restaurants, provision shops and rest houses.

Keylong to Udaipur (by Vehicle)

Beautiful villages are located on either side of the river—Kargha, Ghoshal, Jhalma, Tholang, Shansha and Thirot are some of these. People grow potatoes, peas, hops and off-season vegetables in this region. Lahaulis are very hard-working. They symbolize the spirit of human endurance and survival. The road is on the right bank of Chandrabhaga.

The road upto Udaipur is by and large good but there are many streams and *nallahs* which keep on disturbing the vehicular traffic. A micro Hydel Project is located at Thirot. Electricity is supplied within Lahaul valley from this project.

The Sansari-Killar-Thirot (S.K.T.) road starts from Thirot. Six kilometres short of Udaipur is the Triloknath village located on the left bank of the river. Famous Triloknath temple is in this village. It is very old temple and people of the entire tribal belt including Lahaul, Pangi and Bharmour have great reverence for Lord Shiva,

the presiding deity of the hills and mountains. Both Hindus and Buddhists hold Triloknath temple in great respect.

At the gate of the temple inside the courtyard stand two pairs of parallel pillars close to each other. It is said that the sinner can not pass through these two pillars even if he is as thin as a leaf and in case a person has not sinned he can easily slide through these even if he is as fat as a pumpkin.

Udaipur is administrative sub-division of Lahaul & Spiti district. It is located on the right bank of Chandrabhaga. The valley is quite wide at this place and is surrounded by steep rock faces.

Mayar *nallah* coming from Mayar valley meets Chandrabhaga at Udaipur. There is a small market here that caters to the needs of the locals and the travellers. Udaipur is the main activity centre and market for the people of surrounding panchayats extending upto Mayar valley (42 km). There is a Degree College and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (at Kukumseri), a Senior Secondary School and Community Health Centre apart from various government offices at Udaipur.

There is a famous temple of Mrikula Devi. It has wonderful wood-carving. It is believed that the Pandavas built it while they were in exile. The Archaeological Survey of India has declared this temple a protected monument. It is situated at the junction of Mayar *nallah* and river Chandrabhaga. The main image in Mrikula Devi temple is that of Mahishasurmardini.

Udaipur to Tindi (6-8 hrs)

The valley gets narrow and turns to a gorge after Udaipur and slopes on either side of the river start getting greener. There is a forest rest house at Kurched that is not in good shape. One must carry tents, sleeping bags and other necessities on this trail.

Tindi, nineteen kilometres from Udaipur, is the last inhabited village of Lahaul towards Pangi side. There are a few shops on the right bank of the river. The main village is located on the left bank. There is an old, eerie rest house at Tindi. Popular belief is that it is haunted. Many travellers who stayed at this rest house for night narrate stories about a man with hat. They claim that they heard footsteps in the corridor; they saw a man; they heard him ask for match sticks and that they heard conversation of ghosts.

Tindi to Rohli (4-6 hrs)

The feeling of entering into a gorge grows stronger. At times it becomes very depressing with mountain slopes on both sides closing on you. Beyond Tindi thirteen kilometres journey up to Rohli is in wilderness. There are no means to communicate with the outside world. Even Tindi, the village only a few kilometres behind you, appears to be out of reach and it looks as if Rohli will never come. There are a few seasonal *dhabas* at Rohli for food and shelter.

Rohli to Shour (3-5 hrs)

The road gets narrower after Rohli. About four kilometres from Rohli is Karu *nallah* that forms the boundary of Pangi with Lahaul. There is a small temple after crossing Karu *nallah* that welcomes the travellers into the valley. Shour, the first village of Pangi, is nine kilometres from Karu *nallah*. There is a good forest rest house at Shour.

Shour to Purthi (2 hrs)

Purthi is six kilometres away from Shour. There is a beautiful forest rest house at Purthi located in a thick grove of trees on the bank of Chandrabhaga. There is a plant nursery established by an Englishman, Mr. Tudd. It is said that this rest house used to be the residence of Mr. Tudd who accidentally fell in the river and was drowned. There is a firm belief that the ghost of Mr. Tudd visits his house even today. Though some claim to have seen him others say that Mr. Tudd has stopped paying courtesy calls after the renovation of the rest house a few years back.

Purthi to Cherry Bungalow (3-4 hrs)

Beyond Purthi, the road goes up to Bambal after crossing Rei *dhank*. There are many small *dhabas* at Bambal. From Bambal one can see Kulal and Mindhal villages located on the left bank of Chandrabhaga. Cherry bungalow rest house is at a distance of thirteen kilometres from Purthi.

Saichu *nallah*, one of the major tributaries of Chandrabhaga meets the river here. Cherry is the take off point to the Saichu Twan wildlife sanctuary area.

Cherry to Sidh Mandir and Killar (3-4 hrs)

It is a thirteen kilometres walk from Cherry to Killar. After crossing Findroo village on the way one reaches Sidh Mandir, a resting place with temple, a few shops and shade. After Sidh Mandir, the road gains height up to Killar gradually. Killar and the surrounding villages are located on a mountainside sloping down to riverbed. Killar cannot be described as a valley in the strict sense of the word. It represents a cluster of villages with a small market known as Chowki.

Chamba–Killar via Kishtwar

Highest altitude	—	2600 m
Duration	—	Four days
Season	—	March to November
Grade	—	Easy

A motor road has linked Killar along Chandrabhaga river. Border Roads Organization has constructed the road as an all-weather road to Killar. Now it is possible to drive to Killar in one day from Chamba. However old trek can still be followed beyond Gulabgarh.

Chamba–Pathankot–Jammu–Kishtwar–Gulabgarh (by Vehicle)

Pathankot is 122 km from Chamba. After Pathankot the road goes through Udampur, Kud, Patni Top and Batote. Mansar, a beautiful lake, is on the way. Patni Top is a famous hill station of J & K. From Batote, one road goes to Srinagar and the other to Kishtwar.

From Kishtwar to Atholi bus service is available. Atholi and Gulabgarh are located on the banks of river Chandrabhaga facing each other. There are a few small hotels and *dhabas* at Atholi and Gulabgarh. Gulabgarh was once part of Chamba state. Mines of precious *Neelam* (sapphire) stone popularly known as "*Neelam of Pangi*" are located in this area. It is said that Raja of Chamba gifted the area from Sansari *nallah* upto Gulabgarh in dowry to his daughter when she was married off in the family of Raja of Jammu. Thus the boundary of Chamba state which extended up to Gulabgarh was restricted upto Sansari *nallah*. People of this area have their family ties with the people in Pangi. Gulabgarh is quite open compared to Pangi valley and the mighty Chandrabhaga, known as Chenab in this area, flows in a wider span and appears comparatively calm.

Gulabgarh to Killar

Killar is forty-six kilometres from Gulabgarh. The trekking stages are as under.

Gulabgarh–Shol–Ishtiari (5-7 hrs)

Gulabgarh to Shol is eight kilometres on vehicle road. The old foot path fell in disuse after road construction. But still certain shortcuts are there that reduce the distance considerably. Shol is a small village with a few teastalls and hotels. From Shol there are two options. One trek leads straight from Shol to Ishtiari village. This trek is identifiable. The journey is tiring as the trek goes up and down many times before reaching Ishtiari. Many risky portions over glaciers and icy patches are to be crossed. The second option is to follow the road trace up to village Tiari and then climb to Ishtiari. This climb is also steep. Both ways the walk involves nearly twelve kilometres. Ishtiari is also a small village with a few *dhabas* offering board and lodge.

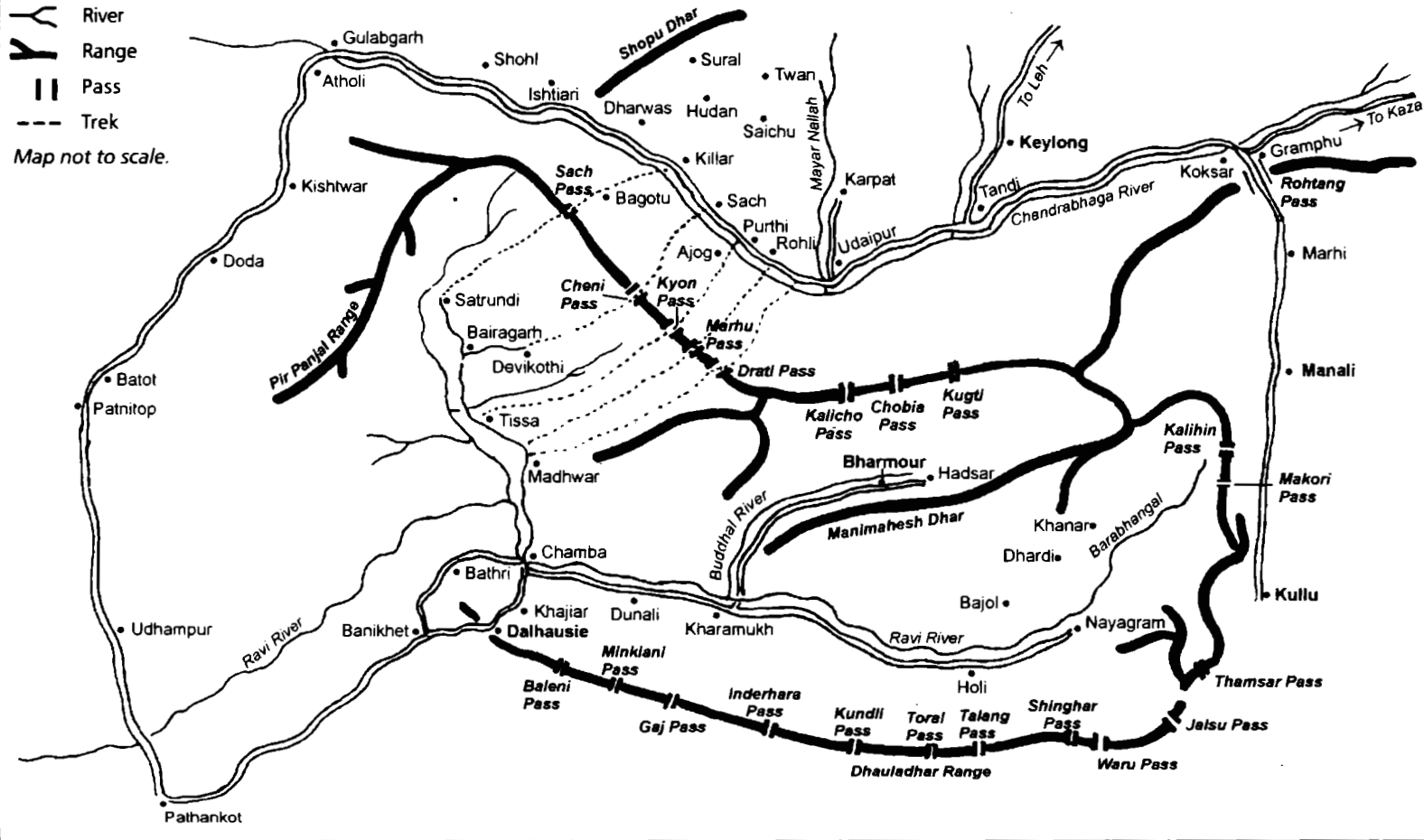
Ishtiari–Sansari Nallah (2-3 hrs)–Dharwas (2-3 hrs)

Dharwas is nearly seventeen kilometres from Ishtiari village. The trek is very well-defined. It meanders into a thick forest across small villages named Shwas and Tham and then descends rapidly to the point where Sansari *nallah* meets Chandrabhaga. It is a beautiful place. If one walks through this area in April end or May, avalanches falling from the steep mountain slopes across the river Chandrabhaga are seen frequently.

From Sansari *nallah*, there is gradual climb through thick forest on a well-defined path up to Dharwas. Natural sources of drinking water are scarce on this route and one has to be self-sufficient. Luj is the first village of Pangi from this side with a rest house. It has three main sub-villages namely Udaini, Bishtow, Mangalwas. There is famous temple of Sheetla Mata in this village where a fair is held annually. Animal sacrifice is practised. From Luj the path leads to Dharwas, one of the most thickly populated villages in the valley. There is a rest house at Dharwas. The trek to Sural valley of Pangi and then upto Zanskar takes off from Dharwas.

TREKKING ENTRIES TO PANGI VALLEY

- Town/Village
 - Y River
 - Y Range
 - == Pass
 - - - Trek
- Map not to scale.



Dharwas to Killar (2-3 hrs)

From Dharwas it is almost level walk of nine kilometres to Killar on the S.K.T. (Sansari–Killar–Thirot) Road.

Chamba–Killar Across Cheni Pass

Highest altitude	—	4385 m
Duration	—	Four days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Moderate

Chamba–Tissa–Devi Kothi

Cheni pass at a height of 4385 m links Churah area of Chamba with Mindhal village in Pangi. Chamba to Tissa is connected by road. From Tissa one has to go to Devi Kothi village that is linked by a motor road. The climb is steeper from Chamba side. Generally, shepherds and the people living in Mindhal and Kulal villages of Pangi valley use this pass, as it involves less travelling for them as compared to Sach pass.

Devi Kothi to Alyas (3-4 hrs)

The trail passes through small hamlets and grasslands. After crossing Hail it enters the *nallah* and goes up along it. After walking for nearly twelve kilometres it reaches campsite of shepherds known as *got*. This is also called Alyas. There is a large cave high up on the right bank which provides shelter.

Got (Alyas) to Grat (Across the Pass) (5-6 hrs)

The ascent to the pass is very steep. The path is over the glacier and running water turns into ice making it very risky and dangerous at places. The travellers negotiate a tricky last climb to reach the top. Across the pass there is an icefield for some distance. After this there is rapid descent but the path becomes less and less risky as one continues to go down. There is a camping place known as Grat at the junction of two steams.

Grat to Mindhal and Killar (6-8 hrs)

The trail is defined and easier after Grat. Mindhal village is at about seven kilometres from campsite. Gaddis camp with their flock

in summer months on both sides of Cheni pass. Locals leave Devi Kothi before daybreak and reach Mindhal or Killar by late evening. Mindhal village is located on the left bank of river Chandrabhaga. Famous temple of Chamunda Devi also called Mindhla Devi is located in this village. There is a rest house in the village.

One trek goes along the left bank of river Chandrabhaga to Findpar village three kilometres from Mindhal. Here the river is crossed in a rope trolley called *jhula* or *ghururu* to reach Findroo village. From there Killar is about ten kilometres on motor road. The other way is to cross bridge over Chandrabhaga below Mindhal village. Across the river the path climbs up to meet the S.K.T. road. From this point Killar is about fourteen kilometres.

TREKKING WITHIN PANGI VALLEY

Killar to Hudan Lake and Back

Highest altitude	—	3506 m
Duration	—	Two days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Easy

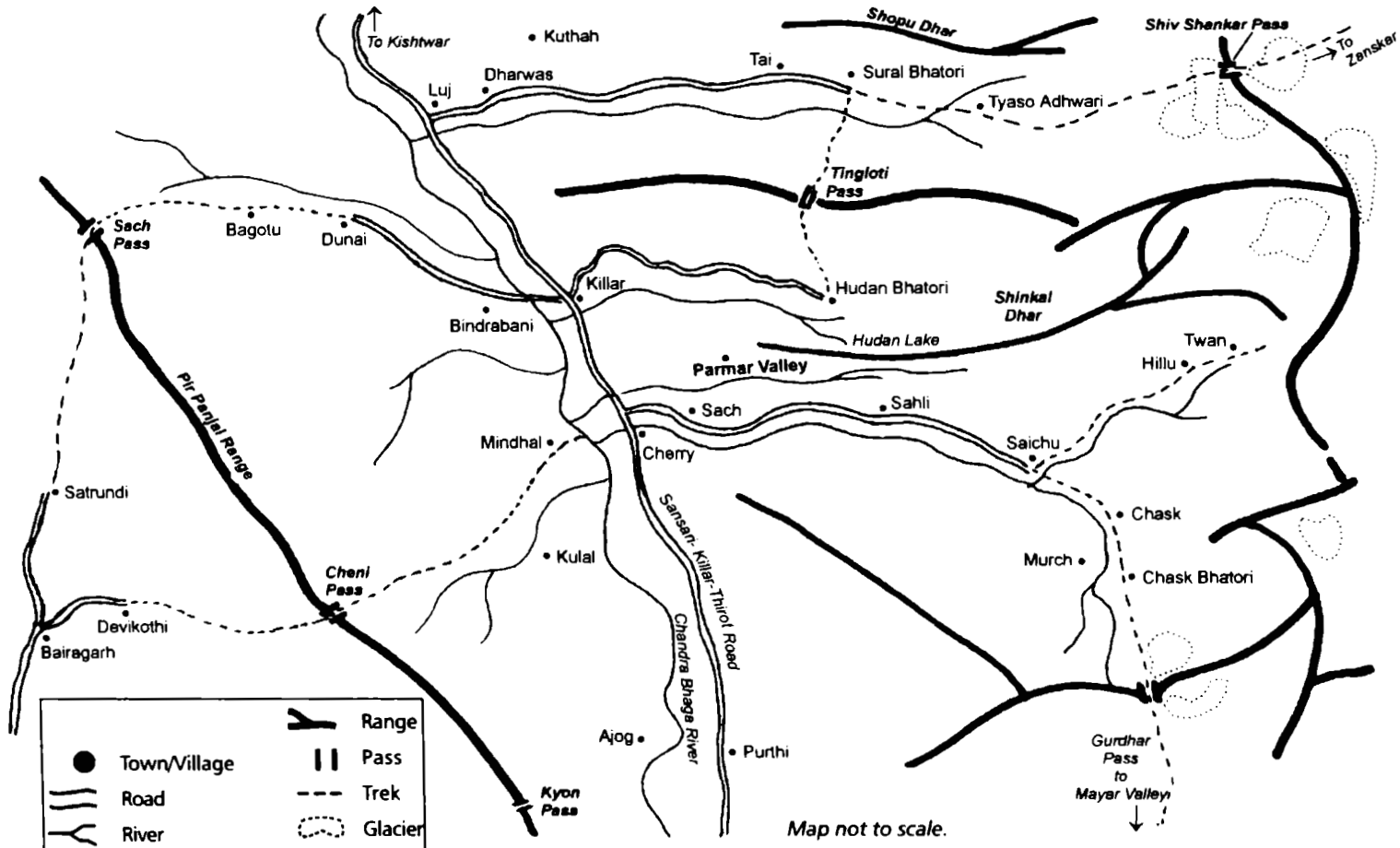
The thirteen kilometres trek from Killar to Hudan village involves moderate ascent. The trail passes through many villages till it reaches Hudan Bhattori, last village on this side. Hudan is a beautiful sub-valley upstream Mahlu *nallah*. It has rich pastures beyond Hudan Bhattori known as Shinkal *dhar*.

The trekkers have many options to start from Killar. They can climb up to the helipad after passing through the Senior Secondary School Killar following a steep shortcut path crossing vehicle road to Hudan. The other way passes through village Kwas and climbs up gradually to meet the Killar–Hudan road. Then road is followed upto Tundroo *nallah* from where the first steep ascent starts.

The trekkers can take alternate route through Chowki bazaar and cross small interesting villages to meet the Killar–Hudan road near the Tundroo *nallah*. This involves an easier climb through Kupha, Parmas and Seri Bhatwas villages.

At Tundroo *nallah* one can rest and have cool refreshing water before starting on steep climb. After the initial climb, there comes a

TREKS AND PASSES IN PANGI VALLEY



small portion below a huge rock. The local people narrate an interesting legend about this place. They show “swords” dug deep high up into the rock face. Only handles of the “swords” are visible presently from the path.

Legend is that three *pandits* lived in Hudan valley who could fly. To demonstrate their skill they flew upto this rock and dug the swords at a place that was beyond reach of ordinary humans. Local people firmly believe this story.

On crossing Tundroo and Takwas, Hudan Bhatori is the last village in this sub-valley. Just one kilometre beyond Hudan Bhatori lies a beautiful lake at a height of 3506 m. Every year a fair is held at this place. It is an ideal camping site. The lake is frozen from mid-November to early May, depending upon weather. The only source of water is a nearby stream. The striking feature around the lake is carpet of wild flowers mostly yellow and blue in colour.

A few kilometres beyond the lake are vast grazing lands known as Shinkal *dhar*. These grasslands are very rich in herbs and medicinal plants. Nagni springs are also located near Hudan Bhatori. This village, located at a height of 3354 m is inhabited by Buddhists. There is a gompa (Buddhist temple) with majestic statue of Lord Buddha. It also has some beautiful wall paintings. One can cross the 4878 m high Tingloti pass from here to reach Sural sub-valley. This is a tough pass and is recommended only for experienced trekkers. Another trek leads to Kiryuni that goes further to Parmar sub-valley.

From Hudan the trek goes to Zanskar also. In fact, the trek from Hudan meets the other trek coming from Sural Bhatori on the glacier on the foothill of Shiv Shankar La.

Killar to Parmar Sub-Valley

Highest altitude	—	3200 m
Duration	—	Two days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Easy

Parmar sub-valley has three villages—Kumar, Parmar and Parmar Bhatori—located upstream Parmar *nallah*. The highest village is Parmar Bhatori (3200 m), twenty kilometres from Killar. It is a Buddhist village. Though the height of this village is not much but due to

geographic location there is no vegetation except birch trees, which too are on the left side of the Parmar *nallah*.

From Killar to Findroo the S.K.T. road is followed. From Findroo the trek winds up via Gowari village towards Parmar valley. The trek passes through deep, dense forest rich in flora and fauna. Just before reaching Kumar the trek drops a little and enters the village. There is a gang hut of Public Works Department having two rooms and a kitchen for staying the night. A daily wage *chowkidar* is there to cook.

Another trail to Parmar valley starts from Sach Ghrat located on the Sansari–Killar–Thirot (S.K.T.) road at about twelve kilometres from Killar. Sach Ghrat is a place where Parmar *nallah* meets river Chandrabhaga. Sach Ghrat to Sach is a well-defined trek. There is a rest house at Sach. Two main treks originate from Sach. One goes to the Saichu sub-valley and the other to the Parmar sub-valley.

The trek from Sach to Kumar descends to Parmar *nallah* that is crossed over a wooden bridge. After this the trek rises suddenly and continues to curl up till it reaches Kumar.

Parmar is about three kilometres from Kumar on a well-defined village path. Parmar Bhatori is two kilometres from Parmar. Parmar Bhatori is a small village inhabited by Bhots. There is a gompa here. Beyond Parmar Bhatori lie alpine meadows and grasslands.

Saichu–Twan–Chask Bhatori Trek

Highest altitude	—	3659 m
Duration	—	Six days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Easy

Killar to Sach (3-4 hrs)

Till Sach Ghrat (12 km) the Sansari–Killar–Thirot (S.K.T.) road upstream Chandrabhaga is followed. Thereafter a well-defined mule path climbs up to Sach village. After climbing for some time, the path enters the fields. From here one can have *darshans* of temple of Chamunda (Mindhla) Devi. Sach (13 km) has been linked with a motor road recently. In fact, road link has become operational till Saichu. There is a good rest house at Sach having three rooms.

Sach to Saichu (5-6 hrs)

From Sach the trek to Saichu valley is quite easy and progresses along the right bank of Saichu *nallah*. At some places there is danger of shooting stones. Another path leads through Kuthal and Ghissal villages involving steep climb to these villages. It is generally avoided. After Sach first village on this trek is Hillaur located on a steep hillside. It is a large village, the last house of which can be seen perched on top of hill.

From Hillaur to Sahli the trek is comparatively less tiring. On the left bank of Saichu *nallah* there is thick vegetation. Mauji and Dhanala are two small villages located on the left bank. Though these villages look to be ideally located in thick forest but these go without sun for most of the year. Next village is Sahli thirteen kilometres from Sach with a community rest house for stay. There is a fountain slab with beautiful carving on it. This slab is preserved as a monument.

At Saichu the valley opens up and it presents a beautiful sight. Saichu is bowl-shaped village surrounded by high rising mountains. It is located at the confluence of three streams—Hillu Twan *nallah*, Chasak *nallah* and Saichu *nallah*. Forest rest house overlooks Saichu village. Many small treks start from Saichu. One trail goes to Leou, Shoon and Udeen villages. From there it leads to Hillu Twan. The other path goes straight to Hillu Twan along Hillu Twan *nallah*. Yet another trek leads to Chask Bhattori and beyond across Gurdhar pass to the Mayar valley in Udaipur in Lahaul.

Saichu is chilly with very cold mornings and evenings. The water starts turning into ice as early as September. All the *nallahs* freeze in winters as temperature drops much below zero degree.

Saichu to Hillu Twan (3 hrs)

Hillu and Twan are two small villages at a distance of nine kilometres from Saichu. These beautifully located villages are inhabited by Bhots. Another small village Kali Cho lies in between them but generally these villages are called by the common name—Hillu Twan. The rest house at Twan was washed away in flash floods of 1998. One can pitch tent near the village and return to Saichu the next day.

From Saichu the trek goes along Twan *nallah*, climbs abruptly after some distance and after that gains height gently. The scenery is very

charming, the trek is smooth and enjoyable. It winds its way through vast fields and many seasonal streams.

There is one Buddhist temple (gompa) at Twan. While coming back from Twan instead of taking the usual path along Twan *nallah* the trekkers can follow the other trail upwards and go to Udeen, Shoon and Leo villages. These three villages overlook Chask valley. While going to Udeen from Twan one can have panoramic view of Twan valley. From Leo one can go to Sahli after visiting Micham, a small village located at the ridge. From Leo another trek goes to the top of village Hillaur, Kuthal, Ghisal and then to Sach.

Saichu to Chask Bhatori (4-5 hrs)

Chask Bhatori, the last village of Pangi before one enters Lahaul across Gurdhar pass, is at about thirteen kilometres from Saichu. After crossing the wooden bridge over the Saichu *nallah* a steep path curls upwards and enters a thick forest of *deodar* trees. The trek is thickly carpeted by pine needles. It is one of the finest forest areas. The trek meanders through this forest land upto village Chask (5 km). Chask is large village and the population is scattered all over the hillside.

After Chask landscape turns barren as the vegetation disappears. This is in striking contrast to the lush green surroundings between Saichu and Chask. The walk from Chask to Chask Bhatori is tiring. The trek continues to gain height gradually on the right bank of Chask *nallah*. Across the *nallah* one village is located absurdly over a ridge on the left bank. This village is Murch. It is a cluster of only eight houses, situated between two glacier points. During winters both these glacier points are full of huge boulders of ice. Throughout winters there is a danger of these houses being washed away.

Murch village has another strange feature about it. There is no source of drinking water in the village. The only source lies about two hundred metres below the village. In winters even this source is inaccessible and the villagers get drinking water by melting snow. There was a proposal to rehabilitate these villagers at some other place but they refused.

From Murch a trek goes up to Chask Bhatori village along with left bank of Chask *nallah* which is crossed over a primitive bridge near Chask Bhatori. This trek is less defined and risky. The path on the right bank of the Chask *nallah* is well-defined and proper.

Chask Bhatori is the highest located village in Pangi valley. It is situated at about 3659 m. It is a small village with about a dozen houses. There is a small gompa here also just like in other Bhatories. The landscape is barren and there are only a few fields where the villagers grow potatoes. People are very poor and they depend only on wages as labourers for earnings.

The trek involves walk of twenty-six kilometres from Saichu to Chask Bhatori and back. From Chask Bhatori one can go further and cross Gurdhar pass to enter into Mayar valley of Lahaul. One should not trek beyond Chask Bhatori without proper guide. There is no rest house either at Chask or Chask Bhatori.

Sural Valley Trek

Highest altitude	—	3181 m
Duration	—	Two days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Easy

One of the most frequented treks from Killar is to Sural and Sural Bhatori. Sural Bhatori is the last village on this side at a distance of twenty-two kilometres from Killar. The trek is easy and gains height gradually. It is gently laid upstream the *nallah* coming from Sural known by different names such as Sural *nallah*, Lujjai *nallah* and Dharwas *nallah*. Sural is one of the most beautiful places in Pangi located at about 3049 m. Sural valley has also been linked with Killar by a motor road.

Travellers reach Sural after starting from Killar usually in two stages. On first day they reach Dharwas where a rest house surrounded by apple trees stands at the entrance of the village.

Killar to Dharwas (2-3 hrs)

This nine kilometres stretch from Killar to Dharwas is easily covered on the first day. From Killar motorable road is followed. There are couple of foot paths that take off from Killar that reduce distance as the road follows a longer route. A steep rock face called *Ur Ki Dhakki* lies on the way. Earlier this was the most dangerous portion between Killar and Dharwas. After crossing the *dhakki* the trek passes through thick grove of *thangi* (hazelnut) trees. The trail then drops towards

the left. In this patch lies the famous spring known as *Tilmil pani*. Legend is that Raja of Chamba was so fond of this water that everyday water was taken to Chamba across Sach pass. Since there were no *thangi* trees in Chamba, Raja had directed that every day the leaves of *thangi* were to be put in the pitcher containing water.

From the *Tilmil pani* the trek leads to Lujjai *nallah*. The flow in this *nallah* is very fast. Many people have lost their lives in this. While some had accidental fall, others jumped into it and committed suicide. After Lujjai *nallah* the trek climbs to Dharwas village which is a thickly populated village in Pangi.

Many trails start from Dharwas besides the one leading to Sural. Road goes to Sansari *nallah* and Kishtwar. The other trails go to Luj village, the last village of Pangi towards Sansari *nallah*, Kuthah village and to a lake situated at about 4573 m known as *that*. In 1993, two ladies jumped in this lake as they felt that they would come up after seven days as *devis*.

Dharwas to Sural (3-4 hrs)

Trek to Sural from Dharwas is scenic and easy. Chaloli and Anch villages are located on the way. Main Chaloli village is at some height from the trek leading to Sural. Trekkers can climb up the trail and rejoin after passing through the village before Anch *nallah* also called as *Pagal (mad) nallah*. After crossing this *nallah* one enters the Sural valley. This *nallah* has earned its name of *Pagal (mad)* due to unpredictable floods. It is known to change its direction every year.

Panoramic and charming view of Sural valley can be had after the *nallah*. On clear days Shiv Shankar Peak can be seen from here. Shiv Shankar La (pass) is crossed to go to Zanskar valley.

Sural at a distance of thirteen kilometres from Dharwas is a cluster of a few villages. These are Kanwas, Ganmas, Rusmas, Tai, inner Bhatore and outer Bhatore. Sural Tai is the main village. There are two beautiful rest houses in Sural. Above forest rest house lie vast grasslands full of wild flowers. Across Lujjai *nallah* rises huge mountain range with Tingloti pass separating Sural and Hudan valleys.

The last hamlets of Sural are Buddhist villages known as Anteru (inner) Bhatore and Bahieu (outer) Bhatore. There is a Buddhist temple (gompa) located at about 3201 m. This gompa is in a thick grove of birch trees. A monastery is located near the gompa. Many monks study here.

Sural valley is very beautiful. The full moon view is amazing. The mighty mountain peaks shimmer and the water keeps on glistening. Sural *nallah* looks like a long shimmering silver ribbon.

From Sural, treks lead to Zanskar, Gandhar Bhatori, Hudan and Killar. Bhots go to Zanskar every year with their cattle. They exchange *chooris* for lambs and yaks. Now money is used in transactions, earlier they used to have only barter trade.

There is a huge waterfall about three kilometres from Sural Bhatori. A well-marked trek passing through Tyaso Got leads there. The waterfall and the wild flowers lend exquisite charm to the scene.

Sural–Killar Across Tingloti Pass

Highest altitude	—	4878 m
Duration	—	Two days
Season	—	August to October
Grade	—	Difficult

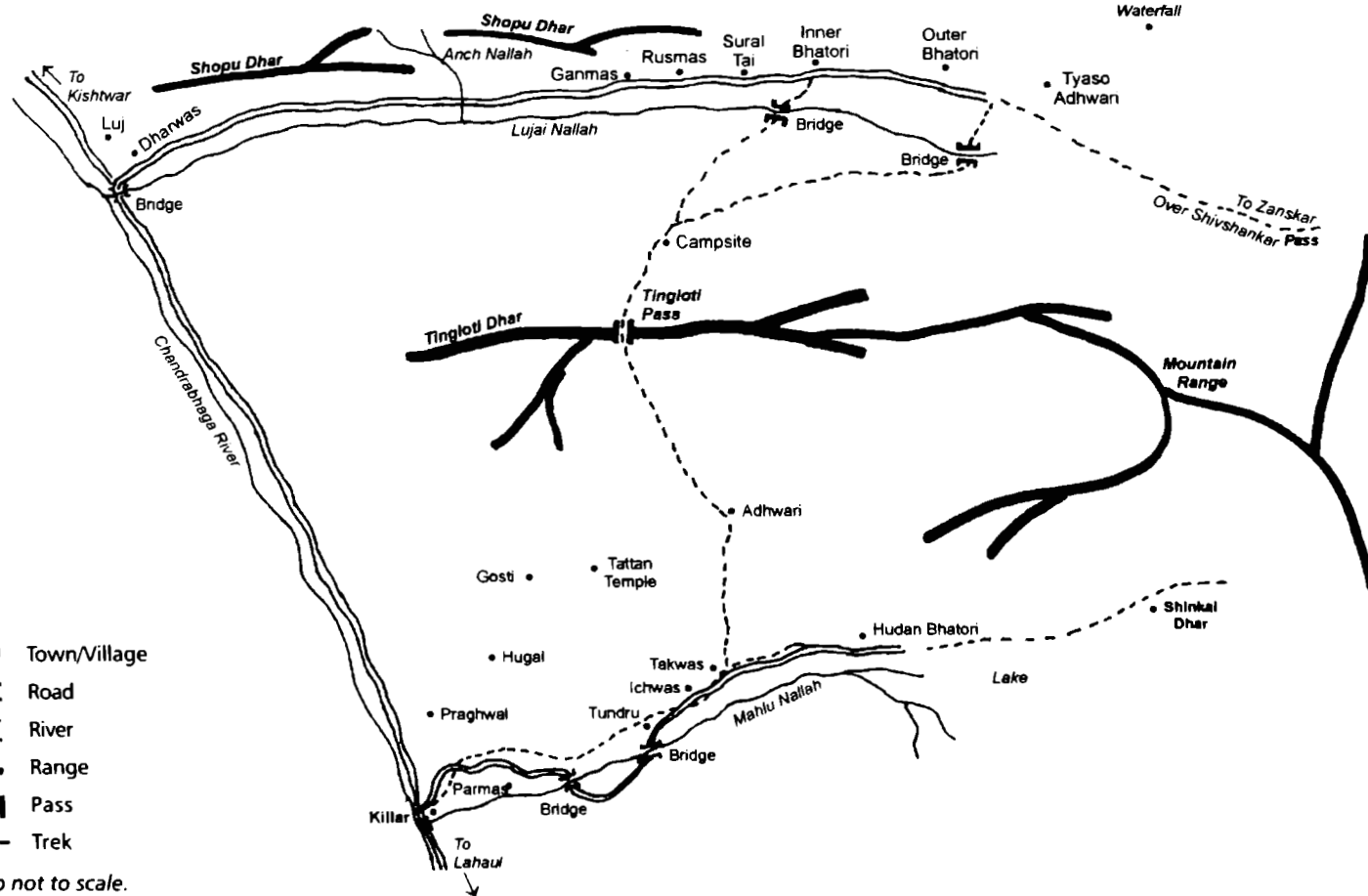
Sural presents a breath-taking landscape in August and September when it is full of wild flowers. There are vast grasslands between Sural Tai and Sural Bhatori located above the forest rest house.

The usual way to reach Sural from Killar is to come via Dharwas. The travellers, including local people use this path only while coming from and going to Killar. But one can attempt crossing mighty Tingloti pass also known as Tingloti Gali located on the high rising mountain range separating Sural and Hudan valleys for going to Killar. This is one of the toughest passes and a guide who had actually crossed the pass is a must.

Though the entire range including the pass is visible from Sural it must not be crossed without a guide and a couple of other people. Ideally, the pass should be crossed in three stages. On day one, trekkers should camp on the flat portion below the pass eight kilometres from Sural Bhatori. On day two the ascent to the pass should be undertaken early in the morning to camp at Hudan lake at a distance of nine kilometres. On third day, the trekkers should walk down to Killar. Local people cross the pass and reach Killar on the same day after starting from Sural early in the morning.

The trek to Tingloti pass starts from Sural. A well-defined trek leads through Bhatori across the fields and the first *adhwari*. After

SURAL TO KILLAR ACROSS TINGLOTI PASS



- Town/Village
- ≡≡≡ Road
- ≡≡≡ River
- ≡≡≡ Range
- == Pass
- - - Trek

Map not to scale.

the *adhvari* the trek turns towards Sural *nallah* that is crossed over a wooden foot-bridge. The trail then progresses through birch trees. In fact, there is no clear path after the *nallah*. Various trails appear to be leading upwards. Since people do not frequent this trek there is no beaten trek. A guide is of great help. After some time the trees end. A glacier is crossed. This glacier remains till September end. The trekkers have to tread on the snow carefully, step by step with extreme caution.

The trekkers have to find their way upward through thick growth of bushes before reaching pastures.

After another steep climb comes a flat portion. There is a small hump on the hillside towards Sural valley from where the entire Sural valley is visible, beautifully spread in the lap of nature below mighty snow-clad peaks. In case the sky is clear and there is no fog one can see as far as Shiv Shankar La. The valley is majestic and one feels extremely lucky for experiencing such a view.

Trekkers can camp for night at this flat portion, before starting the next morning. The climb from this place upto the top of pass is very steep and risky. A sense of direction is required to have an idea which way to head to reach the top. Soon after the hump the grassland also disappears. There are boulders, patches of snow and sandy soil. There is no trek worth the name.

Up above lies the summit that appears miles apart and beyond reach even though clearly visible. Below lies straight fall as if an abyss. Every step requires skill. It is the most adventurous and thrilling portion of the climb but it is also the most dangerous.

The last stretch of about five hundred metres is the toughest. There is no firm ground to rest the feet. With scree slipping below the feet and nothing to hold while climbing nearly vertical cliff, trekkers have to take extreme care to reach the top. After this killing patch, summit is attained. The feeling is beyond words. Just before reaching the top a thick layer of about three feet snow welcomes the trekkers. It feels wonderful to rest feet on firm footing after struggling with loose pebbles and scree.

View from the top is extraordinarily beautiful. But normally the top of the pass remains covered in mist and the splendid view is missing. The Sural valley below the pass looks another world and one wonders if he had really climbed up all the way from there!

Though the feeling of attaining the summit is overwhelming the climb upto the top from Sural is very arduous and tiring. It drains all energy out of the traveller.

Descent towards Killar is on moraine for about two kilometres. After moraine come vast grasslands. These pastures in Hudan valley extend for miles. There is no defined trail that leads down to Hudan village. It takes quite some time before one reaches the *adhwaris* of Hudan village.

The pastures appear to be unending. The climb down is very steep. The worst thing is that the grass is slippery. There is very good campsite just above the *adhwaris*. Water is available from nearby stream. From *adhwari* to Killar the trek is defined and well-marked. It is beaten path and reaches Takwas. Then on, the mule trek between Hudan and Killar is followed. Trekkers can also go to Hudan Bhatari village and camp near the lake located at some distance from the village.

Killar–Parmar Across Kiryuni Dhar

Highest altitude	—	3750 m
Duration	—	Two days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Moderate

Usual approach to Kumar is either from Findroo or from Sach villages. But there is a difficult trek that leads to Parmar via Kiryuni pass. This trek starts from Killar and passes through Kiryuni village from where it winds up all the way to cross the ridge dividing Kiryuni from Parmar.

This trek from Killar to Parmar over Kiryuni *dhar* is not easy and it should not be attempted without the help of well-acquainted guide. This journey should be completed in two stages. By spreading the journey over two days it becomes more enjoyable, comfortable and less taxing. First day the trekkers can camp above the *adhwari* of Kiryuni village and on second day they can reach Parmar by the afternoon in case they start the climb early in the morning.

From Killar to Karyuni there is a proper mule trek. There is no rest house in Kiryuni. From the last village in Kiryuni called Seri, there is a steep climb of about three to four hours to the *adhwari*.

There is good campsite above the *adhwari* in the pastures. The trail from Seri village upto the *adhwari* curls straight up through the fields and past the temple. After the temple one trail leads to the *adhwari* of Kwas village beyond which it continues to climb up till it reaches the ridge of the hill on the slope of which Kiryuni panchayat is located. From the ridge this trek leads to Hudan valley (specifically Hudan Bhatori).

In case one takes the trek going towards left side from the temple and follows it upto the ridge one can see Killar and other villages from the height. The view from this point is very wide and extends as far as Ishtiari village in Jammu & Kashmir.

The trek going to the right side from the temple climbs up at almost vertical gradient and then it turns further right below the *adhwari* of Kwas village and cuts across the slope of hill to reach the *adhwari* of Kiryuni village.

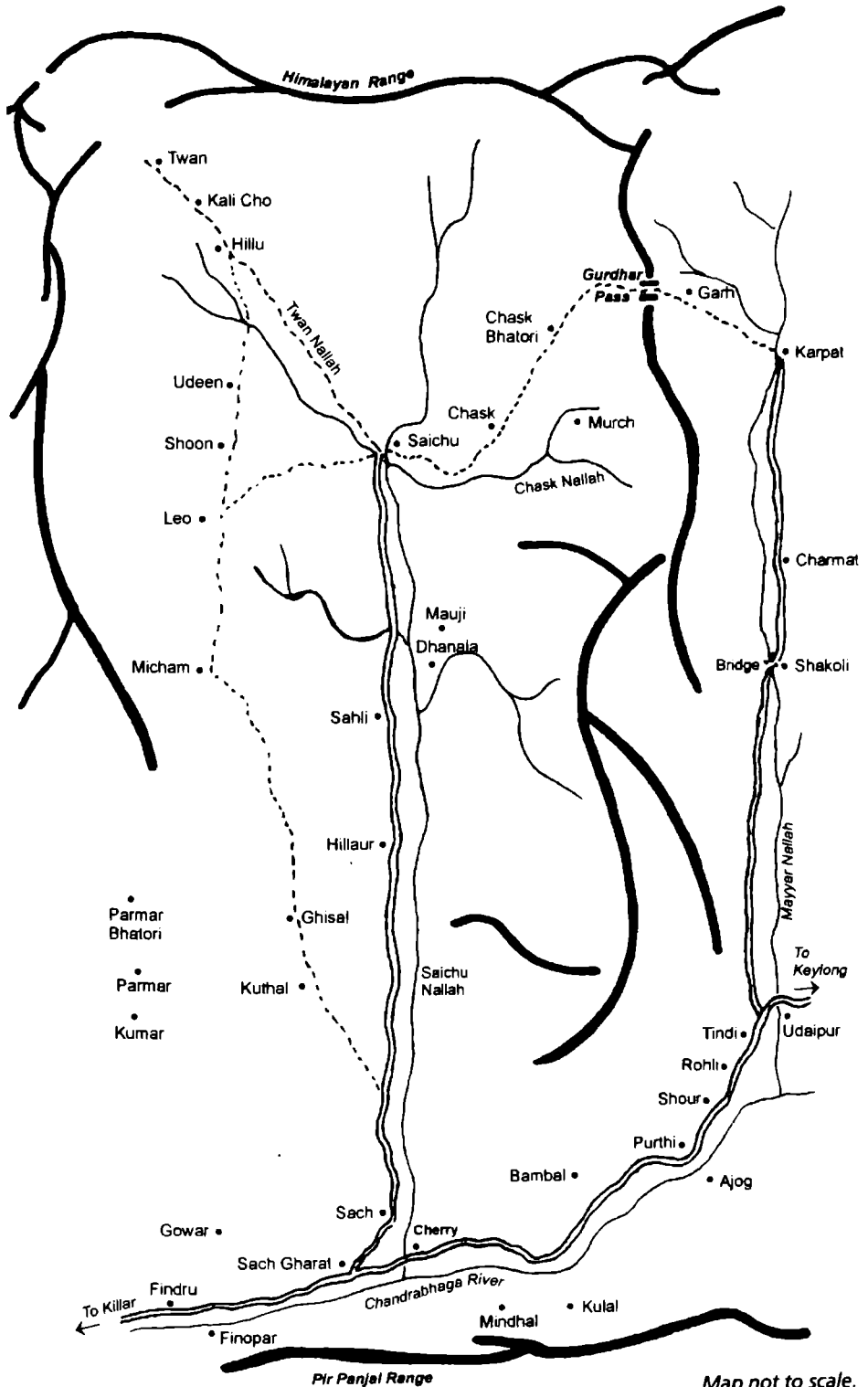
Since the *adhwaris* are the summer pastures and cattle of people remain here during these months there is a peculiar nauseating smell in the air mixed with animal waste, urine and other wastes around the *adhwaris*. Trekkers are advised to stay as far up as possible from the *adhwari* as it would not only save them from the smell but would also reduce the distance to be covered the next day.

In the morning the ascent to Kiryuni *dhar* should be undertaken. The trek winds upward and a few risky portions are crossed. Some patches with loose sandy soil are there. The last stretch below the *dhar* is difficult, it involves cutting across a very steep slope. View from the top is refreshing.

The descent is also very steep. During monsoon months thick and high grass makes things worse. The trail descends down to vast, lush green grasslands before dropping down abruptly towards Parmar Bhatori, a small village inhabited by the Bhots. A Buddhist temple is located here. From this village the trek leads further down to Parmar and Kumar villages.

At Kumar there is a small P.W.D. gang hut having two furnished rooms and a kitchen. After Kumar trekkers can go to Sach. This trek involves steep descent all the way down to the point where Kumar *nallah* is crossed. After the crossing it rises up to go to Sach village. The other path leads to Findroo via Gowari. This is a better trek as far as scenic beauty is concerned. It passes through a thick forest of *deodar* and pine.

KILLAR-UDAIPUR ACROSS GURDHAR PASS



Killar-Udaipur Across Gurdhar Pass

Highest altitude	—	5105 m
Duration	—	Eight days
Season	—	July to October
Grade	—	Difficult

This trek is of about 87 kilometres and passes through Saichu, Chask and Mayar valleys. Stages up to Chask Bhatori are described separately.

Chask Bhatori to Garh (6-8 hrs) Over the Pass

The trek goes up along the *nallah* originating from Gurdhar peak. The pass is crossed before noon. The pass offers a view of several snow-clad peaks. The descent is tough. There is beautiful camping site at Garh surrounded by thick forest of blue pine and junipers. Total distance to be covered is about fifteen kilometres.

Garh to Karpāt (3-4 hrs)

From Garh the trek goes down along the right bank of the *nallah*. This *nallah* joins Mayar *nallah* at Karpāt village. Good camping site is available. Karpāt village is located at a distance of nearly twelve kilometres from Garh.

Karpāt to Udaipur (5-6 hrs)

This eighteen kilometres trek goes on the left bank of Mayar *nallah* after Karpāt till Shakoli where a bridge is crossed and then the trek follows the right bank till Udaipur. Green pastures, thick forests, gushing streams, small villages and meandering paths make it a lifetime experience.



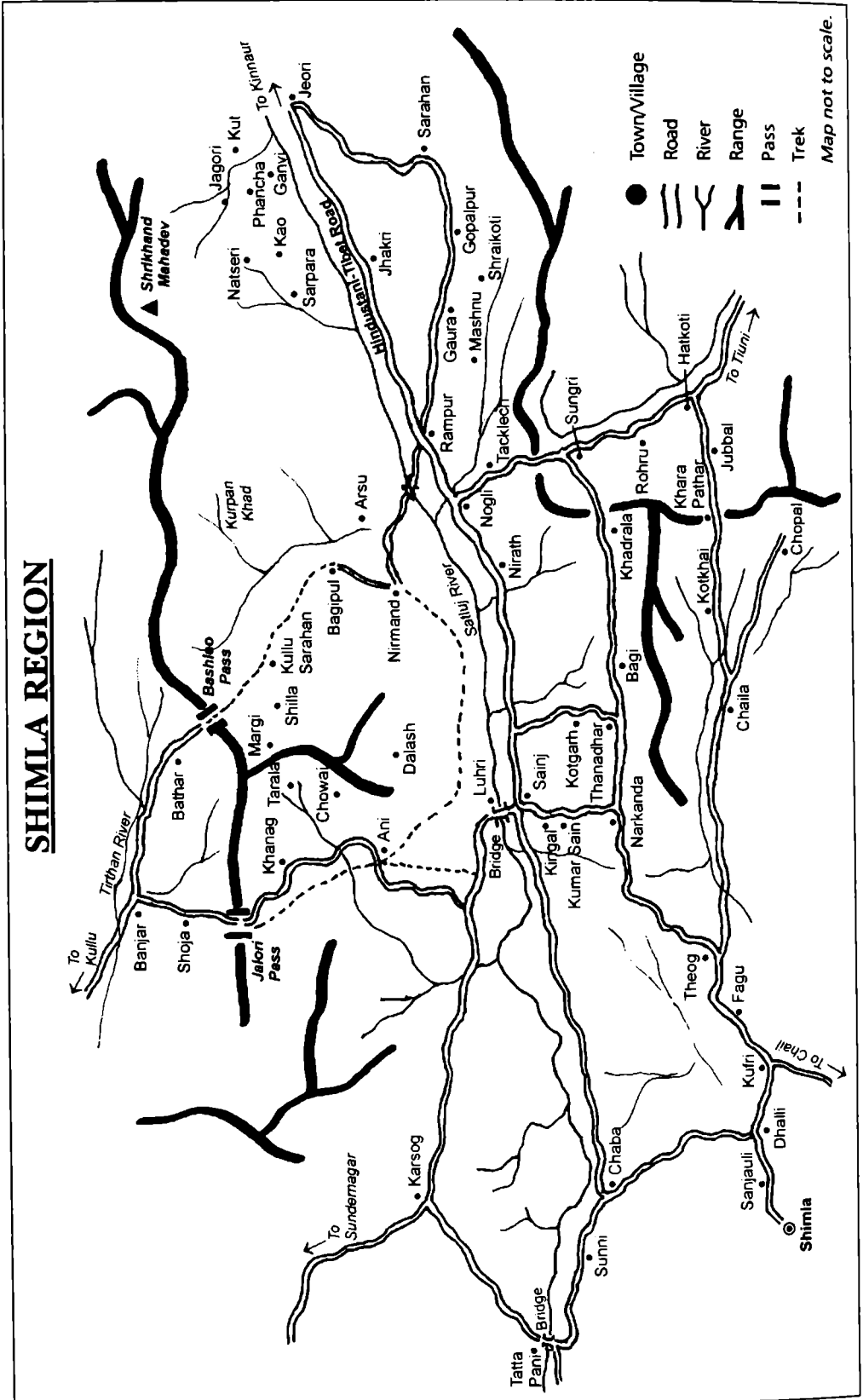
Shimla-Kinnaur Region

SHIMLA

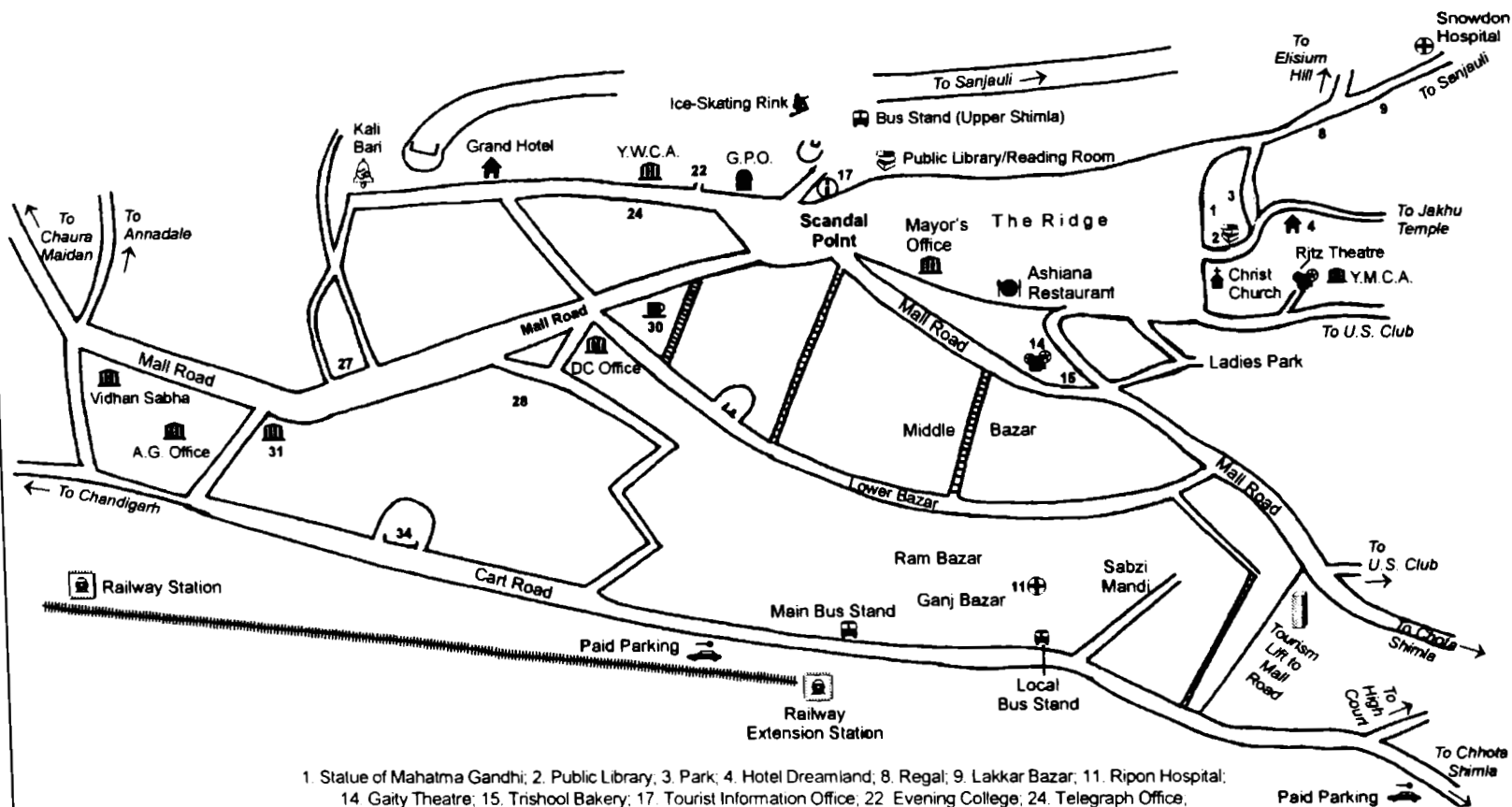
Shimla, the erstwhile summer capital of the British Raj and now the capital of Himachal Pradesh, is a premier hill station in northern India. It is located on a transverse spur of the Shivaliks in $31^{\circ} 06' N$ and $77^{\circ} 10' E$ at a mean elevation of about 2151 metres. This hill station with easy accessibility, delightful climate and breathtaking beauty deserves more than a flying visit. Shimla town (1933-2130 m) is spread across a twelve kilometres long ridge which was discovered first by the British in 1819. After independence Shimla became the capital of Punjab and when Himachal Pradesh was formed it became its capital.

General Information

Area	: 5131 sq km (9.22% of total state area)
Headquarters	: Shimla
Climate	: Cool summers, moderately cold winters
Altitude (Shimla)	: 2151 m (from mean sea level)
Population	: 7,21,745 persons
Density	: 141 persons per sq km
Sub-divisions	: 7
Main rivers	: Satluj
Nearest Airport	: Jubbar Hatti (23 km)
Nearest Railhead	: Shimla
Road Distances	: Kalka 92 km; Chandigarh 117 km; Ambala 166 km; Delhi 370 km; Pathankot 295 km; Dehradun 240 km; Dalhausie 436 km; Kaza 412 km; Kalpa 260 km.



SHIMLA GUIDE MAP



1. Statue of Mahatma Gandhi; 2. Public Library; 3. Park; 4. Hotel Dreamland; 8. Regal; 9. Lakkar Bazar; 11. Ripon Hospital;
 14. Gaiety Theatre; 15. Trishool Bakery; 17. Tourist Information Office; 22. Evening College; 24. Telegraph Office,
 27. SBI Zonal Office; 28. Army Training Command; 30. Indian Coffee House; 31. Railway Board Building; 34. Victory Tunnel

Map not to scale.

Access

Shimla is well connected by air, rail and road with rest of the country. The airport is located at Jubbarhatti, twenty-three kilometres from Shimla. There are regular flights to Shimla from Delhi. There are direct trains to Kalka from Delhi, Kolkata and Amritsar. Thereafter, it is a narrow gauge line up to Shimla. The train on this track takes

Kalka-Shimla railway was opened for the traffic in 1903. It has 103 tunnels enroute, with Barog tunnel being the longest.

six hours. Besides regular trains special deluxe trains and rail car operate on this track. The Kalka-Shimla railway narrow gauge line is a unique feat of engineering. The train passes through 103 tunnels of total length of five miles and eighteen small stations, the main being Barog.

Regular buses are available from Delhi, Chandigarh and other towns of Punjab and Haryana. Being the state capital it is also connected with all the major stations in the state.

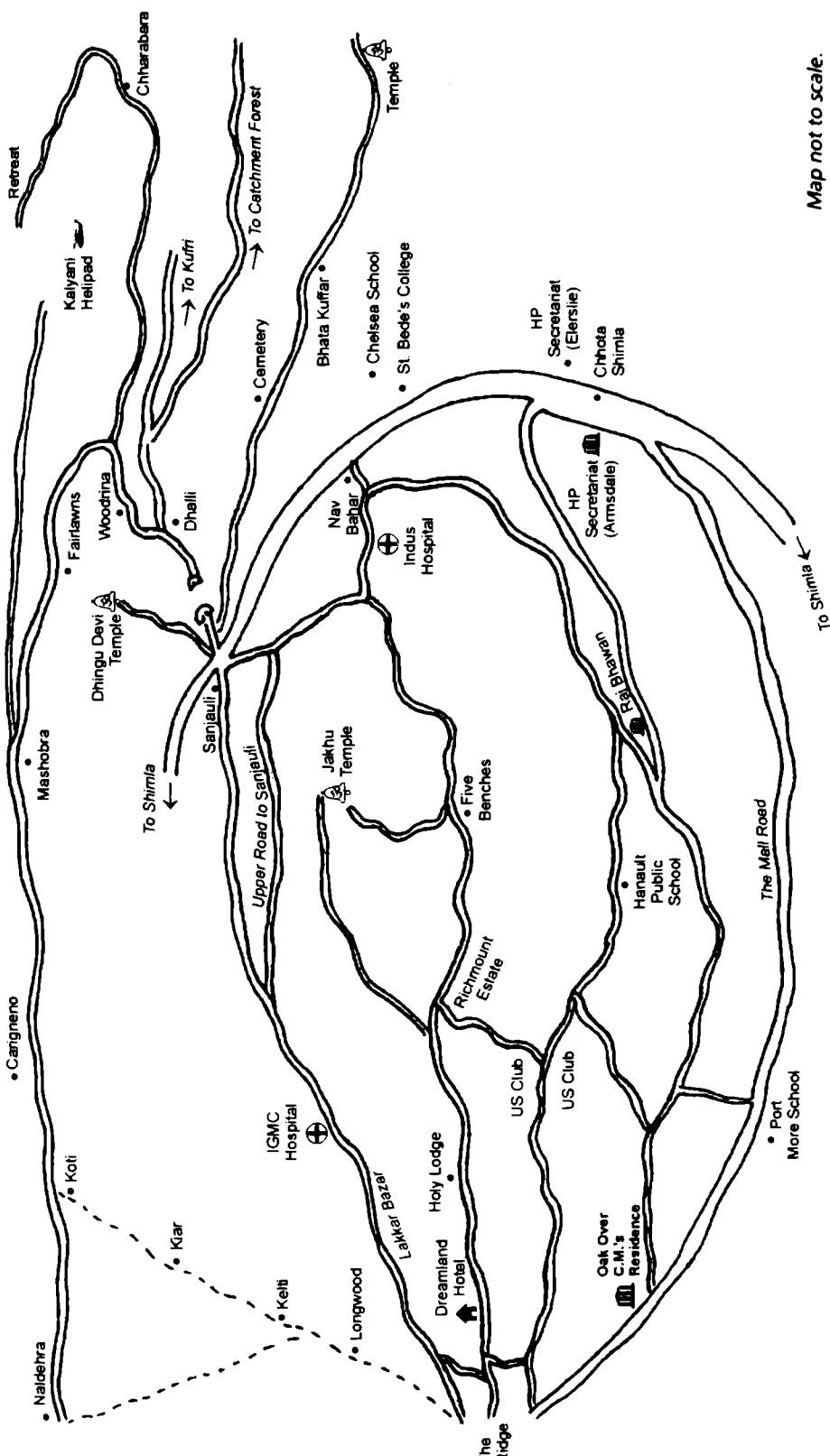
Walks Around Shimla

Shimla has excellent walks. These still retain their charm even after haphazard construction and overcrowding. Most important among these is the walk around Shimla on Forest Road. For other equally important walks the Ridge should be taken as starting point. These include walk from the Ridge to Summer Hill and Potters Hill; Indian Institute of Advanced Study and Prospect Hill; Jakhu Temple; Glen and Chadwik Waterfall. These day-long walks not only cover Shimla and its surroundings but also give a feel of the glorious past as erstwhile summer capital of the British and the present-day capital of the hill state have merged intrinsically and beautifully.

Walk on the Forest Road

This circular walk on the Forest Road starts from the Ridge and passes through Sanjauli, Nav Bahar and Five Benches before culminating at the Ridge. It takes three to four hours at moderate pace. Start from Scandal Point, the hub of Shimla gossip and state politics. General Post Office, Tourist Information Office and the office of Mayor of Shimla Municipal Corporation are located around Scandal Point.

WALKS AROUND SHIMLA-I



Map not to scale.

Reach the end of the Ridge, near the statue of Mahatma Gandhi and take the left road towards Lakkar Bazaar. This bazaar was famous for wooden (*lakkhar* means wood) articles, hence it got its name. Now

Mahatama Gandhi first visited Shimla in 1921 and stayed at Shanti Kutir (Summer Hill). Gandhi murder trial in 1948 was conducted in Petershoff.

it is just another market. Earlier only bicycles plied on Lakkar Bazaar–Sanjauli road, shaded by thick forest. The forest is still there though heavy construction has taken its toll, besides vehicles have also been allowed. As a result the walk has lost its splendour considerably. But it is still worth it.

The road passes through Snowdon Hospital, the state hospital that has now been renamed as Indira Gandhi Medical College (I.G.M.C.). The original wooden building was gutted down in fire. Snowdon was originally a dispensary purchased by Lord Roberts in 1873-74, the Governor General. In 1887, a fancy dress ball was given at Snowdon to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. In 1892, Government of India purchased this building as official residence of British Commander-in-Chief in India.

After I.G.M.C, the road climbs gently to reach Sanjauli. Shortly after the hospital another road branches off towards the right and runs parallel to the main road. Upper road goes past the boy's hostels of medical college to meet the lower road at Sanjauli Chowk. The lower road passes through Bothwell Estate and Government Degree College. The college building housed an orphanage during the Raj. Sanjauli is the main suburb of Shimla. It is a busy town with crowded market. There is a small hilltop temple here—Dhingu Devi temple. It is forty minutes climb to the top. A couple of good walks start from Sanjauli—to Bhatta Kuffar and then to a hill temple, to Mashobra and Kufri.

From Sanjauli one option is to walk on the vehicular road up to Nav Bahar and the other is to follow the upper road. Upper road is better as it has less vehicular traffic. It meanders through thick forest offering good views of Sanjauli and Dhingu temple. Choor Chandni or Choor Dhar range is also visible. The road reaches a point where one branch climbs towards Jakhu hill and the other drops down to Nav Bahar Chowk. Follow the road leading to Jakhu temple. Indus hospital, a private health institution is located nearby. After a while the road reaches the area known as Five Benches. There are benches

to sit and observe good views of Shimla hills. From here one road goes to Jakhu temple while the other passes through Rich Mount, Holly Lodge before dropping down to the Ridge past Dreamland Hotel and the residence of Deputy Commissioner Shimla.

There is another option to reach the Ridge from Nav Bahar Chowk. This road, the lower forest road, starts from Nav Bahar Chowk and reaches Raj Bhawan, Governor's residence. From here one road bifurcates downwards to Chhota Shimla and Mall Road while the other leads up to US Club and then to the Ridge. It meets the Ridge near Christ Church below Ritz Cinema. Both the roads are thickly forested and quiet.

- Jakhu hill is the highest point in Shimla and offers a panoramic view of the town. Famous temple of Hanuman is located here.

- The Christ Church on the Ridge in Shimla was built in 1857 and is the second oldest church in north India.

Another walk starting from Nav Bahar Chowk leads to the office of Director, Department of Horticulture, Himachal Pradesh and then to Nav Bahar cemetery before meeting the Hindustan–Tibet road just above the Officer's Mess of Border Roads Organization's Project Deepak. After this one can follow the vehicular road to Chhota Shimla. This area is thickly forested.

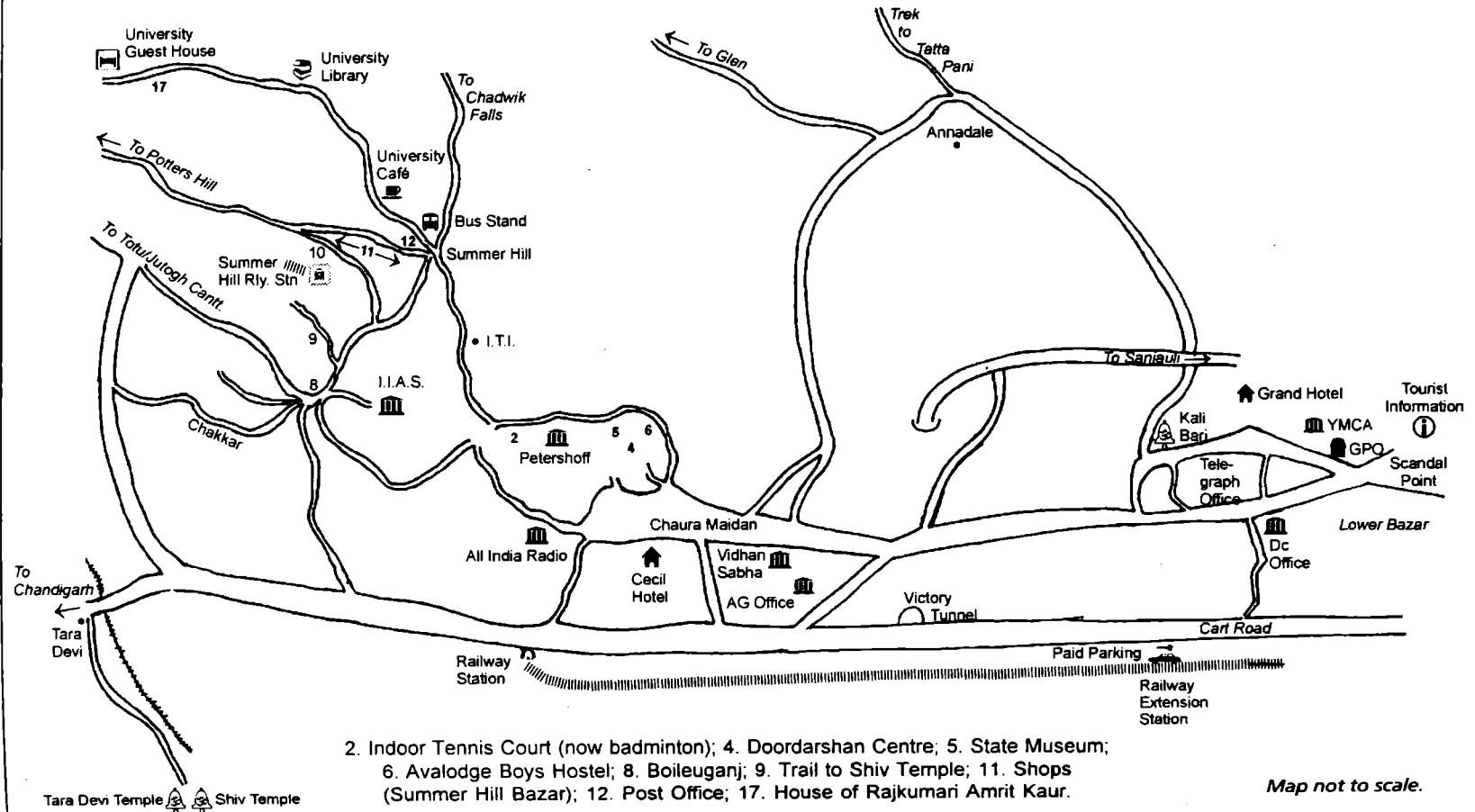
Walks on Mashobra Side

Mashobra and Kufri, the surrounding suburbs of Shimla, are ideal for day-long walks. Mashobra is at a distance of about nine kilometres on foot from the Ridge. The distance is about fifteen kilometres by motor road linking Shimla with Tattapani and Karsog valleys.

From the Ridge follow Lakkar Bazaar road to Sanjauli, a bustling suburb of Shimla. Thereafter follow the Hindustan–Tibet road till Dhalli. Just after Sanjauli there is a tunnel that is considered the gateway to upper Himachal, the land of apples. Dhalli, nearly a kilometre from the tunnel, is a busy station with depot of state transport. Shops of motor mechanics dot the roadside from tunnel up to Dhalli. Some three hundred metres from Dhalli bazaar the road bifurcates, the Hindustan–Tibet road climbs up towards right to Kufri, Theog, Narkanda, Rampur and Kinnaur while the other road goes to Mashobra, Naldehra (golf course), Tattapani and Karsog.

Walkers have several options from the bifurcation point. They can

WALKS AROUND SHIMLA-II



Tara Devi Temple Shiv Temple

either continue on the motor road to Mashobra or choose any of the forest paths described later in this section. The road meanders through forest to Fairlawns, one and a half kilometres from Dhalli. The Fairlawns estate was owned by a Nawab from Punjab who left for Pakistan after partition. The property was converted into a state guest house successively by Punjab and Himachal governments before being made the State Administrative Training Institute. Presently Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration is housed here.

From Fairlawns a three kilometres level walk by road leads to Mashobra. Chrispin's Church and some high-end hotels of Shimla are located here. There is a fine glade below Mashobra where Sipi Fair is held every year.

From Mashobra take the road to Carignano that passes through a thick forest. Carignano has a very well located rest house, a temple and grassy meadows and good campsites. Past Carignano, a forest path drops down to meet the motor road leading to Tattapani. Panchayati Raj Training Institute and potato farm of agriculture department are located along the way. The observatory for weather forecasting is also

nearby. Follow the motor road for about six kilometres to reach Naldehra, the golf ground. Board a bus to return to Shimla.

The other option to reach Mashobra from Dhalli is to follow H.T. road for about hundred metres, then climb to the left on the road leading to Woodrina resorts. Seek directions here for general guidance about the trail leading to Mashobra. A proper, broad and defined forest path of nearly four kilometres branches off shortly after Woodrina and goes to Mashobra through a thick forest.

A different walk after Woodrina is on the metalled road that climbs up sharply and heads to Chharabra, a scenic place. There is a state home for physically handicapped children on the way. This walk of nearly two hours is wonderful experience. At Chharabra one can climb up to the Kalyani helipad. A proper road from Chharabra goes to the Retreat, summer resort of the President of India. After Retreat a defined path goes to Mashobra. Chharabra is located on the Hindustan-Tibet road.

• The biggest fruit research station in northern India is located at Mashobra.

• Naldehra, 22 kms from Shimla, is known for its one of the oldest golf courses in India, laid by Lord Curzon in 1903.

Catchment Area Forest Walk

Walk to the Shimla catchment area is through a dense mixed forest that has excellent growth of *deodar* trees. You require permit to enter the catchment area. Divisional Forest Officer, Municipal Corporation Shimla issues permits. This seven kilometres walk (one way) in the forest is spiritually uplifting, serene and fulfilling experience.

Pack your lunch and snacks with water bottles and take local bus from Shimla to Dhalli or if you prefer, walk from Shimla town itself. After Dhalli take the Hindustan–Tibet road up to the place where one small road branches to Woodrina resorts. Just opposite is another bifurcation to the catchment area. This is *kutchra* road with a gate and warning board that forbids entry without permits.

Small rest house is tucked in the woods at the end of the walk. Further deep the trek leads to the water tanks that store water for Shimla town. The trek then crosses the catchment area and enters village fields. There are very good grasslands and camping places on this ridge.

Walks towards Summer Hill Side

Start from the Scandal Point and go past General Post Office to the Kali Bari temple. The Evening College, Tar Ghar, Grand Hotel are crossed on this ten minute walk from Scandal Point to Kali Bari.

The General Post Office was originally known as Conny Lodge. St. Andrews Church now houses the evening college. The Telegraph Office was started at the present location in 1886 after the library located in the original building called Conny Cot was shifted to the Town Hall on the Mall. Present day palatial structure was constructed a few years later at the cost of nine lakh rupees. Below the Telegraph Office is the Collectorate. Deputy Commissioners of Shimla have been sitting in this building since the Raj days. It was earlier called Caston Hall or Rosna Hall. Then comes the Grand Hotel that has Government of India Guest House and a few other institutions. It was built as Bentinck's Castle for Lord Bentinck in 1830.

Kali Bari complex has temples dedicated to goddess Kali and Lord Shiva. There is a theatre called Kali Bari Hall adjoining the temple. The path drops down to the Mall near Hotel Dalziel and State Bank's zonal office. Thereafter, it passes by the Railway Board building and office of Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

The office of Comptroller and Auditor General of India was previously called Gorton Castle. It was a government property that was purchased by one Col. T.D. Colyear around 1860. Roman Catholic community wanted to construct a Chapel here but they were given alternate property called The Groves near Collectorate. The Gorton Castle saw many owners before Mr. James Walker purchased it in 1890 and gifted it to the government for constructing a hospital for the Europeans. However, the government decided to construct Civil Secretariat here.

The road then passes through the State Legislative Building (Vidhan Sabha) and reaches Chaura Maidan. Cecil Hotel, State Museum and All India Radio and Doordarshan branches of Shimla are located nearby. Petershoff, housing tourism department's hotel and state guest house is also in the vicinity. It takes about thirty minutes from Kali Bari temple to Chaura Maidan.

Petershoff was the house of Earl of Elgin, the then Viceroy of India. He moved here in April 1863. Imperial Government acquired the property in 1880. Petershoff stood on a graveyard and many deaths in the staff of Viceroy were attributed to this fact and eventually Viceroy's residence was shifted. After independence this building remained the residence of Governor of Himachal Pradesh and state guest house alternatively before the Governor's residence was also permanently shifted to Barnes Court near Chhota Shimla. Below Petershoff is an indoor Tennis Court that is now used as Badminton Hall. Lord Dufferin built it upon the model of Radeau Hall in Ottawa, Canada.

Lord Dufferin got the Viceregal Lodge constructed in 1885 at the nearby hill called Observatory Hill. The hill got its name from the observatory built here by Capt. J.T. Boileau in 1840. After independence the house became the summer residence of the President of India and was called the Rashtrapati Niwas. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the President, converted it into Indian Institute of Advanced Study. Summer residence of the President was shifted to the Retreat in Mashobra hills.

From the main Himachal University one can trek to Chadwick Falls. Buses are available from Summer Hill to return to Shimla. Three roads lead from Summer Hill to Boileauganj. One circles around Observatory Hill, the other is motor road, while the third one runs below the motor road from railway station in lower Summer Hill.

From Boileauganj a road climbs to Kamna Devi temple on Prospect Hill. It is one hour walk at the most from Summer Hill to the temple. Heavy construction around the hill has reduced the beauty of this place considerably. Kamna Devi, just half an hour walk from Boileauganj, is the sunset point of Shimla. One can also walk from Boileauganj on the Shimla–Bilaspur road to reach Jutogh cantonment area.

Alternatively one can follow the road back to the Mall through Boileauganj bazaar and Chaura Maidan. The house where Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel laureate, stayed is on this way. From Chaura Maidan a small road bifurcates to Annadale and Glen. In Raj days Annadale was a happening place with open balls, parties and get-togethers.

Treks Around Shimla

Most of the places described below have been connected by vehicular road, however trails leading to them through wilderness are the ones followed by trekkers to reach these destinations. In case of shortage of time a traveller can visit the spots by via vehicular road.

Shali Peak

It is a blessing to be at the top of 2848 m peak on a clear moonless night. It is equally mystic experience to be here on full moon. It appears as if one is somewhere in infinite space with stars shimmering all around. Star-studded sky and countless shining lights in widespread village houses make it a memorable experience.

One full day's trek from Shimla leads to Shali Tibba. There is motorable road up to village Khatnol situated at the base of Shali Tibba. It is nearly three hours drive from Shimla to Khatnol on a bumpy *kutch* road. From the village it is a three hours climb.

Shali peak or Shali Tibba is visible from the Ridge, Shimla. If one looks at the snow-covered ranges behind the hills of Longwood and Bharari a precipice towering high is easily spotted in the foreground. The face of precipice is bare and there are a few trees on the side slopes. A small white dot (temple) is also seen on careful examination.

Trek to the peak is worth the effort. It can be planned in various ways. One way is to take a bus ride to Khatnol, camp for the night in thick grove of pine trees above the village and then climb to the top

early in the morning. The other option is to walk it up from Shimla itself. Or one can board a bus upto Mashobra and then start the trek.

The road passes through Mashobra and Thaila villages whereas the mule trek descends from Mashobra through thick *deodar* forest and crosses tiny villages. The trek goes through the famous Sipi forest where an annual fair is held.

The trail goes down up to Nauti Khad and then climbs up. The climb is taxing as there are no shady portions and no drinking water. The path climbs through a couple of villages perched on the hillside and reaches Khatnol village.

After the village the climb is tough. There is a small temple on the top. Deadwood is available in plenty so cooking is not much problem if all the other provisions are carried. There is a small *sarai* at the temple but it is in a bad condition. Night stay at the top is a wonderful experience. The view is superb and feeling is sublime. Sunrise is also majestic.

Tara Devi Trek

With the road link upto Tara Devi temple (2100 m) becoming operational, this most revered shrine near Shimla is flooded with tourists and local people. However many people take the exhilarating and adventurous option. They choose to walk up to the temple from Tara Devi bus stand on the Kalka–Shimla highway. It takes about two to three hours to reach the temple. Be sure to take water as there is no water till the top.

It is one of the most beautiful walks around Shimla. It meanders through oak and pine forest and climbs at a very gentle grade. After every 400 metres or so there are places to take rest.

The trek is so comfortably laid that it turns out to be a tireless climb. Even those who are not used to walking longer distances can make it without putting in much effort. On way to the top there are a couple of places with wide panoramic view. Short of temple there are beautiful spots to pitch tents for a night out. These are just ideal places to laze around and enjoy the sun. Pine-scented breeze refreshes beyond expectation. The temple is located ideally at the ridge with wide view. There is a Shiva temple below the Tara Devi temple, located in thick grove.

History of temple goes back three hundred years. Legend has it that Raja of Junga state came across an idol in this forest known as Tara Ban during one of his hunting trips. He took the idol with him and erected a temple at Junga. But later the Devi demanded that temple be erected at the same place where she was found. Hence a small temple was built at the present location. Though the Devi is the form of goddess Bhagwati, the name Tara Devi is followed from the first priest Tara Din Nath Rai.

Hundreds of people visit the temple daily. There is great rush of devotees during the *navratras*. The vehicular road to the temple (23 kilometres) from Shimla bifurcates from the Shimla–Kalka National Highway at Shoghi. Some points are quite dangerous and at places the grade is quite steep. A big *sarai* has been constructed at the temple where one can stay.

Churdhar Trek

Churdhar or Churchandni peak (3636 m) is in Chopal sub-division of Shimla. Chopal is one hundred kilometres from Shimla by road. The road to Chopal leaves N.H. 22 at Theog and drops down to Chaila. From there it is steep climb through forest to Khirki and Chopal. It is a small town with provision shops and rest houses.

The trek to Churdhar starts from Sarahan, a small village twenty kilometres from Chopal. Sarahan is connected by road. There is a forest rest house at this village. Forest Corporation provides tented accommodation in summers. Churdhar top is twelve kilometres from Sarahan by a steep footpath. Temple of Churchandni is below the top at a distance of ten kilometres. There is longer but gentler mule path to the temple that is fourteen kilometres long. Kalabag at a distance of eight kilometres from Sarahan is a very good camping site.

April to June and September to October are best months to walk on this trail. Monsoon months of August and September should be avoided. Climb of four hours from Sarahan leads to the temple. Those interested in touching the top of the ridge have to walk for an hour more.

The trek leads through thick forest of *deodar* and other conifers. It is shady for most part. There is a small temple and a *sarai* at the top. View from top is panoramic and breath-taking. One can see the

lights of Shimla and plains of Punjab and Haryana in the night. Shimmering lights of Ambala, Chandigarh and Mussoorie are seen. On clear rain-washed mornings the view is majestic.

The trek to Churdhar from Nohradhar village in Sirmaur involves fifteen kilometres walk. This trek gains height gradually and it takes about four hours to reach the temple.

Two other options are available from the top. Nearly six hours climb down on a defined trek leads to Nohradhar in Sirmaur district. Buses to Solan via Rajgarh and Nahan, the district headquarters of Sirmaur are available. The other option is to trek to Manalag and then to Kupvi, a remote region. It is a day-long trek but one can stay at Manalag for the night.

Tattapani Trek

It is a long but easy trek to Tattapani, the hot sulphur springs on the bank of Satluj. Start early to reach the destination by evening. One can start walking from Shimla itself or from Mashobra, 15 kilometres from Shimla town. Trek on the Mashobra–Sunni road up to Devidhar. Proper footpath drops down from the motor road towards the left. There is a small tea shop where one can get an idea about the directions. Carry packed lunch and water.

The trek goes down in curls to reach the main road near Tattapani. Cross the bridge over Satluj. There are a few hotels and guest houses for food and stay. Bath in hot sulphur springs is refreshing as it ends all tiredness of the long walk.

One can board a bus to Karsog, a beautiful valley or return to Shimla the next day by road or on foot. The alternate walking option is to start for Devidhar on same trail but instead of climbing up to Sunni–Shimla road above Devidhar after crossing the *nallah* coming from Shimla follow the *nallah*. It leads to Glen below Summer Hill. From here one can go to Summer Hill or to Chaura Maidan on clearly-defined trails.

Yet another trek from Tattapani leads to Annadale grounds in Shimla. Annadale is linked by a motor road. One can climb up to Shimla town (Mall Road) from Annadale through Kaithu area.

Hatu Peak

Hatu peak is seven kilometres walk from famous tourist destination of Narkanda on Hindustan–Tibet road. Narkanda, 65 kilometres from Shimla, is famous for ski slopes. Sufficient accommodation is available at Narkanda. Tourism hotel, government rest house and private hotels cater to the visitors. Hatu is just two to three hours walk through a forest. Hatu peak at an elevation of 3330 m is ideal for camping for the night.

A jeep road has come up here too, much to the delight of many, but one must leave the vehicle at Narkanda to enjoy the beauty of nature. Even otherwise the road to the top is narrow and risky. Remains of a Gorkha Fort built in 19th century and a small temple at the top welcome the visitors.

Hatu peak witnesses annual fair in the month of May. Many people throng the place at that time otherwise it is not a sought-after destination.

View from the top is panoramic. Snow-clad peaks of Greater Himalayan ranges are visible from here. On clear days vision extends for miles and the valleys below appear to be spread like a dream. Night stay at the peak is memorable experience. Star-studded clear night or full moon add much more to the experience. Several small excursions can be made around the peak in the forest. All provisions are to be carried from Narkanda.



KINNAUR

Situated in the northeast corner of Himachal Pradesh, Kinnaur, the land of kinnars, is popularly known as *Dev Bhoomi*. It is a home to one of the oldest traditions and the people are warm-hearted and known for their hospitality. A remarkable blend of Hinduism and Buddhism can be seen here.

General Information

Area	: 6401 sq km (11.5% of total state area)
Headquarters	: Rekong Peo
Climate	: Pleasant summers, cold winters
Altitude (Rekong Peo)	: 2350 m (from mean sea level)
Population	: 83,950 persons
Density	: 13 persons per sq km
Sub-divisions	: 3
Main River	: Satluj
Nearest Airport	: Jubbar Hatti (263 km)
Nearest Railhead	: Shimla (240 km)
Road Distances	: Shimla 240 km; Chandigarh 357 km; Delhi 610 km;

TREKS FROM PABBAR VALLEY (SHIMLA) TO BASPA VALLEY (KINNAUR)

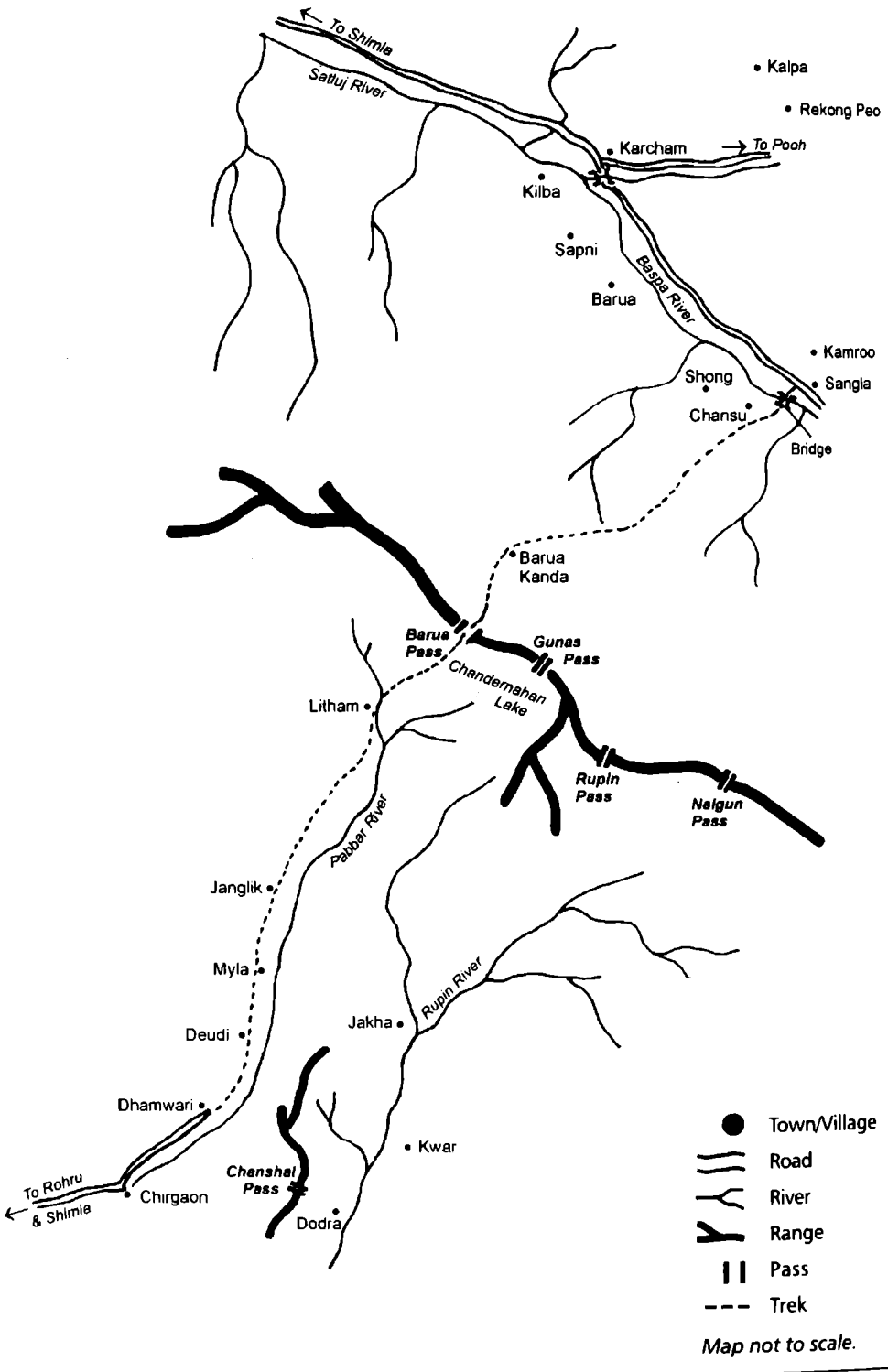
Shimla–Kinnaur Across Barua Pass

Highest altitude	—	4227 m
Duration	—	Five days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Moderate

Pabbar Valley

Located in mid Himalayan region, this valley is full of beauty and charm. The valley opens up at Hatkoti, 105 kilometres from Shimla on Shimla–Teuni road, at the confluence of Pabbar river with Bishkulti. There is famous temple of Vajreshwari (Hatkoti temple). The road leads to Chirgaon, twenty kilometres from Hatkoti. From

SHIMLA-SANGLA ACROSS BARUA PASS



here Chanshal pass can be crossed to reach Dodra Kwar region. The valley has several temples, mostly wooden, dedicated to local *devtas*. Majority of these belong to Mahasu Devta the supreme deity of the region.

Chirgaon (1800 m), 135 kilometres from Shimla and fourteen kilometres from Rohru, is the starting point of this exciting and adventurous trail. The village of Chirgaon was washed away in flash floods in Andhra *nallah* in 1997. The damage can be felt even now. New settlement has arisen again signifying the indomitable human spirit to fight back.

Chirgaon to Dhamwari (3-4 hrs)

A motor road connects Dhamwari (2000 m), a small sleepy village, twelve kilometres from Chirgaon. The view is superb in this beautiful apple country. Wooden houses with plenty of windows and open verandahs are located on gentle hillsides with terraced fields and orchards.

Dhamwari-Janglik (2-3 hrs)-Litham (5-6 hrs)

Climb of nearly eight kilometres through Deudi village leads to Janglik (2850 m). On way Pabbar river is crossed short of Tangnu village. After couple of ups and downs and crossing Myla one reaches Janglik, the last village of Pabbar valley on this side. After Janglik path turns up sharply to the grassland and pastures high up on the right bank of Pabbar. The source of Pabbar, the Chandranahan lake is above the pastures of Litham. It is a revered place by the locals and many people come here for a holy dip. Litham (3600 m) is at a distance of nearly fifteen kilometres from Janglik.

Chandranahan Lake, the source of Pabbar river is above Litham Thatch. There are seven small ponds and tarns in the region. Chandranahan lake is also the original abode of Shikru Devta. In May and June hundreds of pilgrims visit this lake and pray to Shikru Devta. All leather goods are to be left at Litham Thatch short of Chandranahan.

There is an interesting legend associated with Chandranahan and Shikru Devta. It is said that in ancient times great drought gripped entire region of upper Shimla. Shepherds migrated to high lands to save their flock. One shepherd went towards Chanshal area and reached Chandranahan. When he went to the lake to drink water he

saw an idol floating in water. He was scared but the idol spoke to him and requested the shepherd to play flute. The shepherd did as directed. The god was pleased, he granted a wish to the shepherd who asked the god to take his flute to his house through water. On this request the water started flowing towards Rohru. This ended the drought.

Another tale relates that the idol and flute reached Rohru town flowing in water of Pabbar. These fell into the pitcher of the wife of the shepherd while she was taking water from the river. She called the priests of Pawli village who named the deity Shikru Devta. The deity then asked that he should be taken to Chandranahan. Nobody knew the way but the *pujaris* of Pawli reached the lake with the grace of Shikru Devta. Even today the deity travels to the lake every fifteen years.

Litham to Barua Kanda over Barua Pass (8-10 hrs)

It is a tiring and taxing climb to the top of the pass. From the top, Kinner Kailash range towering high can be seen on clear days. The night halt on the other side of the pass can be made at Barua Kanda, the alpine meadow. However one has to cover nearly twenty-four kilometres before resting for the day. Therefore an early start from Litham is recommended.

An alternate route to Kinnaur is across Gunas pass (4775 m) that involves 18 kilometres walk to Sangla Kanda (3600 m) from Litham. Sangla is further down at about ten kilometres from Sangla Kanda on a well-defined route. It is essential to have an experienced guide on all the trails leading from Shimla to Kinnaur district.

Barua Kanda to Sangla (4-5 hrs)

It is a comparatively easy trail of fourteen kilometres that leads to Sangla (2650 m). It is one of the largest villages in Kinnaur. Sangla is linked by a motor road of eighteen kilometres length that branches off from Hindustan-Tibet road at Karcham. Gerard brothers were the first outsiders to record their visit in the beginning of the 19th century. It is one of the most beautiful valleys in Asia. Rest houses of public works department, electricity department and forest department are located here besides private guest houses and lodges.

Shimla-Sangla Across Rupin Pass

Highest altitude	—	4750 m
Duration	—	Five days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Difficult

The trek starts from Naitwar (1400 m) located on the left bank of Tons river in Uttaranchal. Naitwar is connected by road with both Shimla and Dehradun. From Shimla one can reach Naitwar via Chopal or via Jubbal. The Jubbal road is better and leads to Naitwar via Teuni village.

Shimla to Naitwar (by bus)

Buses are available to Teuni from Shimla. Teuni is at the confluence of Pabbar and Tons rivers. From there board a bus to Naitwar that takes you along Tons river.

Naitwar to Dodra (6-8 hrs)

Rupin river is followed upstream on a defined mule trek to Dodra village (2400 m) in the Dodra Kwar region of Shimla district. Work is in progress on a motor road to Dodra. The trek passes through Sewa Dogri after which starts Himachal border. The region of Dodra Kwar is one of the remotest of the state. Government officers and officials posted here dread going to this tough and remote region. From Naitwar, Dodra village is twenty-four kilometres.

Dodra to Saribasa (8-10 hrs)

From Dodra one can go to Kwar the sub-divisional headquarters or to head straight for Jakha (2600 m), the last village in Rupin valley. Going to Kwar would mean an additional day in the trek. After Jakha, the path crosses over to the left bank of Rupin and continues to curl up. The pastures of Saribasa (3500 m) are reached after tough climb of nearly twenty-five kilometres. There are cave shelters on the right bank slightly above the meadow for the night stay.

Saribasa to Sangla Kanda over Rupin Pass (4750 m)

It is another long day on the trail with a distance of twenty-three kilometres mainly on moraine, boulders and snow which takes its

toll. Altitude makes things worse. There is steep climb to the pass with the last stretch being risky and really taxing. Experienced guide is needed for staying on proper trail. Initial descent is also difficult before reaching Sangla Kanda.

Sangla Kanda to Sangla (3-4 hrs)

This is a patch of only ten kilometres on a defined trail. Sangla valley appears not only beautiful but also a 'big city' after days in wilderness.

Shimla to Kinnaur on Old Hindustan-Tibet Road

Satluj valley afforded easy routes to Tibet from India. Route across Shipki pass in Kinnaur was the traditional trade route between Bushahr state and Tibet. Foreign travellers like Gerard, Jacquemont and Hutton explored this route and left written account of their visits.

Old road was a bridle path that started from Kalka, presently eighty kilometres on a motor road from Shimla. The route moved through Fagu, Theog and Matiana to Narkanda. Two routes were there from Narkanda to Sarahan. One was Upper or Forest Road while the other was Lower road.

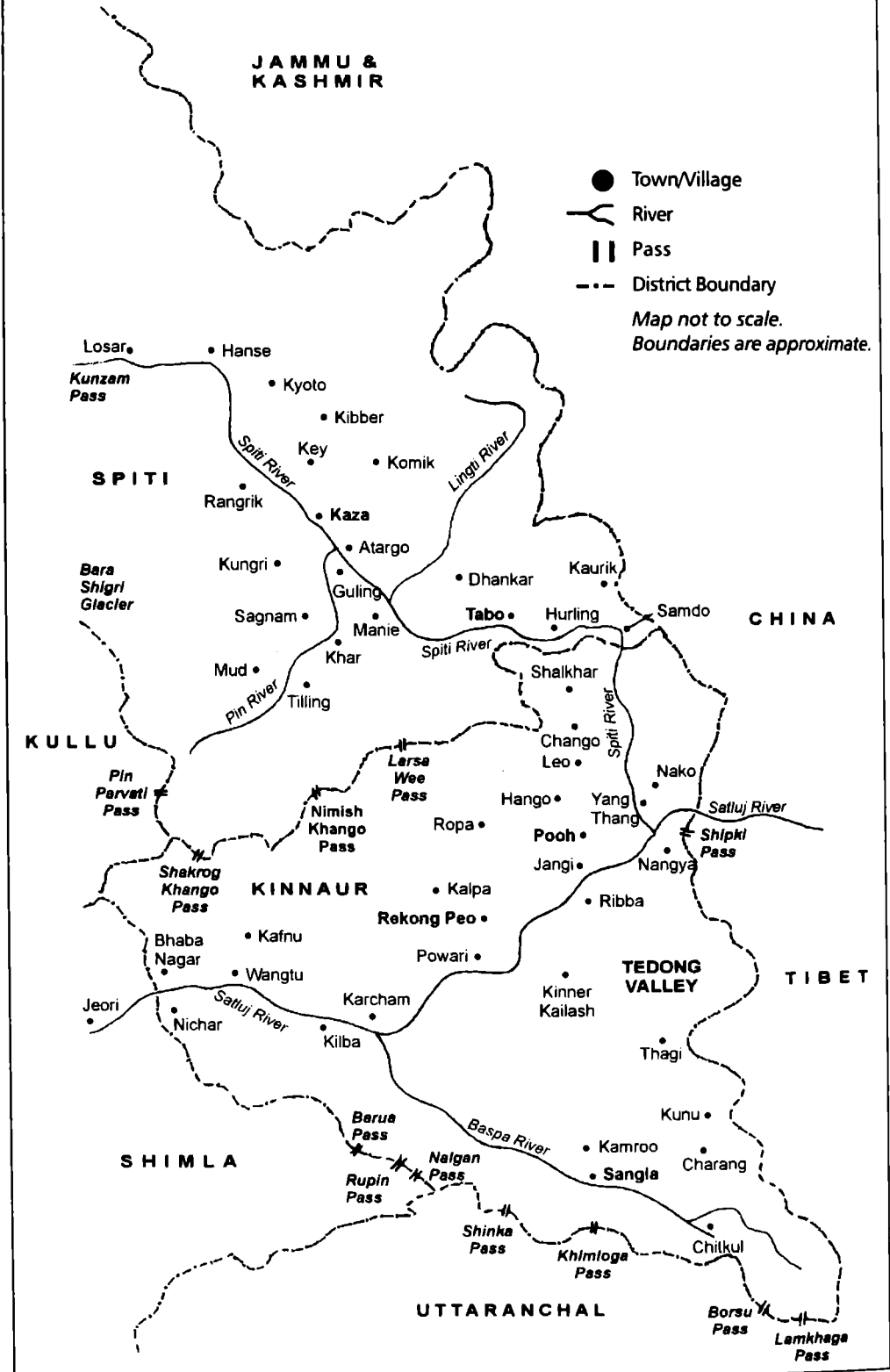
Upper road passes through Baghi, Khadralla, Soongri, Bahli, Tacklech, Daran before reaching Sarahan. There were rest houses (dak bungalows) at each stage on this route. Most of these are being used even today. The Lower road reached Rampur through Kotgarh and Nirath. From there it climbed up through Gaura up to Sarahan, the summer capital of the Bushahr kings.

Present-day Hindustan-Tibet road that drops down to Satluj after Narkanda does not pass through Baghi, Khadralla or Kotgarh. It travels along Satluj upstream and leaves Sarahan altogether.

Sarahan is connected by a seventeen kilometres link road starting at Jeori on Hindustan-Tibet Road. Jeori is at a distance of eighteen kilometres from Rampur. Sarahan commands a beautiful view of the peaks of the Srikhand range across Satluj, marking the divide with Kullu valley. The twin peaks of Gishu Pishu and Srikhand Mahadev are the better known mountains seen from Sarahan. Sarahan is also the home of Goddess Bhimakali. Other attractions at Sarahan are nature walks and a pheasantry.

From Narkanda the route has convenient stages of ten to fifteen

KINNAUR-SPITI REGION



kilometres each day. There are beautifully located rest houses at each stage for night stay. Some of these like Mashnu and Daran have fallen in disuse and lack even basic facilities like beddings. It would be better to be self-sufficient in terms of food, tent and sleeping bags besides other essentials. Elementary supplies can be procured at most of the stages. Distance between Narkanda and Sarahan can be covered in seven days and from Sarahan to Kalpa in eight days. It takes six days from Kalpa to Shipki pass.

It is a long trek but can be cut short according to the time available with the traveller. However it is an easy trek with gradual ascents and descents. The distances and the stages are given below. Certain stages are quite short that can be clubbed depending upon speed and stamina of group members. The old trail is identifiable and defined for most part and is frequented by locals in adjoining villages.

From Narkanda to Sarahan (Seven Days)

Narkanda to Baghi—19 km; Baghi to Khadralla—14 km; Khadralla to Sungri—14 km; Sungri to Bahli—16 km; Bahli to Tacklech—16 km; Tacklech to Daran—16 km; Daran to Sarahan (2165 m)—22 km.

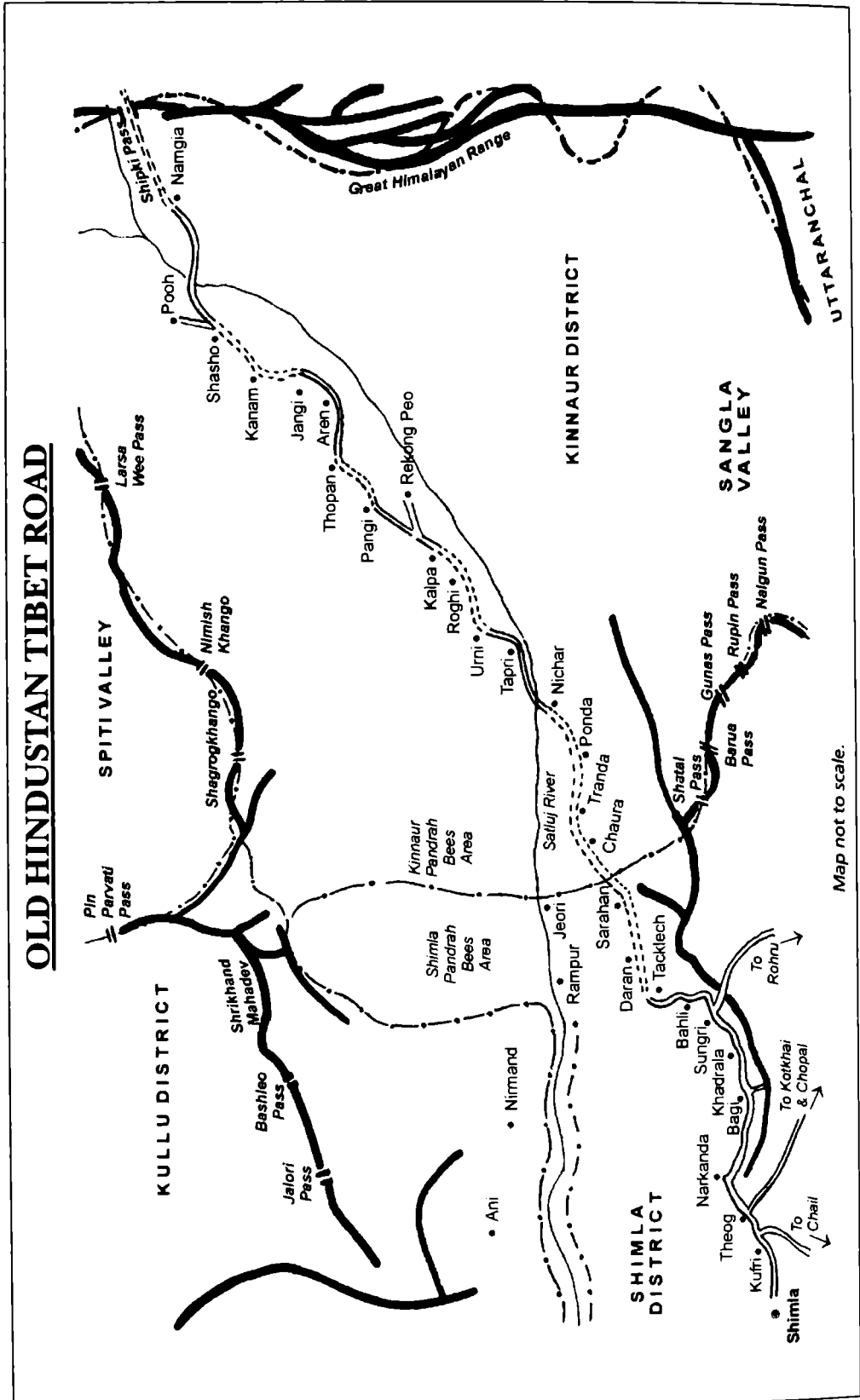
Sarahan to Kalpa (Eight Days)

Sarahan to Chaura (1800 m)—13 km; Chaura to Tranda (2240 m)—9 km; Tranda to Ponda is (1800 m)—8 km; Ponda to Nichar is (2200 m)—8 km; Nichar to Tapri (1750 m)—16 km; Tapri to Urni (2500 m)—6 km; Urni to Roghi (2782 m)—16 km; Roghi to Kalpa (2800 m)—6 km.

Kalpa to Shipki La (Six Days)

Kalpa to Aren (2300 m)—24 km; Aren to Jangi (2600 m)—8 km; Jangi to Kanam (2750 m)—16 km; Kanam to Pooh (2800 m)—20 km; Pooh to Namgia (3000 m)—15 km; Namgia to Shipki La (3700 m)—12 km.

From Narkanda to Sarahan the route is through good forest that has mainly *deodar* growth. It passes through Sungri and Bahli that have become busy places now. These are on a motor road that connects Rampur. Sungri is at the ridge on Rampur-Rohru road. From Sungri trek to Bahli passes through forest and apple orchards. Tacklech is



further down from where one can go to Rampur or to Daran Ghatti and Sarahan.

Sarahan has ancient temple of Bhimakali that is held in great reverence. A beautiful rest house managed by temple, circuit house and hotel of tourism department are there for stay. A bird sanctuary has also been developed as tourist attraction. Sarahan is calm, serene and a quiet place.

After Sarahan, Nichar is the main station. There is thick *deodar* forest around Nichar and a beautiful temple dedicated to Usha Devi, a sister of Sungra Maheshwar. After Nichar there is steep descent to Wangtu, where the old route and National Highway are same till Tapri.

From Tapri to Urni there is steep climb. Thereafter trek passes through Roghi village and then leads to Kalpa. Traditionally trekkers halted at Pangti after starting from Roghi. But now Kalpa or Rekong Peo, the district headquarters of Kinnaur, are better places to stay. One must also have a feel of real town after Sarahan at Rekong Peo.

After Kalpa it is long haul to Aren (Akpa). It is possible however to reduce the walk by taking a bus from Kalpa to Pangti from where it is easy walk to Akpa.

From Akpa to Jangi and then to Kanam can also be covered in one day but it becomes tiring. Besides Kanam to Pooh next day is also twenty kilometres walk. Kanam was a prominent place of Buddhist learning in Kinnaur in olden days.

Pooh is separate administrative division with the post of additional district magistrate. There is brigade headquarters of Indian army at Pooh. There are provision shops, health centre and a small bazaar at Pooh.

From Pooh to the last village Namgia below Shipki pass on Indian side, National Highway is followed short of Khab, the confluence point of Satluj and Spiti rivers. A link road takes off to Namgia from here. The village, located on a steep slope, has a rest house with very old crockery. Some of the items bear insignia of Queen Victoria.

Kinner Kailash Parikrama

Highest altitude	—	5242 m
Duration	—	Eight days
Season	—	August
Grade	—	Difficult

Parikrama or walking around a religious place in clockwise direction is a sacred act. Earlier *parikrama* of the Kinner Kailash meant walking more than 200 kilometres but the distance has been reduced considerably because of roads and there is marked improvement in treks. Traditionally the *yatra* is undertaken in the month of August on *Janamashtami* day. Stages of this *yatra* are as follows.

Powari to Purbani (2-3 hrs)

Powari (2100 m) is located on the Hindustan–Tibet road seven kilometres below Rekong Peo, the district headquarters of Kinnaur. Rekong Peo is 221 km from Shimla. Powari village was the home of Powari Wazir, a powerful minister of Bushahr state. An ancestor of the village was party to the treaty between Bushahr and Tibet. From Powari eight kilometres long road takes to Purbani (2550 m). Purbani has an old forest rest house ideal for night halt.

Purbani to Ribba (3-4 hrs)

This is an eleven kilometres stretch. The path climbs up behind the rest house through *deodar* forest. Trek ascends gradually to Tagain Dhar (3380 m) after that it drops sharply through another thick forest. It leads through fields and orchards to Ribba village. Stay in the rest house or camp around it. Ribba is a big and prosperous village with hard-working people.

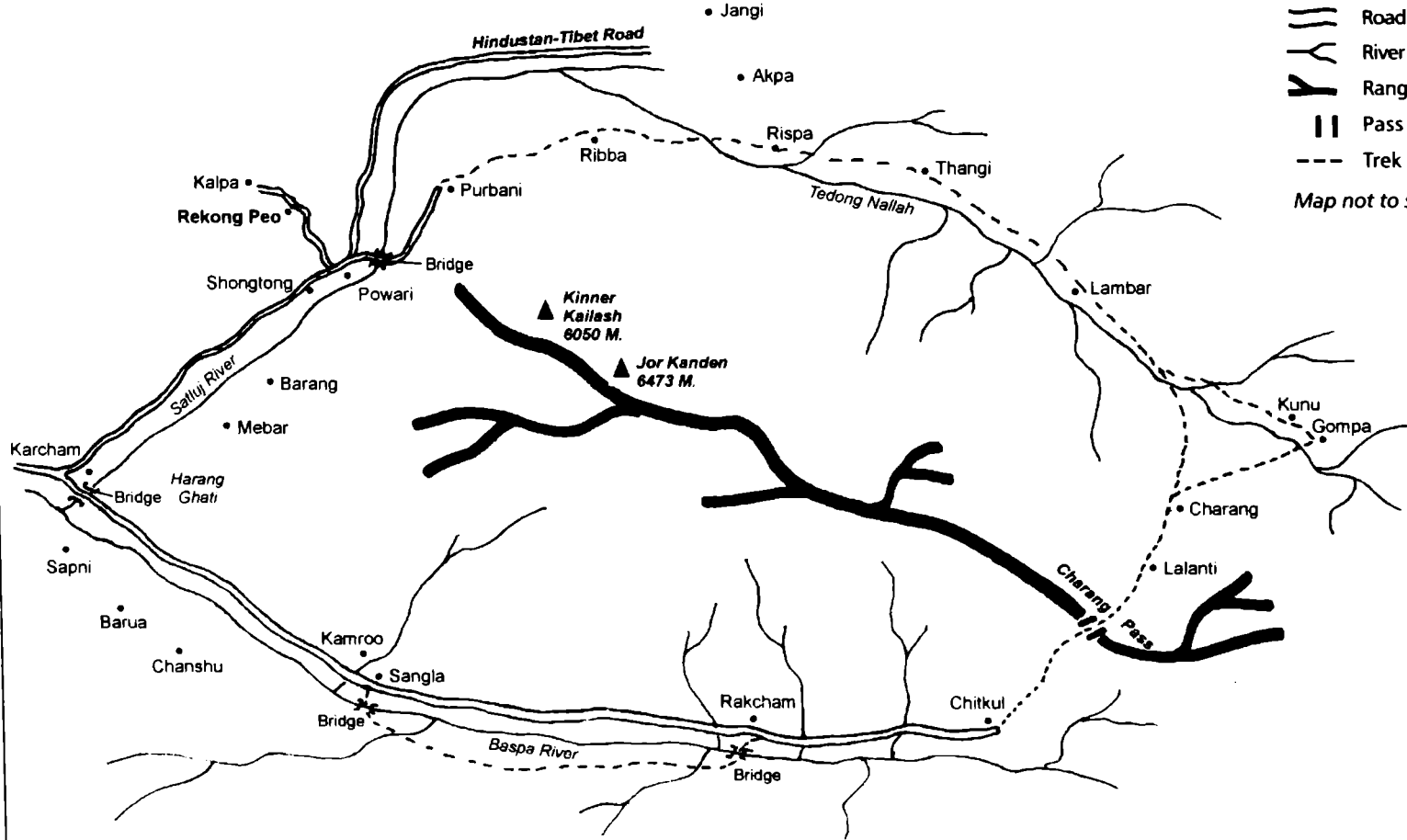
Ribba to Thangi (4-6 hrs)

Fourteen kilometres walk winds its way up through good forest and then leads to Rispa after crossing Charang stream. Then the path descends to Tedong stream. The path then follows Tedong upstream. Rest house is located at the end of Thangi (2800 m).

Thangi to Charang (10-12 hrs)

It is a long day's walk of nearly twenty kilometres to Charang (3450 m). One must start really early to reach the destination in

KINNER KAILASH PARIKRAMA



- Town/Village
 - == Road
 - ~ River
 - Y Range
 - || Pass
 - - - Trek
- Map not to scale.

daylight. Alternatively one can camp on way. Lambar (2950 m) village on the other side of Tedong is seen on way. The path continues on riverbed moraine and crosses over to the left bank before Charang. Traditionally people had to go to Kunu temple before going to Charang which is further up on the right bank. From Kunu to Charang is easy walk.

Charang to Lalanti (3-4 hrs)

One should visit the village temple of Rangrik Tungma two kilometres from here. It is a tiring climb from Charang to campsite in Lalanti pastures.

Lalanti to Chitkul Across Charang Pass (10-12 hrs)

Charang (5242 m) is a high pass that involves steep climb to the top. Descent to Chitkul is quite lengthy as total distance to be covered comes out to be nearly thirty kilometres. Trekkers can camp across the pass in flatter portions above Chitkul. There is a rest house and temple at Chitkul (3450 m). Paying respect to goddess at Chitkul temple is part of *parikrama*. Chitkul is one of the most beautiful villages in Kinnaur.

Chitkul to Sangla (2650 m): 24 km

Chitkul, the last village in Baspa valley, is linked by a motor road. Nearly halfway to Sangla on this 24 kilometres road is Rakcham. It has a rest house by the side of Baspa. From Rakcham one takes forest path on the left bank to Sangla leading to forest rest house at Sangla.

Sangla to Powari: 32 km

Parikrama is complete only after reaching Powari thirty-two kilometres from Sangla. However, for those who do not wish to follow the traditional long route of *parikrama* described above, can shorten the trek to a three-day duration from Kunu Charang to Chitkul. Both Kunu Charang and Chitkul have been connected by vehicle roads.

Baspa Valley

One of the most beautiful valleys of Himachal is Baspa or Sangla valley. Baspa river meets the Satluj at Karcham (1527 m). The seventeen kilometres road to Sangla from Karcham is a motor road

but it is narrow, steep and risky. It climbs up on the left bank rock face of Baspa river. Just as it reaches Sangla it widens and presents a breath-taking view. The road leads up to Chitkul (3435 m) the last village of Kinnaur. There are many trails from Sangla valley. Famous Kinner Kailash *parikrama* terminates in this valley. Shinka pass (4575 m), Khimloga (5151 m) and Borsu (5360 m) lead to Har Ki Doon Valley in Uttaranchal. Another trail leads to Dodra Kwar region of Shimla district over Rupin pass.

Karcham–Sangla Across Shibaling Pass

Highest altitude	—	3980 m
Duration	—	Four days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Moderate

Karcham to Barua (4-5 hrs)

Karcham (1527 m) is on the Hindustan–Tibet road near the confluence of Baspa and Satluj rivers. Trail from Karcham to Barua is easy and is commonly frequented by locals. It leads through Sapni village (8 km) that has an elementary provision shop and school. Those interested can camp near village for the night. Temples dedicated to snake gods are worth a visit. Trail further goes up from Sapni to Barua through fields and apple orchards. Barua is bigger village compared to Sapni.

Barua–Chasu (3-4 hrs)–Dumar (3 hrs)

Thirteen kilometres trail from Barua to Chasu (3100 m) goes down to negotiate Barua *nallah* and then climbs up before turning almost level. There is a stretch of steep climb short of village. Campsite is beyond village near a stream. Vegetation changes first to birch trees and then to bushes before entering grasslands on this seven kilometres stretch between Chasu and Dumar. Camp in meadows called Dumar (3300 m) with rock shelters of shepherds.

Dumar to Sangla over Pass (6-8 hrs)

Gradual climb of nearly four kilometres takes to the pass at an altitude of 3980 m. Trail descends for fourteen kilometres up to Sangla through Sangla Kanda.

Treks in Mandi Region

Present day district of Mandi was part of erstwhile Mandi and Suket states. Mandi state had its capital at Mandi town whereas Sundernagar was the capital of Suket. Rulers of Mandi claimed descent from *Kshatriyas* of Mahabharat epic. Present Mandi town was founded in A.D. 1527 by Raja Ajbar Sen. It is believed that rulers of Mandi and Suket had common ancestors who migrated from Bengal and set up Sen dynasty.

Mandi town is a happening town of Himachal. People like to walk around in the market and Sankan Garden located in the heart of the town in the evenings. Market place is always bustling with activity. Cuisine of Mandi is also popular throughout the state. Mandi town is also popular as the Paris of Himachal.

General Information

Area	: 3950 sq km (7.09% of total state area)
Headquarters	: Mandi
Climate	: Pleasant summers, cold winters
Population	: 9,00,987 persons
Density	: 228 persons per sq km
Sub-divisions	: 7
Main Rivers	: Satluj, Beas
Nearest Airport	: Bhuntar (60 km)
Nearest Railhead	: Jogindernagar (56 km)
Road Distances	: Kullu 69 km; Shimla 143 km; Chandigarh 208 km; Pathankot 213 km; Dharamsala 125 km.

Shivratri Fair of Mandi

Shivratri, the night of marriage of Lord Shiva, falling usually in February end or March is the most popular fair of Mandi. It was started during the reign of Raja Ajbar Sen in sixteenth century. In the middle of the town he erected temple of Bhootnath (Lord Shiva). Other temples dedicated to Lord Shiva in the town are Panchvakra, Triloknath, Ardhnarishwar, Sidh Bhairav. Raja Surya Sen who ruled from A.D. 1664 to 1679, dedicated his kingdom to Madho Rai (Lord Vishnu). On *Shivratri* Lord Madho Rai leads the procession. Other *devtas* who come to attend the festival from far off villages in colourful processions pay respects to Madho Rai who comes out of his temple once in a year at the time of *Shivratri* only.

The *Shivratri* fair presents good picture of traditional village festivity and modern-day cultural festivals. *Devtas* come to Mandi town in their best attires in *palkis* with their followers. They are supported by traditional band. People dance on popular folk tunes. Temples are decorated and religious procession is attended by thousands of people. Village people come to the town for annual shopping in their colourful dresses. Local cuisine is hot favourite in the food shops. On the other side artists of Bollywood perform in Paddal ground where huge stalls are set up by business houses to attract customers. *Shivratri* now is a blend of tradition and modernity.

Temples of Mandi

Mandi is called *chhoti* Kashi for its numerous temples. Small temples constructed hundreds of years back can be found all over the town in every nook and corner. Some of the important temples worth a visit are listed below.

Tarna Devi (Shyama Kali) temple, dedicated to Shakti (goddess of power), lies on top of a hill in Mandi town. It was built by Raja Shyam Singh (A.D. 1664-1675) to commemorate his victory over Suket. The location of temple gives it a commanding position and walking up to the temple from the town is good experience. Though rapid construction on the hillsides has robbed the walk and the temple of their old charm, still evening is spent better at Tarna hill than below in the bustling town.

Ardhnarishwar temple celebrates the half-male half-female image of creation. Image of Shiva and Shakti representing harmony of male and female aspects of nature stands in the temple. This Hindu

concept finds its parallel in Yin and Yang tradition of China.

Panchvakra temple at the confluence of Beas and Suket rivers is dedicated to five-faced Lord Shiva. Bhootnath temple in the heart of Mandi town is another main temple. Raja Sidh Sen had brought heads of 380 men of the army of Raja of Kullu and tied these as necklace around the idol of Bhootnath Mahadev. The other important temple is that of Madho Rai.

Nag cult (worship of snakes) is also quite prominent in Mandi. Two famous nag temples in the district are **Mahu Nag** and **Kamru Nag**. There are several interesting legends associated with these. Mahu Nag is said to be incarnation of Karan, elder brother of Pandvas in Mahabharat. Another tale is that Mahu Nag freed Raja Shyam Sen of Suket from the prison of Mughals on the condition that Raja will give half of his state to the nag. Later Mahu Nag is said to have chosen Bhakhari to stay. Kamru Nag temple is located in village Kamrah in thick forest. Offerings at the temple are thrown in the lake adjoining the temple. Nobody picks up the offerings fearing some misfortune. Every year a fair is held in June at the temple and lake.

Trek to Parashar Lake

Parashar Lake is at a distance of thirty-five kilometres from Mandi town. There is a pagoda style temple of the sage Parashar. The lake is the site of local fair in the month of June. There is bus road up to Kamand from where a jeep road takes to the lake. Horse Breeding Centre of the state government functions at Kamand.

Trekkers can start their walk from Kamand. Those having time can trek from Mandi itself following the motor road. Walking on this hill road is also a worthwhile experience. It passes several small hill villages. One can take the route through villages for which directions can be sought from villagers who are always willing to help. They can halt at Kamand for the night.

After Kamand one can follow the jeep road or take the traditional foot path that has fell in disuse after coming up of road. Trek up the hill is enjoyable experience. It passes through thick forest. There are several splendid campsites on the ridgeline that lead to Parashar lake. A rest house and *sarai* of temple are other options to stay. Camping for the night at Parashar lake is a must.

Parashar is spread beautifully in a depression over the ridge behind Kamand. Lake has a small patch of grassland that floats. Locals tell that the undergrowth is taking its toll and the island has become more or less stationary.

The temple has been constructed in pagoda style. It is said that the temple was built by Raja Ban Sen in the first half of 14th century. There is interesting carving on door-frames and windows. Window-frames show various gods and goddesses. The multiple roofs of the temple are done in slanting slates. In the *garbhgriha* of the temple there are four sculptures believed to be of Parashar *rishi*, Vishnu, Sheshnag and Mahishasurmardini.

A trail takes off from Parashar lake to Kullu valley through many villages. Local persons should be consulted before embarking on it, though it is better to have a guide.

Trek to Rewalsar Lake

Rewalsar lake is at a distance of twenty-four kilometres from Mandi on way to Hamirpur. It is a multi-religious place. People following Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism all have their sacred places here. Legend is that a furious king tried to burn his religious daughter but sage Padmasambhava turned flames of fire into water as a result the lake came into being. Rewalsar is associated with snake worship also. Buddhist belief is that under the lake lies the kingdom of snakes. There is a gurudwara of Sikhs celebrating the visit of tenth guru Shri Gobind Singhji to this place. Namdhari Sikhs believe that their guru Satguru Ram Singhji will appear here in future.

There are other lakes above Rewalsar. In fact the area is known as having seven lakes in all, a couple of which have dried up. This is an interesting trek on a proper road to the top of the hill overlooking Rewalsar.

Kunt Bhauyog lake is the most popular lake of these located at an altitude of 1700 m. The other prominent lakes are Kalasar (1755 m) and Sukhsar (1760 m).

Janjheli–Shikari Devi–Janjheli Trek

Highest altitude	—	2850 m
Duration	—	Two days
Season	—	All year
Grade	—	Easy

The abode of goddess Shikari stands atop a hill in Mandi district. The temple, said to have been built by the Pandavas, is without roof. Locals say that the goddess does not allow construction of roof and all previous attempts have failed. Animal sacrifice is practised at the temple.

Approach to the temple is from Janjheli, located 67 kilometres from Mandi on the outer edge of Seraj valley which is one of the most picturesque valleys in Himachal. It is enveloped by high-rising mountain slopes covered by thick *deodar* forest. The Britishers wanted to develop the area as a hill retreat but the Raja of Mandi did not approve of the plan. Now a jeep road has also been constructed upto the temple. Two main trails lead up to the temple located at a height of about 2850 m from Janjheli. Both these treks pass through thickly wooded forest. It takes a climb of nearly fifteen kilometres in each case to reach the top.

One trek passes through thickly forested area with Budha Kedar cave. It involves steep climb past sleepy villages and taxes the travellers to the limit. The other approach though slightly longer is less demanding as the grade is gentle. This trail criss-crosses the jeepable road link to the temple. There are several shortcuts, which the experienced trekkers can follow by instinct, but beginners must take the help of a guide. Safe course is to follow the road and leave the shortcuts altogether.

An early start in the morning makes the journey easy and enjoyable. The forest is rich in both flora and fauna including wild bears, therefore one must not travel in the dark.

The stone images on a flat platform in this roofless temple inspire devotion and submission to the supreme power. Some people say that the name Shikari comes from the practice of local hunters who prayed to the goddess for success in game. Local people have great faith in the goddess and during the *navratras* the temple is bustling with activity.

Beautifully located rest house near the temple and a couple of *sarais* are available for stay. The rest house is reasonably furnished with beds, beddings and elementary furniture besides having fuelwood and a small kitchen.

The view from the top is panoramic. Hills and valleys lie endlessly as far as eye can see. On clear rain-washed mornings high-rising snow-covered Himalayan ranges are visible. One can return to Janjheli or proceed to Karsog, which again is a beautiful valley having ancient temples. Karsog is 15 kilometres down from the temple. Karsog is a valley that spreads beautifully surrounded by apple orchards and coniferous forest. There is an old temple of Mahu Nag revered by people. Devotees come from far off places to this temple.

From Karsog one can trek to Banjar and Kullu valley or to Tattapani. Alternatively board a bus to reach Sundernagar or Shimla.

The Barot Trail

Barot is a small, serene, quiet and comfortable place to stay for a few days. It is located deep in the valley of Uhl river, away from maddening crowds. It is also the site of reservoir and tunnel-head of Shanan Hydel Power Project built in 1925. Thoughts about the vision, of Colonel Betty who designed and executed the project, fill with awe. Trout fish farm and project site are worth a visit. Barot is linked by motor road that takes off from Ghatasni on Jogindernagar–Mandi road.

Barot (1803 m) is located at a distance of sixty-three kilometres from Mandi and forty-two kilometres from Jogindernagar. The road to Barot bifurcates from Ghatasni on the Pathankot–Manali highway. Ghatasni is seventeen kilometres from Jogindernagar towards Mandi on this road. Five kilometres from Ghatasni on way to Barot is Jhatingri (2000 m) located on Ghogar Dhar.

Jhatingri, one of the lesser known destinations in the state, was the summer retreat for former rulers of Mandi. Nearest railhead for reaching Jhatingri is Jogindernagar in Mandi district. Ruins of summer palace of rulers of Mandi are still there echoing the tales from the distant past. Presently a PWD rest house and good camping place serve the purpose. Cedar and pine forest and the Dhauladhar as the background are a visual treat.

After a halt at Jhatingri one can reach Barot. Barot has a lovely

rest house and campsites. Booking for the rest house should be done at Mandi in the office of executive engineer, Public Works Department. Another rest house located higher up belongs to Shanan Project that can be booked at Jogindernagar. Ghatasni to Barot is 25 kilometres.

Treks from Barot

Several trails start from Barot. One can visit temple of Bardharni Devi in Chhota Bhangal region and return to Barot by evening. Billing, the hang gliding site, is one day trek that is lengthy but easy. Billing is nearly twenty-seven kilometres from Barot. After an early start from Barot one can reach Billing by evening. From Billing trail descends to Bir and then to Baijnath. Villages like Polang, Bhujling, Kothi Kohr, Baragaon are good opportunities for trekkers to explore Chhota Bhangal region and to study village life in this interior region of the state. A day's walk takes to Jogindernagar along the trolley trail. Those interested in herbs and medicinal plants can visit Herbal Garden at Jogindernagar.

Dehnasar lake at 4150 m is accessible from June to October depending upon weather after a three days trek. One can walk over to Kullu valley from there. Lag valley in Kullu can be accessed from here across Sari pass (3760 m).

Trek to Bara Bhangal across Thamsar pass (4665 m) can be started from Barot. It has been described in detail in chapter on Kangra-Chamba valley treks. Another trek that takes to Bara Bhangal from Barot is over Makori pass (4444 m). Makori pass is less frequented by trekkers. It is a difficult pass. Even locals do not prefer this pass. Trail leads through Polang village, Nanwani Got, Thangkar Got and then to Bara Bhangal over the pass.

Barot-Bardharni Devi-Barot Trek (8-10 hrs)

Temple of Bardharni Devi is located in Chhota Bhangal region. The Devi commands great respect in the area. The temple is under a big *brass* tree in the open. There is no structure or superstructure. An idol is placed with *trishuls* all around under the tree. That is all. But the temple inspires awe and a feeling of devotion. Locals say that the Devi does not allow to construct any temple. Villagers have constructed a *sarai* after taking permission from the Devi below the temple.

The trek to the temple starts from Lohardi village six kilometres

from Barot on a motor road, however it is worthwhile to walk from Barot itself. The path climbs up at a steep grade after crossing a bridge at Lohardi. The trail passes through couple of villages. One should start after early breakfast from Barot with packed lunch and water. Trekkers can easily return to Barot for a good night's sleep after a tiring but rewarding day.

Jogindernagar–Barot–Billing–Palampur Trek

Highest altitude	—	2900 m
Duration	—	Four days
Season	—	All year
Grade	—	Easy

Jogindernagar to Winch Camp to Barot

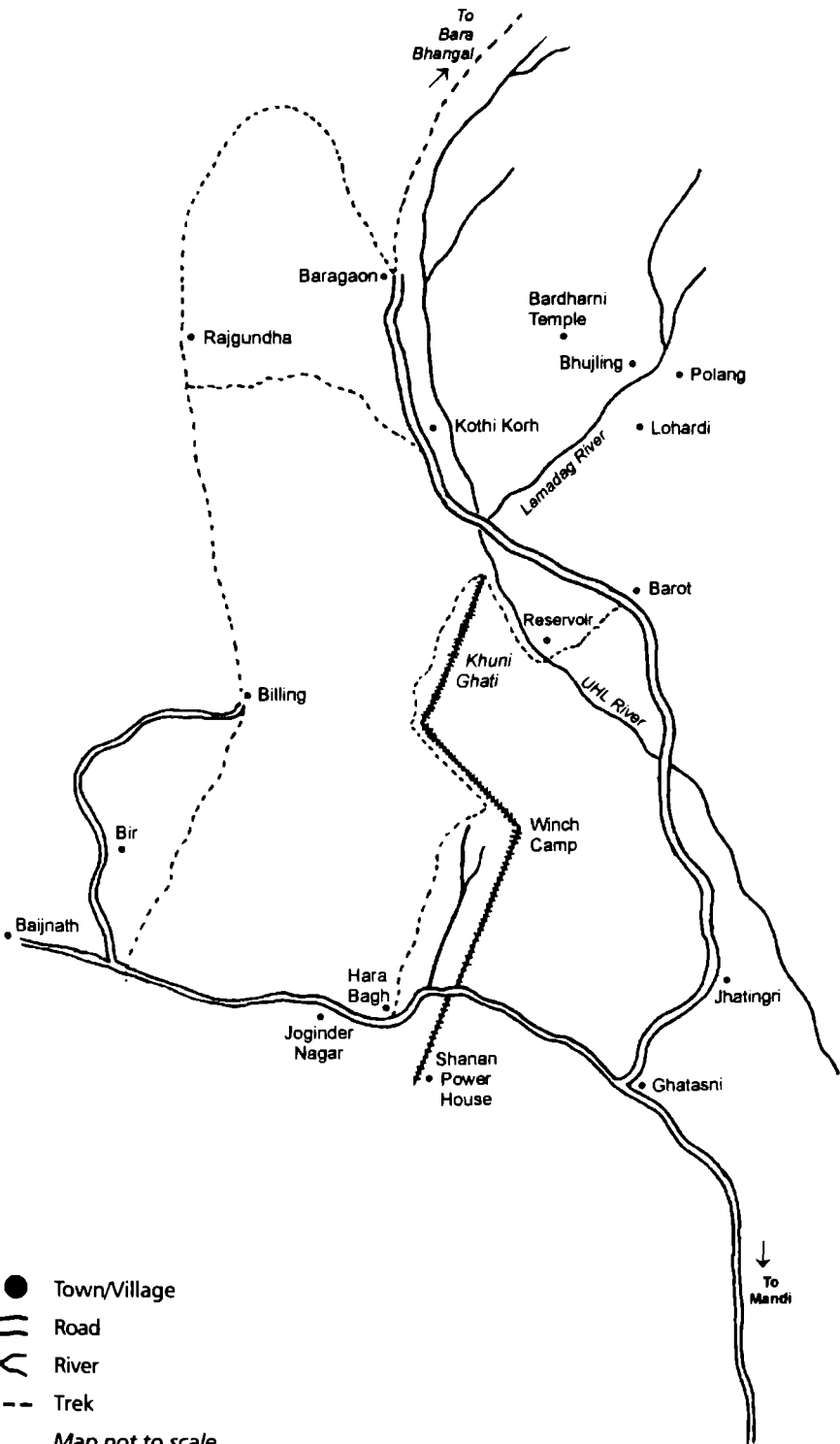
Start the trek from Jogindernagar and follow the main road up to Hara Bag, a small village with terraced fields. Take the path leading upto the Winch Camp. Alternatively take the trolley to the camp. Contact Shanan Project officers at Jogindernagar for permission to travel in trolley. Power house of the project is in Jogindernagar and the reservoir is at Barot on the other side of the hill. The water is brought by way of tunnel. Barot is only eleven kilometres from power house on haulage trolley. From Jogindernagar to Winch Camp is a climb of five kilometres followed by level walk on trolley trek for three kilometres and the last three kilometres are a steep descent to Barot.

It is easy walk from Jogindernagar to Barot but one must not miss the joy and thrill of travelling in the trolley. Travel in trolley to Winch Camp and then walk to Barot. One can camp at Winch Camp or walk down to Barot the same day.

It is nice level walk from Winch Camp to the point from where trolley descends to Barot. Now the project people do not operate trolley on this part. Even if they do for maintaining the trek, people are not allowed on the trolley. But this is the most thrilling part of the journey. Last stretch is called Khuni Ghati (the blood valley) for steep gradient. It is said once a mishap occurred here and all people aboard the trolley had died.

PWD rest house and Shanan Project's rest house at are well-located and are very comfortable. There is enough space to pitch tents. A

JOGINDERNAGAR BAROT BILLING TREK



small market at Barot is sufficient to cater to the needs. Barot is the last destination in Mandi district, as after crossing the bridge over the side stream that joins Uhl at Barot Chhota Bhangal region of Kangra district starts. The cook-cum-*chowkidar* of PWD rest house prepares delicious food.

Barot to Kothi Kohr (4-6 hrs)

Kothi Kohr village is fourteen kilometres from Barot. A motor road has come up that links Barot with Kothi Kohr and then Baragaon. This is part of the road link under construction to Billing. One can follow the road through Rajgundha village or take the foot path to Kothi Kohr. Kidney beans and potatoes are famous cash crops of this region.

Kothi Kohr to Billing (4-6 hrs)

It is an easy walk of twelve kilometres to Billing from here. There is rest house at Billing, the world famous paragliding site. A jeep road links Bir and Billing.

Billing to Bir (3-4 hrs)

Bir is ten kilometres walk from Billing on jeep road. Proper foot path (5 km) dropping down sharply also takes you to Bir, a small town. From Bir buses are available to Palampur.

Barot to Dehnasar Lake and to Kullu

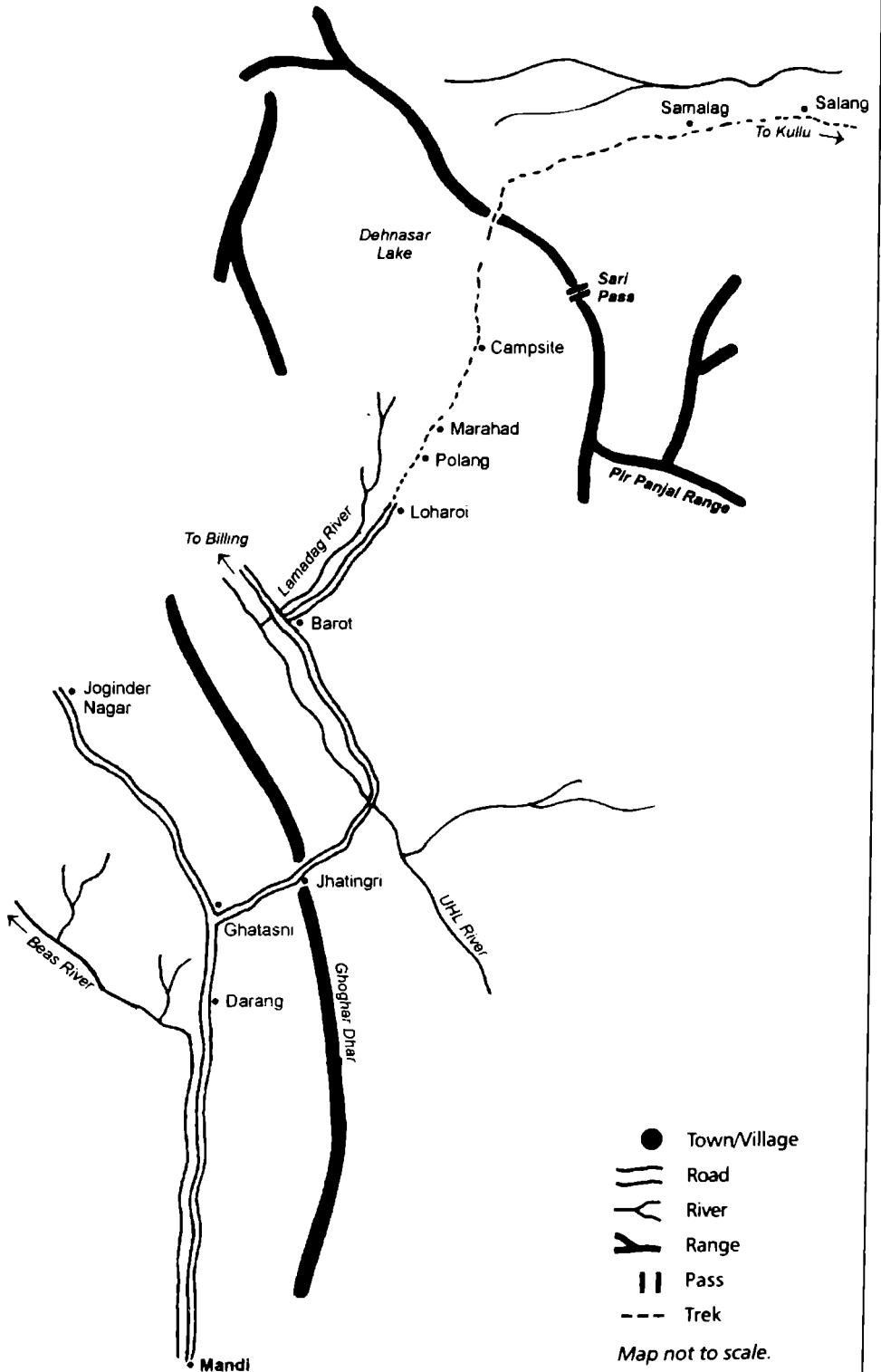
Highest altitude	—	4200 m
Duration	—	Four days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Moderate

Barot-Lohardi-Polang (4 hrs)

Barot to Lohardi is six kilometres. The distance to Polang village is three kilometres from here. From there the walk involves another fourteen kilometres to the lake through Marahad.

Lohardi, at an elevation of 1900 m, is connected by a motor road with Barot but the charm of walking leisurely on this road following Lamadag river is an exhilarating experience. The market at Lohardi is small but interesting. The place bears a forlorn, ancient and

BAROT-DEHNASAR-KULLU



abandoned look even today in 21st century. Many trails branch off from this sleepy little village. One trail goes to Kullu across Sari pass (3760 m) while the other passes through Dehnasar lake. Guide is required on this trek who can be hired at Lohardi.

The trek to Dehnasar passes through Polang village that has nearly thirty houses. It is better to camp in the village and then start early to reach the lake.

Polang–Dehnasar Lake (5-7 hrs)

From Polang to Marahad there is decent walk of about five kilometres. During the working season (May to November) there is good amount of activity at the timber collection centre located here. After Marahad the trek is difficult to locate and involves very steep climb. Adequate water supply must be carried from Marahad as drinking water is not available till one reaches near the lake. On the way one passes a campsite of widespread grassland with lot of wild flowers and mighty Himalayan ranges forming the backdrop.

Altitude starts to wear one down after the campsite. The trail continues to climb up to reach the lake located beautifully in high Himalayan ranges. Tiredness vanishes after reaching there and one bows at the greatness of nature. There are cave shelters short of the lake where one can stay the night.

Dehnasar (4150 m) is one of the highest lakes in Dhauladhar range. It lies at the boundary of Chhota Bhangal, Bara Bhangal and Kullu regions. It is said that the lake was created by Lord Shiva when certain goddesses worshipped him. The lake is the site of annual fair in the month of September.

Dehnasar Lake to Samalag Village (6 hrs)

The trail from Dehnasar to Samalag is confusing. There are several paths that lead down to Kullu side but most of these may end up somewhere in the forest or near the stream that is uncrossable. One should not travel without local guide well-conversant with the route on this trail. The village is about fourteen kilometres from the lake. So one must start early.

Samalag to Salang (4 hrs)

A defined and easy trek passes several villages before reaching Salang, the road point from where Kullu is fifteen kilometres.

Kullu-Spiti Region

KULLU-MANALI

Kullu town (1217 m) located on the right bank of Beas river is the headquarters of Kullu district. Once a hill state, Kullu had its capital at Naggar further up in Beas valley. The present town is famous for Dhalpur ground, Raghunathji temple and Kullu shawls. Kullu is connected by air with Delhi and Chandigarh. Bhuntar airport is at a distance of eight kilometres downstream Beas from Kullu town. It is a long journey of nearly fifteen hours by bus from Delhi. Tourism Development Corporation, State Transport Corporation and several private operators ply luxury buses between Delhi and Kullu.

Manali, forty kilometres from Kullu, is famous tourist destination.

Kullu—General Information

Area	: 5503 sq km (9.88% of total state area)
Headquarters	: Kullu
Climate	: Pleasant summers, cold winters
Altitude (Kullu)	: 1217 m (from mean sea level)
Population	: 3,79,865 persons
Density	: 69 persons per sq km
Sub-divisions	: 4
Main River	: Beas
Nearest Airport	: Bhuntar (9 km)
Nearest Railhead	: Shimla 240 km (narrow gauge); Pathankot 215 km (broad gauge)
Road Distances	: Manali 41 km; Mandi 69 km; Shimla 240 km; Dharamsala 195 km; Chandigarh 280 km.

Road to Manali passes through very beautiful villages and apple orchards along Beas. After Patli Kuhl there are two options to go to Manali: the right bank road and left bank road. The left bank road passes through Naggar village. It was the capital of Kullu state for hundreds of years.

Manali retains its old charm even today despite massive construction and over-crowding. Hidimba Devi temple, Vashisht hot water springs, Solang valley, Dashohr and Bhrgu lake are the main attractions around Manali. Walks to the surrounding villages pass through forests and apple orchards. Rohtang pass is the access to Lahaul region.

Parvati valley, Banjar, Shoja and Nirmand areas are full of trekking opportunities. Several trails lead to distant villages deep in the woods away from the world. One can cross over to Pin valley in Spiti across mighty Pin Parvati pass. Jalori and Bashleo passes provide access to Satluj valley. Kullu and Manali are also starting points for treks leading to Lahaul and Bara Bhangal areas.

Kullu–Bijli Mahadev–Bhuntar

Bijli Mahadev temple dedicated to Lord Shiva in Kullu district is unique. It is said that lightening hits the temple breaking the Shivling in pieces. The priest of temple joins the Shivling with butter and it takes proper shape with the grace of god. It is a wooden temple with small opening in the roof for the lightening to pass. The temple is located on a very open ridge overlooking Kullu valley. The place is windy but beautiful. There are very good campsites with plenty of water and dead-wood around the temple. There is a *sarai* near the temple for stay. Utensils are available for cooking but it is better to be self-sufficient.

The trek to the temple starts from Kullu. The bridge over Beas is crossed after Ramshila bazaar and the trek passes through forest of oak, pine and *deodar*. There are several trails that lead to the temple. Every village located on the slope of the mountain face has its own path upto the ridge. There is no danger of getting lost as there are many small hamlets on the way for instructions about the route and directions. A jeep road of twelve kilometres has been constructed to the temple. The road stops three kilometres short of the temple. The distance on foot to the temple is about ten kilometres.

The view from the top is panoramic. It is peaceful, serene and

calm at the top. Old priest of the temple is a storehouse of interesting legends and tales about miracles and glory of Bijli Mahadev.

While going down one can descend to Bhuntar. The path has steep grade therefore it must be negotiated with care. Regular buses are available from Bhuntar to Kullu.

Naggar

Naggar (1840 m) is located at a distance of twenty kilometres from Manali and twenty-three kilometres from Kullu on the left bank of Beas. Naggar is picture postcard village with terraced fields, thick forests and open views. Naggar was the capital of Kullu hundreds of years back. The castle has now been turned into a hotel. Paintings of Nicholas Roerich at Roerich Gallery present the mystique of the Himalaya in a manner unparalleled.

Tripura Sundari is the presiding deity of the area with a mesmerising wooden temple. The Devi travels all over her area in stages with her followers and goes as far as Malana, the ancient village that is said to be inhabited by the descendents of Greek soldiers who had come with Alexander.

It is an exhilarating walk in thick woods from Patli Kuhl to Naggar. Beautifully terraced fields and thick grove of trees present majestic view. Several trails start from Naggar to many interior villages, highland pastures and mountain passes.

Malana Village: Trek into the Past

Located at an altitude of 2652 m, Malana is one of the remotest villages of the state. Though with the construction of Parvati and Malana Hydel Projects the remoteness of Malana is fast becoming a misnomer. However, it still remains an interesting village. A vehicular road has come up to the village.

Democracy at Work

Malana is an ancient village that is said to be the oldest democracy of the world. There are elected members who govern the affairs of the village. In fact, the village is organised in a bicameral legislature. Upper House is called *Jyeshthang* and Lower House is called

Kanishthang. Both *Jyeshth* and *Kanishth* are Sanskrit words meaning elder (upper) and younger (lower) respectively. Four *Fouguldars* who are also elected assist the elders. They are the executive branch of government responsible for implementing the decisions of the village parliament. Supreme judiciary is the Jamlu Devta whose decisions are binding on all. All disputes that can not be resolved by people come to him and his writ runs without any problem.

Upper House has eleven members, out of whom three are permanent while eight are temporary. Permanent members are *Karmishth*, the village chief; the Priest and third is *Gur*. *Gur*, the medium of the Devta, is elected by the Devta himself. The remaining eight members are elected from four wards called *Chug*. Each *Chug* is further divided into two sections called *Chhundi*. These elders are called *Jathera*. The temporary members are chosen in an election.

Lower House is the representative house where one person from each family is included as member. Generally, head of the family is the member. If there is no male member then the lady of the house is taken as representative of that family. Consent of Lower House is mandatory in each decision concerning the village.

When two houses differ and their joint session and consultations fail to resolve the issue, matter is brought to the notice of the Jamlu Devta whose decision is binding.

In fact, Malana has two distinct villages, Saura Berh and Dhara Berh, having the temple of Jamlu Devta (Harcha) in between. The sitting of the houses takes place in the compound of the temple. Whenever needed any member of the house calls, "Doye Gatake", three times from the stage in the precincts of the temple and all members assemble for proceedings.

Approach to Malana is either from Naggar across Chandarkhani pass or from Jari in Parvati valley. Malana is a village that carries an old look and a distinct feel about it. Many rituals and traditions practised here do not belong to Hinduism *per se*. Jamlu, the presiding deity of the village, controls the life in the village. His dictate is final and binding. There is a people's rule here with two assemblies of villagers deciding the matters. Main precinct of the temple and most parts of the village are out of bounds for outsiders; leather goods and shoes are not allowed. Violation is punished by penalty. This system has led to many cases of harassing the innocent outsiders and trekkers.

Naggar–Malana Across Chandarkhani Pass

Highest altitude	—	3500 m
Duration	—	Three days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Easy

Naggar to Rumsu Camp (6-8 hrs)

Naggar is famous for its castle, old pagoda temple of Tripura Sundari and Roerich Art Gallery. Proper village mule path leads to Rumsu village (2200 m) located above Naggar town. Climb is rather steep at places and tires the travellers. People have an option of camping near the village or trekking further up on a forest path towards the pass. Several trails criss-cross immediately above the village posing the danger of losing one's way. However if general directions are taken in the village itself there is little danger of missing the actual trek.

There are many splendid campsites on the way with plenty of deadwood and potable water. The further one can go the better it is, as the next day's distance is reduced considerably. This proves quite helpful as the climb to the pass is also taxing.

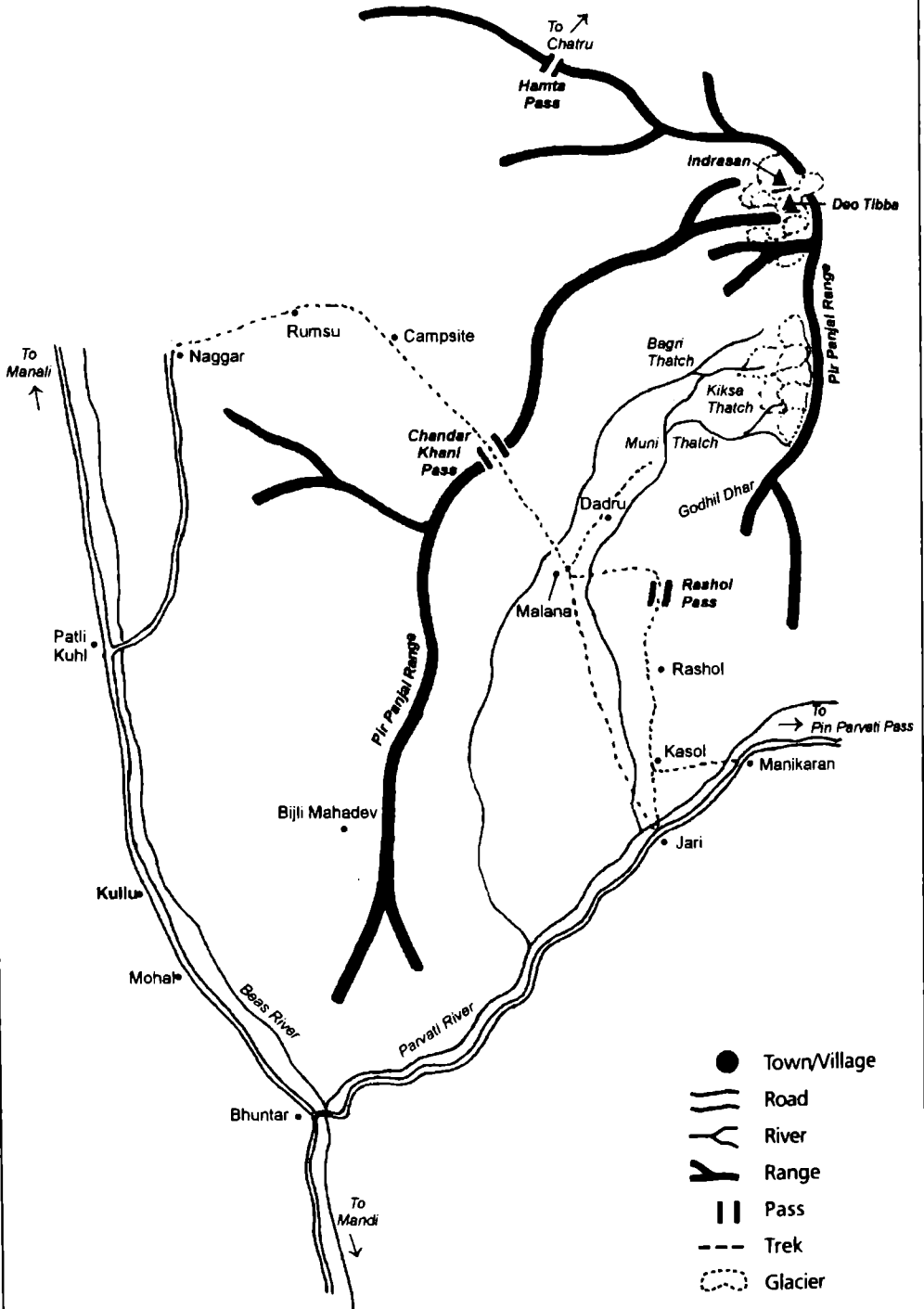
Rumsu–Chandarkhani Pass (3500 m)–Malana (6-8 hrs)

People relate an interesting tale connected with Chandarkhani pass. In ancient times god Jamlu, the presiding deity of Malana, was carrying all the gods on this route. He opened the basket full of gods on the top of Chandarkhani pass and a strong wind blew all the gods away. These gods settled all over the valley, hence Kullu came to be known as 'Valley of Gods'.

Climb to the pass is tiring. Contrary to most other passes, the last leg is not very steep and the trek is on the ridge of Chandarkhani for quite some time. The top offers panoramic view of Pir Panjal and Dhauladhar. Descent is very steep and risky. Path just falls down abruptly to Malana. An alternate route that is longer but gentler is through Dadru forest area.

Malana (2652 m) comprises two villages about hundred yards apart. There are peculiar customs in the village. One should not enter the village with leather articles including leather shoes. There are identifiable places where one can and can not go. The instructions

MANALI-MALANA-MANIKARAN TREK



from local people should be followed carefully.

A steep descent from Malana takes to Jari twelve kilometres from Bhuntar on the roadhead. It is a day-long trek to Jari. With the coming up of Malana Power Project and Parvati Project the road construction has changed the landscape of the area. Other option is to trek across Rashol Jot.

Malana–Manikaran/Kullu Across Rashol Pass

Highest altitude	—	3250 m
Duration	—	Three days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Easy

Malana to Rashol (6-8 hrs)

A defined trail heads to Rashol pass and then to Rashol village (2300 m), at a distance of thirteen kilometres from Malana. Ascent to the top of the pass is of about four hours that turns steep in the end. Downward trek from the pass to the village is also steep. There is good campsite near the village.

Rashol to Kasol (4-6 hrs)

Proper forest path of about eight kilometres leads to Kasol (1580 m). The village is beautifully located with a rest house.

Kasol to Jari (3-5 hrs)

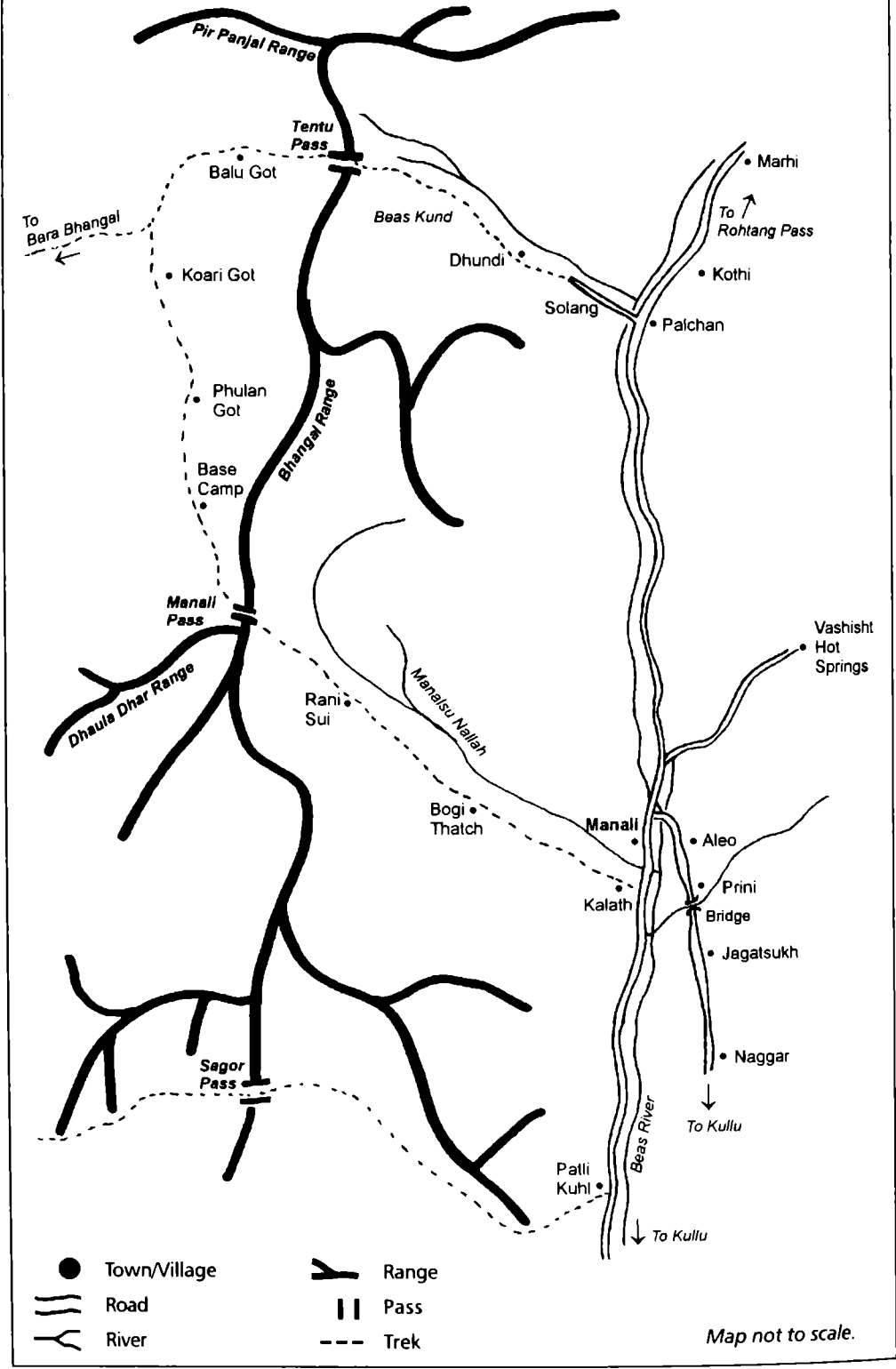
Kasol to Jari (1500 m) is a three-hours walk on an easy trail. Board a bus to Kullu or Manikaran from here.

Manali–Solang Valley–Beas Kund Trek

Highest altitude	—	3540 m
Duration	—	Two days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Easy

The trek from Manali to Beas Kund is quite enjoyable, as it is comparatively easier and passes through beautiful landscape. This is

MANALI-BEASKUND-MANALI TREK



a tree-days trek that is generally extended as one wants to stay another day in the lap of nature.

Manali–Dhundi (4-6 hrs)

Start early and follow Manali–Rohtang road up to Palchan. From Palchan a road branches off to Solang (2480 m). This road leads to the skiing training centre of Mountaineering and Allied Sports Institute. Climb up to Dhundi (2800 m) on a well-marked trail. The trail goes on to the campsite through stone and moraine-filled path for some time. Side stream is to be crossed before starting on last ascent to Dhundi. Dhundi is about eight kilometres from Solang.

One can trek from Manali or alternatively take bus to Palchan and walk from there to Solang or hire a taxi up to Solang *nallah* before starting the trek.

Dhundi to Beas Kund (3 hrs)

It is a six kilometres trek up into the Solang valley to the source of Beas river. Halfway up is Bakkar Thatch pasture. Last leg is slightly steep before reaching Beas Kund (3540 m). Hanuman Tibba stands out majestically in the mountainscape all around.

One can descend on the same route or cross over Tentu also called Solang pass (4996 m) to return to Manali. Other option is to trek to Marhi and Rohtang pass.

Beas Kund–Manali Across Tentu and Manali Passes

Highest altitude	—	4998 m
Duration	—	Five days
Season	—	June to October
Grade	—	Difficult

Beas Kund to Balu Got Across Tentu Pass (8-10 hrs)

Steep climb of nearly four hours leads to the top of the Tentu pass (4996 m). It is a beautiful pass that presents panoramic view of Kullu valley and Pir Panjal range. Trail descends to Balu Got, a camping ground at a distance of about ten kilometres from the top of the pass.

Balu Got to Phulan Got (6-8 hrs)

The trek passes through various pastures where shepherds camp with their flock in summers. One of the prominent *gots* on the way is Koari Got before reaching Phulan Got. The trail climbs up after Koari Got rather sharply. It is tiring climb and rest is well deserved.

Phulan Got to Base Camp (6-8 hrs)

A day's trek involves walking on moraine and confusing trails. An experienced guide is needed to cross over without losing precious hours in trying to figure out the correct trail. Camp is generally set up at the snout of glacier below the pass.

Base Camp–Manali Pass–Rani Sui (6-8 hrs)

Climb up from the base camp to the Manali pass (4998 m). Deo Tibba, Indrasan, Hanuman Tibba peaks are visible from the top of the pass. Trek down to Rani Sui campsite.

Rani Sui to Kalath/Manali

It is a steep descent to Manali through Boghi Thatch and Kalath. The walk involves nearly twenty-two kilometres to Manali. One can board a bus, get a taxi or hitch hike to Manali from Kalath.

Manali–Chandar Tal–Manali Trek

Highest altitude	—	4480 m
Duration	—	Five days
Season	—	July to October
Grade	—	Moderate

This Chandar Tal lake should not be confused with Chandar Tal lake in Spiti.

Manali to Chikka (4-6 hrs)

Board a bus from Manali to Jagatsukh, at a distance of seven kilometres from Manali, a beautiful village steeped in history. It was the capital of Kullu state. From Jagatsukh, a defined trek takes off to Chikka along Jagatsukh *nallah*. A couple of side streams are crossed

on the way. There are some dangerous sections below high rocks having a steep fall. There is a danger of shooting stones. The trek passes through thick forest and continues to gain height. On way are summer camps of shepherds. The trail leads to alpine pastures of Chikka (2960 m). There are rock overhangs for shelters besides *marh* constructed by shepherds.

Chikka to Seri (4-6 hrs)

After Chikka the trek climbs for ten kilometres up to the beautiful camping ground of Seri (3990 m). Seri is at the base of southwest face of Deo Tibba. This area has some of the finest varieties of alpine flowers. On way to Seri there are several places to camp but it is better to reach the main flatter pasture at the base of rising presence of Deo Tibba.

Seri to Chandar Tal (3-4 hrs)

It is nearly two-hours climb to the lake (4480 m). A *nallah* coming down from one side is crossed before heading up straight. There is another campsite below the lake called Tenta campsite. After staying at the lake for some time one can return to Chikka by evening or halt at Seri itself and return the next day.

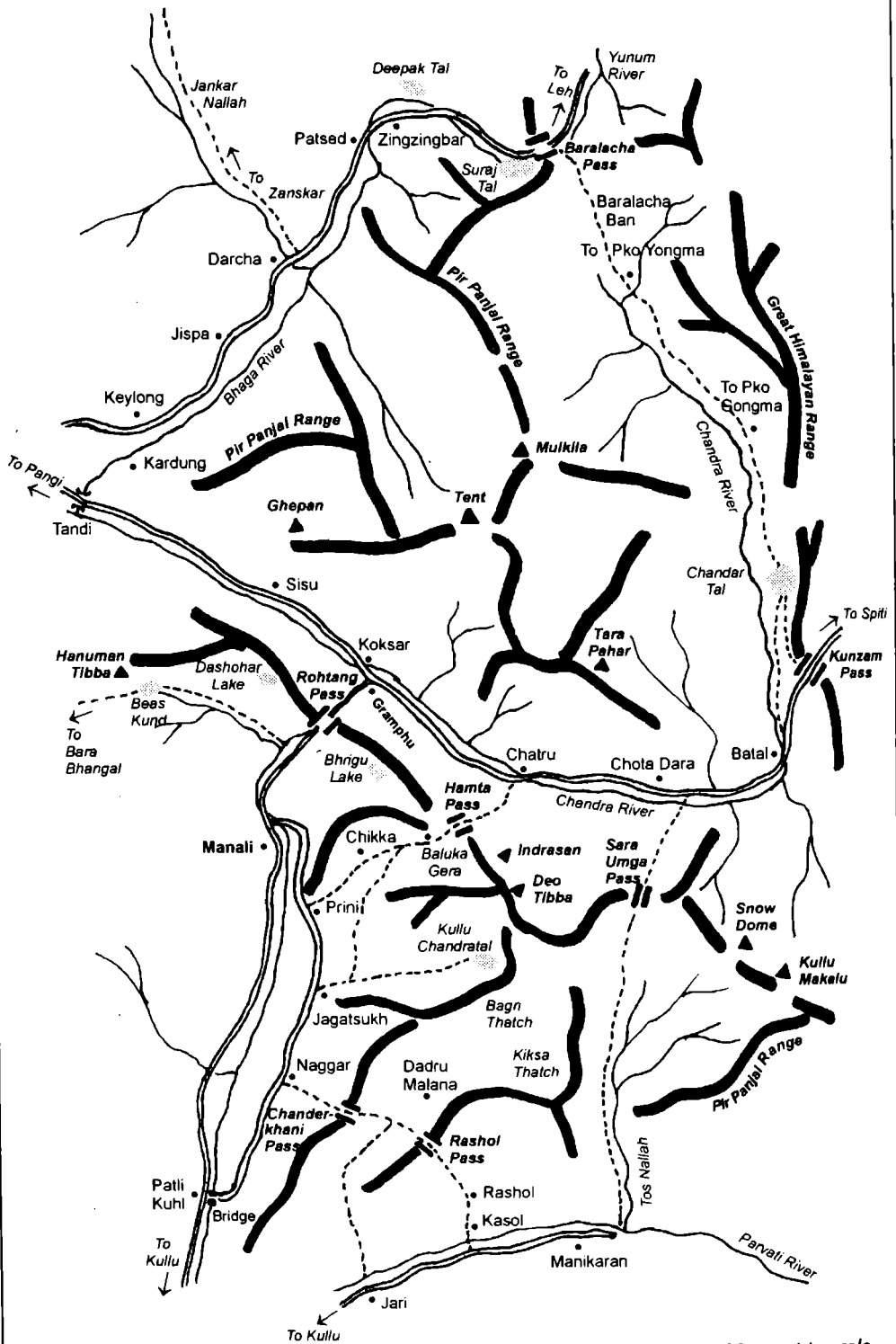
Manali-Chatru-Chandar Tal-Suraj Tal- Baralacha Across Hamta Pass

Highest altitude	—	4885 m
Duration	—	Ten days
Season	—	July to October
Grade	—	Difficult

Manali-Prini-Chikka (4-6 hrs)

It is a trek of nearly fourteen kilometres. It starts at Prini village located at about three kilometres from Manali on the left bank road to Kullu. Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee has made the village famous as he has a house in this village where he goes every summer. Trek climbs up along Hamta *nallah*. It curls up sharply on the left bank of the *nallah*. It passes through a good forest before crossing potato farm and descends to Settan village. The path climbs further up and then levels for some time as it passes through many grazing grounds.

MANALI-CHANDAR TAL-SURAJ TAL TREK



Map not to scale.

Before Chikka the trail crosses over to the right bank of the *nallah*. Several side streams are to be crossed on the way.

Chikka to Balu Ka Gera (4-5 hrs)

Eight kilometres trek from Chikka campsite takes to the next day's destination below the pass. It is a tough and tiring climb that winds up above the treeline and enters difficult terrain of stones and boulders. Side streams need to be crossed which present a lot of difficulties. Therefore an early start from Chikka is recommended. The path involves steep ascent before reaching the little sandy place along the *nallah*. This is Balu (sand) Ka Gera.

Balu Ka Gera–Hamta Pass–Chatru (6-8 hrs)

Ascent to the pass involves steep climb of nearly three kilometres. It is taxing and takes a minimum of three hours. Top of the pass offers good view of Pir Panjal range. Descent on the other side is very steep in the beginning. One must have an ice axe if crossing in the month of May or October. Even otherwise it is a valuable addition. After about a descent of 400 m there is a flatter portion suitable for emergency camping. The path goes down on moraine and scree for some time before entering grasslands. Trek to Chatru is along the *nallah* (Chatru *nallah*) originating from Indrasan glacier. One can cross over to the right bank and descend to the confluence point where Chatru *nallah* meets Chandra. There Chatru *nallah* is to be crossed again over a *trangari*.

After Chatru one can return to Manali over Rohtang pass in a bus. Alternatively the trek can be extended to cover Chandra Tal and Suraj Tal lakes. These two beautiful lakes in Lahaul and Spiti district are worth a visit. Both these are linked by road. While Suraj Tal lies just below Baralacha pass on Manali–Leh highway, Chandra Tal is below Kunzum pass and it takes a walk of nearly three hours from the top of the pass to the lake. There is a jeep road that branches off to the lake after Batal before Kunzum pass. This road stops short of Chandra Tal and one has to walk for about three kilometres to reach the lake.

However it is possible to trek from Chandra Tal to Suraj Tal. The trek is very difficult and must not be attempted without a guide. It involves following stages as an extension of Hamta pass trek.

Chatru to Chhota Dara (3740 m): 16 km

Walk on the motor road connecting Kullu with Spiti over Rohtang and Kunzum passes. There is a shabby hut in the name of the rest house and seasonal teashop. The terrain is rugged and depressing, besides being a tiring trek.

Chhota Dara to Batal (3960 m): 16 km

Batal is located at the foot of Kunzum pass that provides access to Spiti valley. There are seasonal shops providing food and shelter.

Batal to Chandra Tal (4270 m): 18 km

Chandar Tal or Moon Lake is one of the most beautiful lakes of the Himalaya. One trek takes off to left along Chandra river after Batal from the loops climbing to the top of the pass. Better option is to take nine kilometres trail that drops down to the lake from Kunzum pass top.

Chandar Tal to Topko Yongma (4320 m): 12 km

Ice-cold water of river is to be crossed. It is advisable to cross early in the morning as water levels rise ominously at noon. Some people have lost their lives while crossing the river. A guide who knows the way must be engaged.

Topko Yongma to Topko Gongma (4640 m): 11 km

It is a rugged terrain, cold desert. There are many confusing trails.

Topko Gongma–Suraj Tal–Baralacha Pass: 10 km

Baralacha is on Manali–Leh road. One can board a bus here or at Patseo (3820 m) 19 kilometres down on Lahaul side. There is a rest house at Patseo. Thereafter following the road one can head to Jispa (3320 m) 14 kilometres from Patseo. And Jispa to Keylong (3340 m), the district headquarters of Lahaul and Spiti is 21 kilometres.

Manali–Bhrigu Lake Trek

Bhrigu lake (4270 m) is on the ridge towards the right side of Rohtang as one looks at Rohtang pass from Gulaba, the starting point.

The trek can be started from Gulaba on Manali–Leh road. One can ask for directions about starting point in the bus itself. Milestone indicating the distance of Rohtang as twenty-six kilometres is another indication as the trail branches off from the motor road near it. There is a depot of Border Roads Organization at Gulaba to seek directions.

Once on the trail it climbs up sharply and makes its way through forest and pastures. On way Kolang *nallah* is crossed after which there is sharp ascent. Thereafter the climb is strenuous and tiring as altitude gains, drop in temperature and thin air make it difficult to walk. Small ridges and humps on the sloping hillside are crossed before making it to the last ridge. The lake is on the other side of the ridge that comes from Rohtang side.

After a walk of about six to eight hours one reaches the lake. Good trekkers can descend back to Gulaba before dark. But better option is to stay for the night near the lake. Even otherwise grand view, serene lake and splendid campsite compel the travellers to stay for the night. Many trekkers camp here for days exploring side ridges and enjoy star-gazing. One can also trek to Rohtang pass or down to Vashisht.

Manali–Dashohar Lake Trek

It is a three-hours long climb at moderate grade from the road point to Dashohar lake (3950 m) located to the left of Rohtang pass on Kullu side. Trek starts from the last sharp curve before Rahla Fall on Manali–Leh road. Rahla Fall lies below Rohtang pass. Before Rahla Fall there is a stretch of about one kilometre without any sharp loop upward. The road climbs up from Marhi to Rohtang in short loops. The trail to the lake takes off from here.

Climb is straight up on the spur of a subsidiary range that is cut by the road. The path is not marked or defined but the location of the lake is on the saddle straight above the curve on the road. It is not visible from the road but one can see the ridgeline with the saddle as one climbs up for about an hour.

Thereafter the sight of saddle must not be lost. Shi, the piles of stones put up by locals and shepherds as direction marks are other guides.

The lake is located beautifully with high rising snow-covered peaks forming the backdrop. One can climb down on the same trek or take

the route below the ridgeline towards Rohtang top and reach the top of pass in about two hours.

Trekking in Seraj Region in Kullu

The magic of this isolated and unknown region is because it is not a crowded destination. It has special feel about it. It is sublime, quiet and beautiful. Seraj can be accessed from Kullu or Shimla. The area also offers entry into the Great Himalayan National Park. Inner Seraj is the area that is towards Kullu whereas Outer Seraj is the region that stretches towards Shimla district.

Bashleo pass (3250 m) and Jalori pass (3313 m) are the two most frequented mountain passes connecting Kullu and Shimla districts. There are innumerable trails to trek around this region. These are easy, friendly treks with little sleepy villages. People are hospitable and helpful. Pasture and grasslands serve as ideal campsites. Another advantage is that one is closer to the road in this region, though the roads may scare the life out of first-time travellers.

From Shimla the trek can be started at Ani, the sub-divisional headquarters. Ani is connected by all-weather road with Shimla through Narkanda and Luhri.

Jalori Jot, Sareolsar lake, Temple of Shingar Rishi, Shoja, Banjar, Takrasi, Paneo, Dalash, Khanag and Kullu Sarahan are the areas that can be trekked to. Nirmand, one of the largest and ancient village with history going as far as post-Harappan period according to some scholars, is worth a visit. Another trek is to Shrikhand Mahadev (5155 m), considered the abode of Lord Shiva. It is difficult trek involving many days.

Ani to Khanag is twenty kilometres on a very well-defined trek. Shoja, a beautiful resting place far away from the world with an ideally located rest house is ten kilometres walk from Khanag.

Shoja to Banjar is thirteen kilometres walk. Jalori, the mountain pass with motor road and Sareolsar lake nearby is vast camp ground. There are several small one-day excursions around the pass. Alpine pastures above Shoja and Jalori pass are beautiful, scenic retreats.

From Banjar an easy trek goes to Nirmand over Jalori and Bashleo pass. First stage is a trek to Goshaini thirteen kilometres from Banjar. Next day's trip to Bathad is a walk of sixteen kilometres. From there

to Kullu Sarahan is another memorable walk. Kullu Sarahan has beautiful landscape and an ideally located rest house.

The Great Himalayan National Park

The Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) in Kullu district is spread over an area of 765 sq km. Rupi Bhabha Sanctuary (269 sq km) of Kinnaur, and Pin Valley National Park (675 sq km) of Spiti valley border with GHNP. It comprises the region lying in the upper reaches of the catchment area of Tirthan, Sainj, Parvati and Jiwa *nallahs*. These *nallahs* merge in Beas river. More than half of the area of the park is above 4000 m.

The park has very rich biodiversity. Forest is subtropical, alpine and alpine shrub type. Vast grasslands high up in the valley lead to snow-covered mountains. Western tragopan, monal, blue sheep, ghoral, musk deer and Himalayan tahr are found in this region. The park is the habitat of Western Himalayan tragopan, monal, cheer, koklass, kalij and Himalayan snowcock, the Himalayan pheasants.

Hot springs of Kheer Ganga, Mantalai, the source of Parvati river, Raktisar and Hans Kund, Saryolsar lake are within the limits of the park. Main entries to the park are along Sainj *nallah* or Tirthan *nallah*. Aut is 45 km from Mandi on Mandi–Kullu road. Larji, 4 km from Aut, is the zero point so to say. One trail leads along Sainj *nallah*. On this trail motor road is up to Neuli, 26 km. The other trail follows the Tirthan *nallah* where motor road leads to Gushaini, 28 km. The other route is to enter Parvati valley. Pin Parvati pass connecting Kullu and Spiti is the last point in this direction. Entry in to protected region is through permits provided at Director GHNP's office located at Shamshi, short of Kullu. The Range Forest Officers posted at Shairopa, Banjar and Sainj can also be contacted. Guides are also available at nominal fee.

Fourteen inspection huts are there in the park where one can stay with permission. Accommodation is also available at Aut, Larji, Banjar, Sainj, Sairopa and Bathad.

Every season is special for the visitors for different reasons. Winters and early spring are best for wildlife sightings as wildlife species descend to the lower altitudes. Wild flowers and alpine flora can be seen in its full mystique in August and September. September and October are the best months for high altitude treks in the park. May

and June are also good for snow walking and trekking. GHNP offers everything to nature-lovers, trekkers and adventure travellers.

Kullu–Shimla Across Jalori Pass

Highest altitude	—	3313 m
Duration	—	Six days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Easy

Banjar (1534 m) is a small town located in Kullu district below Jalori pass that links Kullu and Shimla districts. There are government rest houses and private hotels for boarding and lodging. Banjar area presents great trekking opportunities. It is also an entry point to explore the Great Himalayan National Park and Seraj region of Kullu. Many unexplored treks await the adventure-lovers. There are several old trails that have now been abandoned even by local people. Road construction has taken its toll in that sense. However these roads have thrown up many new possibilities for trekkers. Two of the most commonly trekked routes are over Jalori and Bashleo passes. These trails pass through thick forests, alpine meadows and wonderful landscapes. This is unspoiled region and sheer delight to trek on. More frequented valleys of Kangra and Kullu have become overcrowded whereas this region retains naturalness to the full.

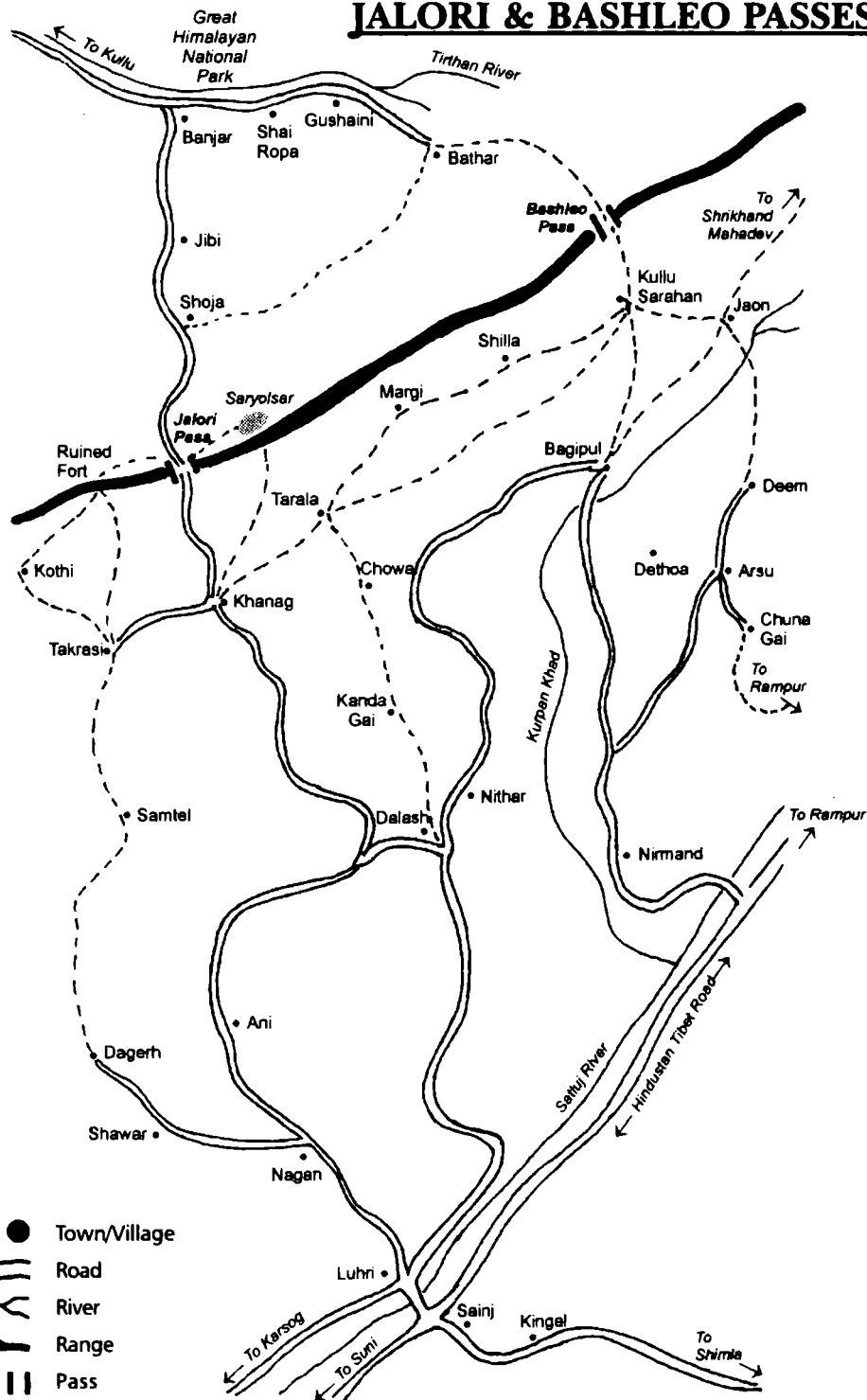
Banjar to Shoja (4-5 hrs)

It is a long but easy and enjoyable walk to Shoja (2692 m) from Banjar covering fourteen kilometres in about four hours. The road is followed to Ghyagi village at about eight kilometres from Banjar. It is a beautifully located village that has forest rest house and a few hotels offering elementary facilities. Thereafter the trek leads to Shoja, connected by motor road. The path passes through good forest.

Shoja to Jalori Pass (2-3 hrs)

It is a two to three hours steep climb to the top on the motor road to the pass. There are a few shortcuts through the forest of rei, fir, kharsu trees. It is a climb of six kilometres to the top. Grassy meadows characterize the pass. After May flowers carpet these grasslands. There are *dhabas* offering boarding and lodging at the top. One can camp near the ridgeline of the pass but there are other worthwhile options.

KULLU-SHIMLA ACROSS JALORI & BASHLEO PASSES



Map not to scale.

Jalori Pass to Saryolsar Lake (3 hrs)

A gentle, beautiful walk through forest and pastures of nearly eight kilometres takes to Saryolsar lake. There are splendid campsites besides the lake. After Saryolsar the trek descends to Khanag.

Jalori Pass to Raghupur Garh Fort (2 hrs)

The other option from Jalori pass is to climb up for about four kilometres to reach the remains of an old fort. This Raghupur Garh fort is another wonderful place with very good campsites. Trekkers should not miss either Saryolsar or Raghupur Garh. An extra day should be planned to cover both these places.

Saryolsar to Khanag (2-3 hrs)

It is a steep descent of five kilometres from the lake down to Khanag village. There is a rest house at the village.

Trek from Raghupur Garh fort follows following route to Khanag. From the fort trail descends to Takrasi village at a distance of about five kilometres. There is an old forest house. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, had stayed in this rest house. After Takrasi there is a walk of seven to eight kilometres on motor road to Khanag.

Khanag to Ani (2 hrs by Bus)

Khanag village is connected by road and taxis are also available to Ani, one of the sub-divisional headquarters of Kullu. From Ani one can go to Luhri, Sainj and then to Rampur or Shimla by bus.

Khanag to Rampur on Dak Runner's Trail

There is an old trek trail that takes off from Khanag to Rampur. This was the route on which forest dak runners used to ferry official and personal letters regularly. The trek has convenient stages of eight to nine kilometres a day with rest houses at each stage. It follows through tiny hill villages, far away from the world. Trekkers can embark on this exciting journey after Khanag instead of going to Ani. This trek follows following stages.

Khanag to Taral, Taral to Margi, Margi to Shilla, Shilla to Dalash, Dalash to Kullu Sarahan, Kullu Sarahan to Bagi Pul, Bagi Pul to Nirmand, Nirmand to Rampur.

All these stages except the last two involve a walk of not more than nine kilometres in a day and there are beautifully located rest houses for night halt. The trekkers can club stages if they so desire. From Bagi Pul another trek heads for Kurpan Khad valley and then to Shrikhand Mahadev.

Nirmand is about eight kilometres from Bagi Pul and Rampur is further seventeen kilometres. One can board the bus at Bagi Pul or Nirmand.

Kullu-Shimla Across Bashleo Pass

Highest altitude	—	3277 m
Duration	—	Four days
Season	—	May to November
Grade	—	Easy

Banjar to Bathar (4-5 hrs)

It is a thirteen kilometres trek that follows motor road. Five kilometres after Banjar is Shai Ropa Trekker's Hut built under the auspices of the Great Himalayan National Park. Trekker's huts are on the bank of Tirthan river famous for trout fishing. One can stay here or proceed to Bathar. There are good camping sites near the village.

Bathar-Bashleo Pass-Kullu Sarahan (8-10 hrs)

A steep climb of ten kilometres on a proper path leads to the top of the pass. From the top it is an equally steep descent of five kilometres to Kullu Sarahan. There is a beautiful rest house in the village.

Kullu Sarahan to Bagi Pul (4-5 hrs)

Eight kilometres descent leads to Bagi Pul from where one can board a bus to Rampur and then to Kinnaur or Shimla.

Kullu Sarahan to Rampur via Arsu

Other option after Kullu Sarahan is to follow different route to Rampur on foot. From Kullu Sarahan the trek leads to Jaon village. Next comes Arsu village at a distance of five kilometres from Jaon. There is a rest house at Arsu. Chuna Gai is four kilometres from Arsu and Rampur is further six kilometres from there.

Shrikhand Mahadev Yatra

Highest altitude	—	5155 m
Duration	—	Six days
Season	—	August to September
Grade	—	Difficult

Shrikhand Mahadev is one of the revered places of pilgrimage associated with Lord Shiva. Shrikhand Mahadev or Shrikhand Kailash (5155 m) is located in Kullu district. This tough and taxing journey is undertaken by hundreds of devotees in the month of August every year. The top of the peak is considered a natural Shivlingam. The *yatra* is completed in following stages.

Shimla–Bagi Pul (by Vehicle)

Shimla is starting point of this *yatra*. First step is to reach Bagi Pul after crossing Narkanda and Nirmand. This 140 kilometres long journey by road is no less tiring and takes nearly eight to nine hours.

Narkanda, 65 kilometres from Shimla, on the Hindustan–Tibet road, is a beautiful tourist spot. A few provision shops and *dhabas* are there besides hotel of Tourism Department, private hotels and a rest house of Public Works Department.

Hatu peak at a distance of eight kilometres from here is another place worth a visit. Though connected by a jeepable road it is better to walk up.

After Narkanda the road goes down towards river Satluj. Nirmand, an ancient village, claims to be the largest village in Asia. It derives its name from *nirmedh* meaning human sacrifice. It is said that Lord Parsurama having killed his mother Renuka at his father's command brought her back to life by performing filial obeisance. He expiated his crime of matricide by donating land to the Brahmins of this village and presenting an idol of goddess Ambika to the villagers. A *yajna* is performed in honour of Ambika who is regarded as the presiding deity of the village after every twelve years. In this *yajna* called *Bhunda*, human sacrifice was practised earlier. Now it has been replaced by animal sacrifice.

There is a government rest house besides some private guest houses and hotels. On way to Nirmand one should also visit the Sun temple at Nirath on Hindustan–Tibet road.

Bagi Pul, eight kilometres from Nirmand, is the last point of the motorable road. It is a small beautiful village. One can stay here at night, private accommodation and campsites are available. ❁

Bagi Pul-Sindhwar (4-5 hrs)

Trek to Shrikhand Mahadev goes along Kurpan Khad. After Bagi Pul next halt is Sindhwar village, which is the last village on this trail. A bridal path, about five kilometres long, takes to Jaon village. There are a few modest private hotels and a few provision shops. These hotels have bare minimum in terms of comfort. Then an almost level walk of three kilometres leads to village Barnagi. There is an old forest rest house at Barnagi. One kilometre from Barnagi is Sindhwar village.

Sindhwar-Bhimdwari (10-12 hrs)

The *yatra* after Sindhwar is tough as it involves a stretch of nearly 32 kilometres up to the destination that is Bhimdwari. The trek follows Kurpan Khad with the roar of flowing water as background music. First part of the trek after Sindhwar (about five kilometres) is not tiring, as it is a level walk. It passes through very beautiful landscapes, meadows and pastures. The trek traverses through very rich Girchi forest area.

Then comes the taxing stretch of nearly eight kilometres known as *Khara Danda* (straight climb). It involves a lot of effort, energy and will power. After this climb the path is gentler and a distance of nearly twenty kilometres is to be covered to reach Bhimdwari. This part goes through alpine meadows and small glaciers.

Bhimdwari is the base to start the climb up to Nain Sarovar, a small, sleepy yet breath-takingly beautiful lake and further to Shrikhand. There is space to pitch tents, also a *kud*, the cave shelter.

Bhimdwari-Shrikhand Mahadev-Bhimdwari (10-12 hrs)

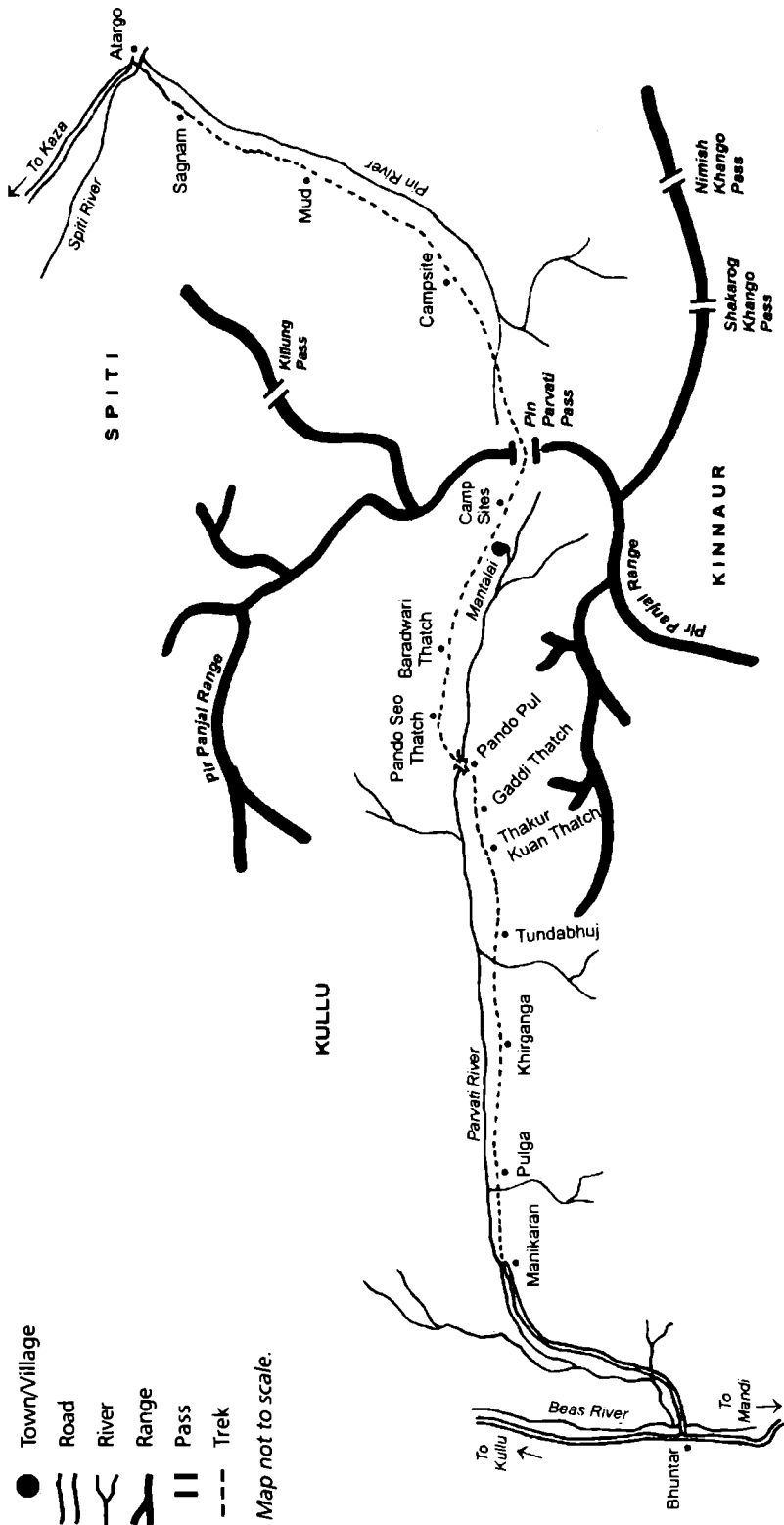
The climb from Bhimdwari to the top is also tough and risky. One must start early as the night halt has to be again at Bhimdwari.

A steep climb of about four kilometres leads to Nain Sarovar lake, where a holy dip in the icy waters is taken by the devotees (it is mandatory) before proceeding to the *darshan* of Shivlingam.

PIN PARVATI PASS

- Town/Village
- == Road
- ~ River
- ≡ Range
- || Pass
- - - Trek

Map not to scale.



After the lake another stretch of about four kilometres on moraine is to be covered before reaching the prized destination. This is very risky and tiring journey and a local guide who has performed the trip is a must. It is essential to start back towards Bhimdwari by noon as the weather is unpredictable. Rain, snow and mist are regular features in the afternoons. During the *yatra* days, tented accommodation, health facility and food are available at Sindhwar and Bhimdwari.

Pin Parvati Pass

Highest altitude	—	5319 m
Duration	—	Eight days
Season	—	August-September
Grade	—	Very difficult

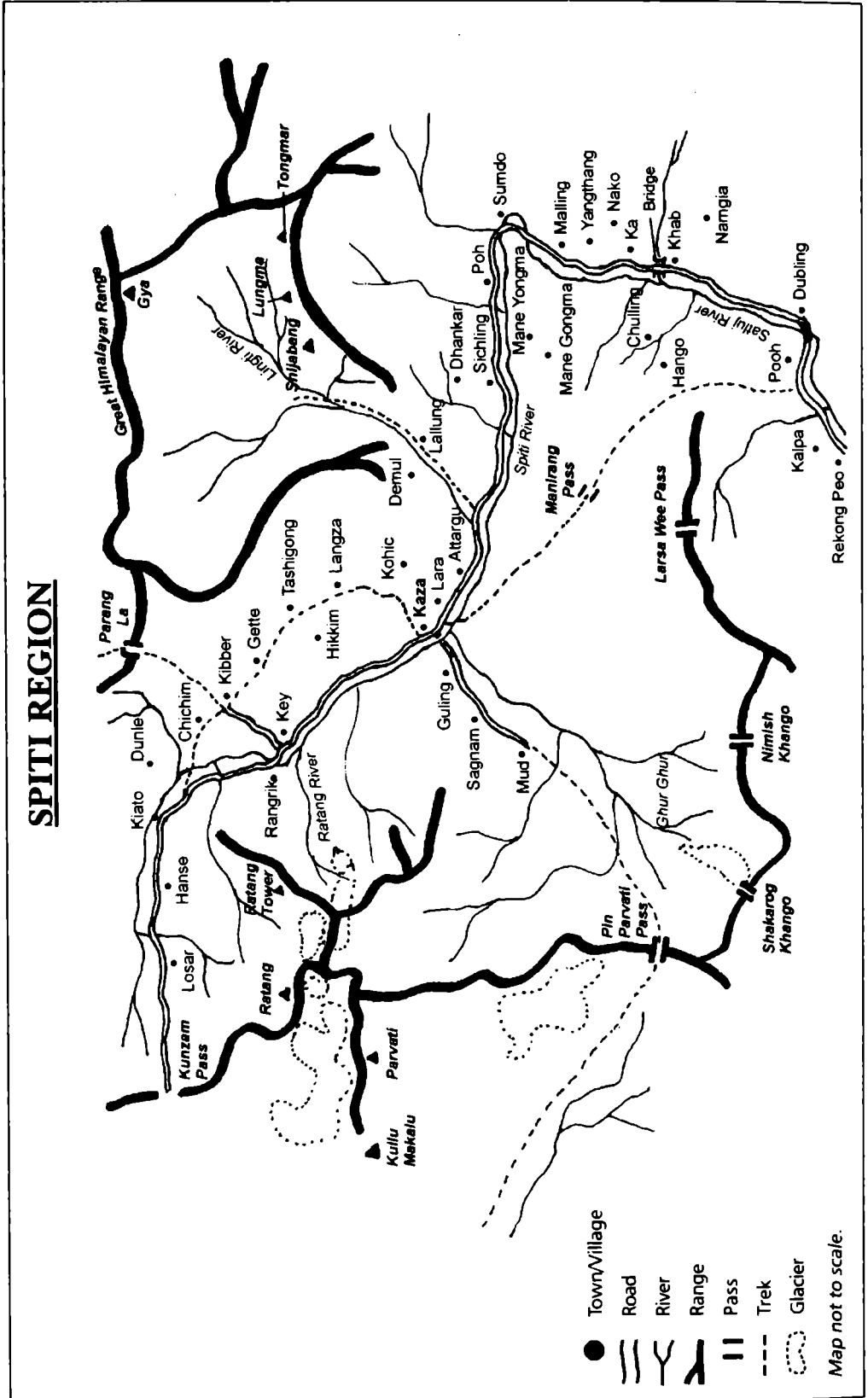
Sir Louis Dane first discovered this high pass in August 1884 as entry point to Spiti from Kullu. It is a very difficult pass. Not only because it lies very high and remains under heavy snow for most of the year but also because it involves very long journey beyond habitation. Besides it can not be located easily. Experienced guide is needed on this trail.

This pass links Parvati valley in Kullu with Pin valley of Spiti. Hence it derives the name Pin Parvati pass. Perhaps this is the only important pass in Himachal that was not discovered by enterprising local shepherds.

Manikaran (1700 m), a popular tourist place is the first destination on this trail. Manikaran is famous for hot water springs and a guru-dwara. People believe that Shiva and Parvati spent eleven years at Manikaran. Guru Nanak Devji, the first guru of the Sikhs had also visited this place. Frequent buses are available from Kullu to Manikaran. Now the road extends further up in Parvati valley due to construction of Parvati Hydro Electric Project. The pass can be crossed in following stages after starting from Manikaran.

Manikaran to Pulga (4-5 hrs)

Porters and guides for the journey can be arranged here but one must verify the credentials of the guides. They should be experienced and must have travelled on the trail. From Manikaran the trek



progresses on the right bank. A broad forest road leads to Pulga nearly twelve kilometres away. There is a forest rest house at Pulga (2290 m). On way there are remains of old silver mines that gave this area the name of Rupi (silver) valley. Most of the openings of these mines were covered or hidden at the time of Sikh invasion in 1810 and have never been reopened since then.

Pulga-Khiringanga (3-5 hrs)

Khiringanga is at a distance of ten kilometres from Pulga. Experienced trekkers can make to Khiringanga (2960 m) in a day from Manikaran after an early start. Khiringanga has hot springs and a temple. It is a beautiful place with pristine environment, hot water springs and temple.

Khiringanga to Tunda Bhuj (4-5 hrs)

The trek traverses on the left bank of Parvati and moves through thick forest and sloping grasslands. Several *nallahs* are crossed on the way. Path climbs up to reach Tunda Bhuj (3285 m) camp about eleven kilometres from Khiringanga.

Tunda Bhuj to Pandu Pul (6-8 hrs)

It is a long stretch of twenty kilometres after Tunda Bhuj to the camp ground ahead of Pandu Pul. The trek passes through coniferous and *bhojpatra* trees at first, later vegetation changes and the trail heads up across sloping pastures and bushes. It then progresses over stones and boulders to Thakur Kuan Thatch (3560 m). Thereafter ascending gradually trekkers cross Gaddi Thatch to reach Pandu Pul (3700 m). The shepherds camp on nearby ridges in summers with flock. A *thatch* is a grazing and camping ground just like a *got*. After Pando Seo Thatch (Pandu Pul) one crosses Bara Dwari Thatch at about 3900 m before reaching Mantalai. All these are suitable places for camping for the night. One must assess the strength of the group members and ensure that everybody gets adequate rest before taking off the next day.

Pandu Pul has two natural rock bridges. It is said that the Pandavas constructed these while in exile. Once over these bridges the path crosses to the right bank. Camp should be established as far up as possible to reduce next day's climbing time.

Pandu Pul to Base Camp (8-10 hrs)

The day's walk can be of twenty kilometres before halting for the night depending upon the position of previous camp. Altitude keeps rising, air becomes thinner and temperature drops considerably and it gets difficult to carry on at a reasonable speed. The trekkers must continue at a speed that is well within their limits without taxing themselves. Extra effort to maintain speed should be avoided. Another important thing is that all group members should travel together.

The trek first climbs to Mantalai (4100 m), a small lake held sacred as the source of Parvati. Parvati river flows in many channels near the lake. There is a rock cave near the lake for shelter. Further up, the trek is on moraine. Campsite is after the moraine area up in the eastern valley. Generally trekkers who do not have a guide get confused about the directions after Mantalai and lose their way. Base camp is to be established nearly at 4400 m on snow.

Pass Base to Pin Valley Camp Across the Pass (10-12 hrs)

Over scree and moraine-covered slopes the route is in permanent snow. The pass (5319 m) is soon visible as the lowest point on the ridge. There are crevasses in this area and one must be careful. Small temple with *trishuls* marks the pass. Descent on Lahaul side is also steep and is on snow. After one hour or so the snow clears and the path is on boulders. After the glacier, the path goes down along Pin and camp is established generally at an altitude of around 4000 m. Trekkers should try to go down as far as possible depending upon stamina and time available and camp at reasonably safe place.

Pin Valley Camp to Mud (6-8 hrs)

The terrain after the pass is typical of Spiti. It is generally barren. The path goes down on the left bank of Pin river to reach Mud village nearly ten to twelve kilometres down. Site of a village after so many days in the wild is thrilling.

Mud-Sagnam-Kaza

The trail then leads to Sagnam village 12 kilometres away. The shortest route is along the left bank but at two places you have to climb steep scree to cross the landslides. The walk to the village takes about six hours. There is a rest house. Kaza is twenty-five kilometres from Sagnam.

APPENDIX I

Language and Dialect

Hindi is understood throughout Himachal. In remotest parts some old people may not speak it but they can make out the meaning. In all major tourist centres English is easily understood, even in small towns many people understand and speak English. Almost all shopkeepers and guest house owners understand workable English. But it is a great help for foreign tourists if they have elementary vocabulary in Hindi. A foreigner speaking Hindi is taken to be a positive sign.

There are many dialects in Himachal some of which are similar to Hindi but others are entirely different. It takes a lot of time to be familiar with these. The glossary of commonly used words is given below for reference.

Alyas (Lhais)	—	Camping place at the base of the pass (base camp)
Bhang	—	A stimulant
Ban	—	Oak tree
Chola/Choli	—	Long woollen shirt of men/women worn by Gaddis
Chela	—	The chosen one through whom the Devta speaks
Chaurasi	—	Eighty-four
Devta	—	Deity
Dhar	—	Ridge
Dora	—	Long black rope tied around the waist by Gaddis
Dal	—	Lake
Dal	—	Pulses
Danda	—	Stick
Dhaba	—	A small eating place
Dukaan	—	Shop
Gaddi	—	Shepherd, the tribal person from Bharmour, Chamba
Gaddan	—	Lady Shepherd
Got	—	Shelter with small cave, stone hut or just a camping place.
Jhola	—	Bag

Jot/La/Gali	—	A mountain pass
Khalru	—	A sheep skin bag
Nag	—	Cobra (snake)
Nallah	—	A stream
Pithoo	—	Rucksack
Pyjama	—	A loose trouser held up by a string
Rasta	—	Path
Sarai	—	Resting place for pilgrims
Sarak	—	Road
Shahar/Kasba	—	Town

Numbers

Half	—	Aadha	Thirty	—	Tees
One	—	Ek	Forty	—	Chalis
Two	—	Do	Fifty	—	Pachaas
Three	—	Teen	Sixty	—	Sath
Four	—	Char	Seventy	—	Sattar
Five	—	Panch	Eighty	—	Assi
Six	—	Chhay	Ninety	—	Nabbay
Seven	—	Saat	Hundred	—	Sau
Eight	—	Aath	Thousand	—	Hazaar
Nine	—	Nau	Ten Thousand	—	Das hazaar
Ten	—	Dus	Hundred thousand	—	Ek lakh
Twenty	—	Bees	One million	—	Das lakh

Body Parts

Blood	—	Khoon	Hand	—	Hath
Ear	—	Kan	Hair	—	Baal
Eye	—	Aankh	Knee	—	Ghutna
Nose	—	Naak	Leg	—	Tang
Finger	—	Ungli	Mouth	—	Munh
Foot	—	Paon	Tooth	—	Dant

Colours

Violet	—	Jamuni	Yellow	—	Peela
Black	—	Kala	Orange	—	Santri
Blue	—	Neela	Red	—	Lal
Green	—	Hara	White	—	Safed

APPENDIX II

Places of Interest

CHAMBA DISTRICT

Temples

Lord Shiva is the presiding deity of the Himalaya. He is alive in folk tradition of the district even today. Hundreds of shrines are dedicated to him in different manifestations. Primitive Shaivism is still prevalent in the district. All high altitude lakes are considered to be his abode. Manimahesh Lake and Kailash in Bharmour rank at the top in the hierarchy of sacred places linked to him.

Lakshmi Narayan Temple Complex in the heart of Chamba town has six temples dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu. These date back to 8th century. All these temples are examples of *shikhara* style of construction. Other important temples around Chamba town include Hari Rai, Champavati, Bansi Gopal, Ram Chandra, Brajeshwari, Chamunda, Narsingh, and Yogi Charpat Nath temples.

Temples at Chaurasi complex at Bharmour, 65 kilometres from Chamba are among the most important early Hindu temples. Mahisha-surmardini (Lakhna Devi), Ganesh, Manimahesh and Narsingh are main temples. Images of deities and wood carving are worth noticing. The Nandi Bull in front of Manimahesh temple speaks volumes about the artisans.

Chatrari village, eight kilometres from Luna on Chamba-Bharmour road, has an old temple dedicated to the goddess Shakti. Luna is at a distance of forty kilometres from Chamba. The temple in the village has beautiful image of Shakti and wonderfully carved wooden panels and frames.

Temple of Bhadra Kali or Bhalei Mata as it is known popularly is forty kilometres from Chamba via Koti. Another road from Dalhausie leads to the temple via Khairi. Legend is that the goddess directed Raja

Pratap Singh of Chamba in a dream to erect a temple in her honour and disclosed the location of the idol. On finding the idol the bearers started for Chamba. However on way they rested, but could not pick up the idol after that, so the temple had to be erected there only. This is an interesting myth related to the erection of temples. It appears all over the western Himalaya. Another tale speaks about the theft of the idol in early seventies. It is stated that the thieves could not carry the image of goddess across Ravi as they lost their eyesight. Thus frightened they ran away, the idol was re-installed in the temple.

Devi Kothi temple built by Raja Umed Singh deep inside Churah valley at a distance of 117 kilometres from Chamba is famous for wooden carving.

Temple of Mindhal or Mindhla Devi in Pangi located at a distance of seventeen kilometres from Killar, the headquarters of the valley, is also one of the known temples of Chamba. Temples of Bharmani Devi and Banni Devi in Bharmour are also very popular.

There are several other temples dedicated to local deities. For example Kartik Swami (Lord Kartikeyan), Marali Mata, Banni Devi, Diggu Wazir, Kelang Wazir and Khateru are the main deities in Bharmour. Most of these are not part of the main Hindu pantheon, but tales associate these local gods and goddesses to the Hindu deities. In the process they have assumed varied identities. Besides, Nag cult is also prevalent and temples dedicated to Nag are found in all areas of the district.

Lakes

Manimahesh lake with Manimahesh Kailash rising above it, is a popular pilgrimage in Chamba. It is at a distance of eighty-seven kilometres from Chamba. Thousands of devotees have a holy dip in the lake on *Janamashtami* and *Radha Ashtami* days. The *yatra* starts on foot from Lakshmi Narayan temple in Chamba.

Annual fair is held at other lakes also in the district on the same days. Dhauladhar region is known as the area of seven lakes. Prominent among these are: Lam Dal, Nag Dal, Chander Koop Dal and Kali Dal. Ghadasru Mahadev, Mahakali Dal, Khundi Maral Dal and Mehalwar Dal are in Tissa area. The other lakes in the district include Chamera lake formed by the dam on Ravi river. All the high altitude lakes are approachable on foot from the nearest roadhead.

Other Places in Chamba Town

Bhuri Singh Museum located in the heart of Chamba town gives an

interesting idea about the history, culture, traditions, customs, arts and craft of Chamba.

Walking around in the lanes and bylanes of Chamba is like moving in an old town steeped in past. The enclosed houses with a courtyard, narrow lanes and tiny shrines give a distinct feel to it. Chamba Chogan, Rang Mahal and Akhand Chandi Palace (now government degree college) built by Raja Umed Singh (1748-1764) are places worth visiting. Bhuri Singh Power House below the main town is another place to be visited. Jumhar, ten kilometres by motor road, is on the ridge above Chamba town. It is very good place to camp amidst apple orchards. Saho, 20 kilometres from Chamba by road, is another place to see the village life. It is a small village with Gujjar settlements, a temple and a rest house. One can make the base here to explore far off villages.

Dalhausie

The road to Dalhausie (2039 m), famous tourist destination, bifurcates from Pathankot–Chamba road at Banikhet. Dalhausie is nearly eighty kilometres from Pathankot. Chamba town is at a distance of fifty kilometres from here.

The church near the G.P.O. looks untouched by time. Church of St. Francis, built in 1894, is set against a backdrop of tall pines overlooking the Subhash Chowk. Dalhausie is a town where one can enjoy walks. Near Dalhausie Dain Kund (2745 m) offers wonderful view of Pir Panjal ranges; Kala Top (2440 m) is ideal for weekend retreat; Satdhara (2036 m) has seven springs; another spring and good view awaits at Subhash Baoli (2036 m). Panjpula is popular picnic spot with five benches. Short refreshing walks lead to all these places. In fact, Dalhausie can only be enjoyed on foot. There is defined trek from Banikhet to Dalhausie and Chamba. This trek passes through Dalhausie Public School, Alha, Lakkar Mandi, Kala Top, Khajjiar and small villages. This day-long trek is an option worth considering. One can extend the days involved in the trek by camping at Kala Top and Khajjiar.

Kala Top forest on way to Khajjiar from Dalhausie is a sanctuary area. It is thick forest of deodar with a rest house and camping place. The place and its surroundings are quiet and serene.

Khajjiar

Called mini Switzerland of India or Gulmarg of Himachal is located at a distance of twenty-two kilometres from Dalhausie. The grassy meadow with very thick forest cover around it is a visual treat. In summers it is

bustling with tourists. Small lake that has been spoilt by undergrowth lies at one end of this glade. Khajjiar gets its name from Khajji Nag, the presiding deity. There is a small temple of the god that has been enveloped by ugly growth of hotels and *dhabas*.

Salooni and Bhandal Valleys

Salooni (1829 m), 56 kilometres from Chamba by road, lies on a ridge with panoramic views on all sides. Bhandal valley, 22 kilometres from Salooni, extends to Bhadrawah region of Jammu. There are beautifully located rest houses in this area. It is thickly forested region rich in flora and fauna.

KANGRA DISTRICT

Temples

McLeodganj above Dharamsala town is the seat of the Tibetan government in exile. It has a big temple of Lord Buddha with huge prayer wheel in the main street. Bhagsu Nag (2100 m) eleven km from the town is another popular temple. Dal (lake) near McLeodganj also has a temple. Temple of Kunal Pathri is reached after a walk of three kilometres from Kotwali bazaar in Dharamsala.

Trilokpur temple dedicated to Lord Shiva is 41 km from Dharamsala. Rock temples of Masrur dating back to eighth century are fifteen kilometres from Kangra. There are fifteen such temples. Famous temple of Lord Krishna is located at Nurpur, 66 km from Dharamsala on Pathankot road. Chinmaya Tapovan at Sidhbari established by Swami Chinmayananda ten kilometres from Dharamsala is also worth a visit.

Vajreshwari or Brajeshwari Devi temple situated in Kangra town, seventeen km from Dharamsala, was plundered by Mohammed of Gazni in A.D. 1009. It was destroyed completely in 1905 earthquake. It was re-built later.

Bajjnath temple dedicated to Lord Vaidya Nath (Lord Shiva) was built in A.D. ninth century by Rana Lakshman Chandra or Raja Chandra. It is a *shikhara* style temple that was renovated by Raja Sansar Chand in eighteenth century. Bajjnath town is located at a distance of 51 kilometres from Kangra.

People relate interesting tales associated with it. One story speaks that it was constructed by Pandavas while in exile. The other states that two blacksmith brothers Manyuka and Ahuka provided shelter to a saint on his way to Manimahesh. The saint left some of his belongings with

them. Brothers kept the baggage in their store of iron bricks. The saint on his return asked for his things. When brothers opened the store they found gold bricks instead of iron. Saint gifted the gold to the brothers who got the temple constructed with the money. Another story tells that Ravana, the king of Sri Lanka, prayed here to please Lord Shiva. He offered his ten heads to Him in sacrifice.

Jwalamukhi temple at a distance of 56 kilometres from Dharamsala, has a dome that was gilded by Mughal ruler Akbar. The temple gets the name from eternal burning flames from the hollows of the rock. The flame is considered to be manifestation of goddess. Chamunda Devi temple 15 kilometres from Dharamsala is another famous pilgrim centre.

Other Places

Both McLeodganj and Dharamsala have good, shaded walks around the town. Forsythganj with a church and cemetery, Bhagsunath with temple and waterfall, Dharamkot village and Triund spur are the main areas to have leisurely walks in and around McLeodganj. Kunal Pathri temple, Shaheed Park dedicated to war heroes, Chilgari, Sidhbari, Khaniara, Naddi are connected by well-defined trails and roads that present wonderful opportunity to walk around Dharamsala.

The stone church of St. John lies on a motorable road between McLeodganj and Forsythganj 8 kilometres from lower Dharamsala. It has a monument of Lord Elgin, one of the Viceroys of India, who died in Dharamsala and was buried here.

Palampur (1219 m) 35 kilometres from Kangra is beautifully located in the valley with mighty Dhauladhar at the background. Tea gardens, small irrigated fields and slate-roofed houses lend exquisite beauty to this small town. Agriculture University nearby is an institution worth a visit. One can walk up to Neugal Khad, a picnic spot, through a meandering path in the tea gardens.

Andretta 13 kilometres from Palampur was home of Sardar Sobha Singh. Presently his house displays his paintings. House of Norah Richards and the open theatre in front of it is worth a visit.

Billing is the world famous hang gliding site in Kangra. The road passes through Tibetan settlements and monasteries. Billing has hosted several national and international paragliding competitions. Other sites for paragliding in Himachal are Bandla Dhar in Bilaspur and Bijli Mahadev Dhar in Kullu. Solang in Manali is yet another paragliding destination.

SHIMLA DISTRICT

Shimla (2130 m), the capital town of the state is a charming hill station. It is famous for walks, scenic beauty and old buildings of Raj days.

The Christ church, with its tall spire dominates the Ridge in Shimla. This imposing structure is visible from as far as Tara Devi, 8 kilometres away. It was built in 1857, when Shimla was developing as the premier hill station of India. The first Catholic church of Shimla, St. Michael's church, built in 1850, is near the Collectorate. The other church near Shimla is at Mashobra.

Kasauli still an unspoiled, quiet hill station has a fine old church. Foundation of the Christ church, a typically Anglican structure, was laid in 1844.

Kufri, Mashobra, Naldehra, Tattapani are worth visiting around Shimla. Chail (2250 m) 43 kilometres from Shimla has world's highest cricket pitch and polo ground. Located in the thick *deodar* forest it can also be trekked from Shimla.

Fagu (2500 m), 25 kilometres from Shimla on Hindustan-Tibet road (N.H. 22) is the take off point for the trail leading to Churdhar peak. Theog, ten km from Fagu on the same road is the point from where road bifurcates to Rohru and Pabbar valley. Temple of Banthia Devta at Janog near Theog has good wood carvings presenting ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, ten-headed Ravana and Mahishasurmardini.

After separating from N.H. 22, the road from Theog leads to Chaila from where one road goes to Chopal (2328 m), while the other heads for Kotkhai (1525 m). Chopal area has temples dedicated to Lakra Bir, Narsingh Bir, Gugga Pir, Shirgul and Lord Shiva. Interesting treks lead to all these temples through thick forests, apple orchards and small but prosperous villages. Kotkhai is the fruit bowl of India famous for apples.

Khara Patthar (2673 m) 24 kilometres from Kotkhai has a huge free-standing boulder giving the place its name. The place is located on top of a ridge having a panoramic view. From here descent starts to Pabbar valley. Nine kilometres down the road is Jubbal, an old town, earlier the seat of power of Jubbal Raja. There is a palace designed by a French architect. The temple of Piri Devi exemplifies the local craftsmanship.

Hatkoti (1400 m), 20 km from Jubbal has a famous temple of Mahishasurmardini locally called Hateshwari. Adjoining Shiva temple has remarkable wood carvings. The place is associated with Pandavas also.

Rohru (1550 m), only 11 kilometres from Hatkoti, is one of the sub-divisional headquarters of Shimla. Angling in Pabbar can be ideal pass time. Chirgaon 15 kilometres from Rohru is the starting point for the treks leading to Baspa valley in Kinnaur and to Dodra Kwar region in Shimla.

Dodra Kwar region is reached after crossing Chanshal pass (4220 m). The pass can be crossed from May to October. 45 kilometres trek to Dodra and Kwar follows these stages: Tikri, Larot, Chanshal, Gajyani Thatch, Kalapani, Dodra, Gaon Pujarli, Gusangu and Kwar.

Bhimakali temple in Sarahan, 155 kilometres from Shimla, is an example of hill architecture. It is set against beautiful backdrop of high mountain ranges. The Srikhand Mahadev and peaks of Gishu and Pishu are seen. Guest house of temple, government circuit house, hotel of tourism department and private hotels offer boarding and lodging facilities. Sun temple of Nirath is on the way to Rampur from Shimla.

Short of Rampur the road bifurcates to Nirmand, one of the oldest and biggest villages in Himachal. The village has unique character, old tales, myths and legends are attached to it. The area also hosts festival of Bhunda. From Nirmand there are ample opportunities to trek in the Kullu-Seraj valley.

Nankhari and Khamadi are two interior villages in Rampur sub-division that are connected by road. These are worth a visit to study the life of villages in remote regions. If one wishes to reach normally inaccessible areas then treks lead to Fancha, Jagori and Kut areas (*Pandrah Bees* region) and Kashapat (*Barah Bees* region). Details about the trek routes can be obtained from local administration at Rampur.

MANDI DISTRICT

Mandi, called Chhoti Kashi, has many ancient stone temples in the town and on the bank of Beas and Suketi Khad. Tarna Devi and Bhootnath temples are popular. Karsog and Balh valleys are good destinations for nature-lovers. Treks to Parashar lake, Kamru Nag, Rewalsar and Shikari Devi are good excursions.

One of the most sacred spot for Buddhists in Himachal Pradesh, Rewalsar is 20 kilometres southwest of Mandi. According to legend, Guru Padmasambhava started his journey to Tibet from this spot, to spread 'dharma'. A pagoda-style monastery stands along the edge of the lake. Shiva temple, Lomesh Rishi temple and a gurudwara are located here. Parashar temple stands in the little green hollow around the Parashar

lake, above the town of Pandoh. The views of the mountains are spectacular.

Shikari Devi (2850 m) at the top of the hill is a famous pilgrimage. Hunters in the area used to pray to the goddess for success in their hunt. Perhaps this is the reason for the origin of the name 'Shikari Devi'. The goddess is worshipped in the form of stone images. Interestingly, the temple that is said to have been in existence since the time of the Pandavas, has no roof. Locals say that all attempts to build one have been unsuccessful.

LAHAUL AND SPITI DISTRICT

Monasteries in Lahaul

Guru Ghantal monastery (3020 m) is located on the right bank of Chandra river about 4 kilometres above Tandi in Lahaul. It is one of the oldest gompa in Lahaul having idols of Padmasambhava. On full moon night in June a festival called "*ghantal*" is celebrated here. Kardang monastery (3500 m) is about 5 kilometres from Keylong across Bhaga river dating back to 12th century. It has a large library of Buddhist scriptures. Kardang village was once the capital of Lahaul.

Situated on a hill about 3 kilometres from Keylong towards north is Shashur monastery. In June the lamas perform devil dance here. It was founded in the 17th century and the paintings here represent the history of 84 Buddhas. Tayul gompa (3900 m) is 6 kilometres from Keylong having a big statue of Guru Padmasambhava. In Tibetan Ta-Yul means the chosen place.

Monasteries in Spiti

Ki monastery is situated 12 kilometres from Kaza at 4116 m above Ki village. It houses beautiful paintings of Buddha. In 18th century Ki was attacked during the war between Kullu and Spiti Rajas. The armies of Jammu & Kashmir under general Ghulam Khan and Rahim Khan damaged it in 1841. It stores some rare *Thangka* paintings. Thang Yug gompa located 13 kilometres from Kaza is situated in a secluded place in the narrow gorge of Kaza *nallah*. Above it lies a long plateau that leads to Shilla peak. Kungri gompa is situated in the Pin valley about 10 kilometres from Attargu bridge where Spiti river has to be crossed to enter Pin valley.

Dhankar monastery (3370 m) is situated about 25 kilometres from Kaza. Dhankar is a big village and an erstwhile capital of Spiti king.

The monastery has about one hundred lamas at any one point of time. Principal idol is the statue of Vairochana (Dhayan Buddha). There is a lake above Dhankar village that takes nearly three hours to reach as the altitude makes it very difficult to climb.

Tabo monastery (3050 m) 47 kilometres from Kaza is one of the oldest and most popular monasteries in Spiti. It has completed 1000 years of its existence as it was founded in A.D. 996. It has a large complex. The old section has nine temples, 23 chortens, monk's chamber and nun's chamber. Several caves and contemporary structures form part of Tabo monastery. UNESCO has declared it a 'world heritage'.

KINNAUR DISTRICT

Rekong Peo is the district headquarters of Kinnaur located at an elevation of 1540 m. The road to Rekong Peo branches off from Hindustan-Tibet road (N.H. 22) at Powari. District offices, market and rest houses mark the place. Small villages full of mystique and wonder surround Rekong Peo. One can collect tales of supernatural in Brilingi, Tailingi, Kwangi and Chini villages. Chini or Kalpa (2865 m) higher up in the thick *deodar* forest is better place to camp. Circuit house and forest rest house at Kalpa are ideally situated. Massive Kinner Kailash is seen across Satluj from Rekong Peo and Kalpa. Ribba, Pangi and Kanam are important villages nearby.

Baspa river forms a wide, open valley before it drops suddenly to meet Satluj at Karcham. Chitkul, Rakcham and Sangla villages are located in the valley. A 17 kilometres road to Sangla takes off from N.H. 22 at Karcham. Treks lead to Har ki Doon in Uttaranchal and Pabbar valley in Himachal from Sangla. Pilgrims on 200 kilometres long Kinner Kailash *parikrama* enter Baspa valley at Chitkul. Kamru fort near Sangla village is a wonderful institution. Not only the architecture but also the rituals and myths associated with the place are quite interesting. Kamru was the capital of Bushahr before it was shifted to Sarahan and then to Rampur downstream Satluj.

Tedong valley with Thangi, Kunu and Charang villages offers the trek route across Charang pass to Baspa valley. This trek marks the *parikrama* route. Local people return to Powari from Sangla valley after making the holy trip around Kinner Kailash across the pass.

Ropa valley is formed by Ropa stream before it meets the national highway at Shasho Khad 270 kilometres from Shimla. Ropa (2950 m), Sunnam (2810 m), Rushkalang (2750 m) and Gyabong (2840 m) are

the main villages in the valley. Temple of Chandika Devi is in this valley at Ropa.

Pooh is 278 kilometres from Shimla on Hindustan–Tibet road. It is small town with rest houses and market. Beyond Pooh, Buddhism dominates the religious life. More and more gompas appear as one follows the Satluj and then Spiti river to Kaza. Pooh La (4600 m) stands above Pooh connecting Hango in Hangrang valley. It is a difficult trek involving full day's walk.

Nako (3662 m) is a small village in Kinnaur located beyond Pooh (2800 m). Nako lake and old gompa mark the village. A footprint-like impression is credited to Lord Padmasambhava. For mountaineers on way to climb Leo Pargial peak, Nako serves as the base camp. One can trek to Chango from here. Tashigang gompa is another place worth visiting. After Pooh the road crosses over to the left bank of Satluj and heads to the confluence point of Spiti and Satluj rivers. One has to climb up on a steep path leading to Tashigang gompa (3400 m).

KULLU DISTRICT

Kullu, the valley of gods, famous for Dussehra festival is at the bank of Beas. Raghunath temple in Kullu, Bajaura temple at Bajaura, Hidimba temple in Manali, Tripura Sundari temple at Naggar are the main temples in Kullu. Bijli Mahadev temple is another revered temple dedicated to Rudra Shiva—the Lord of lightning. Lightning hits the temple and breaks the stone *lingam* into pieces. Broken parts are held together by butter and the *lingam* takes former shape. Temple of Hidimba or Dhoongri temple is four-tiered pagoda style standing in the grove of tall *deodars*. It is dedicated to Hidimba Devi, wife of legendary Bhim.

Raghunathji temple was 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.

Manikaran, Khirganga and Mantalai are main attractions in Parvati valley. Manikaran has hot springs and a gurudwara. Vashisht near Manali also has hot sulphur springs.

Banjar, Shoja, Kullu Sarahan and Nirmand are other interesting places to visit. Malana termed as the oldest democracy in the world is yet another destination in Kullu valley.

Dashohar, Bhriugu, Beas Kund, Kullu Chandar Tal, Khirganga and Mantalai are famous lakes in Kullu. Kullu is also popular destination

for water sports. Angling and river rafting in Beas river attract many visitors every year. Anglers should visit Trout Fish Farm at Patli Kuhl on Kullu–Manali road. Naggar further up from Patli Kuhl on the left bank is worth a visit. Naggar is twenty kilometres from Manali.

OTHER DESTINATIONS

Cave temple of Baba Balak Nath is located at Deot Sidh, in the Dhaulagiri hills of Hamirpur district. It is a famous pilgrimage centre. Deot Sidh is 46 kilometres from the district headquarters and Shah Talai is at a distance of ten kilometres from here. People speak of a Sidh from Kathiawad who settled here after his wanderings in the Himalaya. It is said that he attained *nirvana* here and many tales of his miraculous healing powers are related. Chintpurni temple dedicated to Bhagwati Chinmastika, the goddess who grants all wishes, is in Una district. A popular place of pilgrimage, it is about 50 kilometres from Una town.

Naina Devi temple 70 kilometres from Bilaspur is one of the 51 Shakti *peethas*. There is an interesting tale behind these *peethas*. King Himvan insulted Lord Shiva, his son in law. Sati, wife of Shiva and daughter of Himvan, killed herself to avenge the insult. Lord Shiva became furious and he started the *tandav nritya*, the dance of destruction. In order to save the earth Lord Vishnu cut the body of Sati into fifty-one pieces. These pieces fell all over the Himalaya. People believe that the eyes of the goddess fell here. That is why the goddess is called Naina (eyes) Devi.

Renuka lake in Sirmour district is famous for religious as well as tourism purposes. The temple dedicated to the immortal Renuka, stands near the picturesque Renuka lake. The lake shapes like a woman. Legend is that Renuka, wife of saint Jamdagni, was very beautiful. King Sahastrabahu fell for Renuka. He killed Jamdagni and his four out of five sons. Renuka jumped into the waters of the lake. When the fifth son Parshurama, one of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, returned he came to know about the story. He avenged the murder of his father by killing Sahastrabahu and all his men. People believe that Parshurama comes every year to meet his mother at Renuka lake. The day falling in October is celebrated by holding a fair.

From Renuka the road leads to Sangrah, Haripurdhar, Nohradhar, Rajgarh and then to Solan. Nohradhar and Haripurdhar are quiet little villages. Many treks can be undertaken in this region.

Paonta Sahib. The Sikhs came to the Shivalik hills in Himachal Pradesh in 1695, at the invitation of the ruler of Sirmour, 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 18th century, many of the western hill states also came under Sikh sovereignty. This is the main centre of Sikh pilgrimage in Himachal. The gurudwara located on the banks of the river Yamuna 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.

The other prominent gurudwaras in the state are located at Rewalsar in Mandi and Manikaran in Kullu. Guru Nanak, the first guru of the Sikhs, meditated at Manikaran.

Kasauli at 1818 m is a hill station made famous by Khushwant Singh. Only sixty-one kilometres from Chandigarh, it is ideal for weekend travellers. There is thick forest cover of oak, rhododendrons, fir and willow. The British founded it as military station in 1842. Cantonment Board has done well to restrict entry of vehicles beyond certain points. Christ Church, Kasauli Club, Hotel Aasia, Hotel Maurice remind of the old days. Central Research Institute (CRI) established in 1906 by Dr. Sample is located here.

On rain-washed mornings Kasauli is at its best and wide panoramic views of plains of Punjab from Monkey Point are breath-taking. Monsoon landscape in Kasauli is also bewitching with mist floating all over. Winters are quiet and one can take long undisturbed walks in the woods or meditate in the serene surroundings at Monkey Point where a temple dedicated to monkey god Hanuman stands.

Instead of taking the main bus road to Kasauli one can trek from Dharampur. Cross Lawrence School Sanawar and meet the road at Garkhal. Two famous temples dedicated to Sai Baba and Baba Balak Nath are located at Garkhal.

Sunset at Kasauli is another attraction. There is great rush of visitors during weekends. Most of the crowd comes in summer or in winters if there is snow. Otherwise rainy season and winters are a quiet affair here. It is one of the places where one falls in love with nature. Easy access from plains of Chandigarh makes Kasauli a major tourist attraction.

Bachretu fort constructed by Raja Rattan Chand of Bilaspur who ruled between 1355 and 1406 can be visited from Bilaspur. One should take a boat ride across Gobind Sagar lake to Rishikesh. It is a small village famous for *khoya*. From there seek guidelines from villagers and head to the fort at the end of day's walk. Camp for the night near the fort and start for Baba Balak Nath temple.

Maharana Pratap Sagar came into being after a dam over Beas river was constructed. The dam led to formation of reservoir covering an area of forty-five thousand hectares with mighty Dhauladhars forming the backdrop. It extends for 42 kilometres in length and two kilometres in width. The reservoir was declared a bird sanctuary in 1883 and a National Wetland in 1994. Maharana Pratap Sagar (Pong Dam) supports 54 species of waterfowl, 220 species of birds and 25 species of fish.

Directorate of Mountaineering and Allied Sports Manali has its water sports base at Pong. The center runs regular water sports courses and offers wide variety of water sports both for amateurs and professionals. The center offers basic, intermediate and advanced courses. Seventy-five-bed hostel provides accommodation for trainees and visitors.

Gobind Sagar lake formed by Bhakra Dam over Satluj is the other big reservoir that offers water sports and angling. Small village treks across Gobind Sagar opposite Bilaspur town are worth a visit.

Himachal Pradesh is the land of fairs and festivals. These festive occasions play a very important part in the lives of hill people who do not have modern means of entertainment. This is true even today as for people living in villages located far away from the world these are the colourful moments. People sing and dance for days whenever a festival arrives.

January is generally the quiet month as winters keep the people indoors. Lohri in mid-January is believed to end the winters. It is celebrated with great hope. In the tribal area of Lahaul, festival of Dechhang is celebrated.

In February people in tribal areas start celebrating the end of severe winters. Jukaru in Pangti and Losar in Lahaul & Spiti are the main attractions. People visit each other's houses in Pangti and thank gods that they survived hostile winters. The temples that had been closed for the winters are opened again with great fanfare. Mask dances (the devil dance) signifying the triumph of good over evil mark celebrations of Losar. Monasteries become alive with Chham dance.

In March, Shivratri fair dominates all other festivities in the state. Lord Shiva is the most beloved god in the hills. He is alive in folk songs and traditional art forms prevalent in the state. Main Shivratri festival is held in Mandi town where hundreds of devtas reach Mandi in colourful processions. Fag Mela at Rampur is worth a visit. Devtas visit Rampur town with their *gurs* in traditional gaiety. Nalwar, traditional fair to trade animals starts in Bilaspur with the colours of Holi. The Nalwar fair travels to adjoining areas in coming months. It is held at

many places in Bilaspur, Mandi and Hamirpur districts. Sujanpur and Palampur are popular for Holi festivities.

Baisakhi on 13 April is an important day when thousands of people take holy dip in lakes, rivers and ponds. Sui Mela in Chamba is also held in April.

Sipi fair in Shimla and Shoolini fair at Solan are main attractions in the months of May and June.

Ladarcha fair at Kaza, Lahaul festival at Keylong are the major events in the state as monsoons approach. Minjar at Chamba and Manimahesh *yatra* at Bharmour are the key events in August.

September month is the right time to visit Kinnaur and join in the celebrations of Fullaich. It is the festival of flowers. People go to the high altitude alpine pastures and collect wild flowers that are offered to gods and goddesses.

In October Kullu Dussehra is the main festival of the state. Dussehra of Kullu is unique in the country. More than 200 devtas converge to Kullu to pay respects to Lord Raghunathji. An International Folk Dance festival is held on this occasion. People of Pangi celebrate Phool *yatra* in October.

Lavi Fair at Rampur is the traditional trade fair famous for woollens, dry fruit and Kinnaur apples and is the main fair in November. Both Pong Dam and Gobind Sagar lake come alive with water sports competitions in the months of November and December.

APPENDIX III

Road Distances in Himachal

Bilaspur	Kms.	Dharamsala - Pathankot	90
Bilaspur - Chandigarh	139	Jogindernagar - Pathankot	173
Bilaspur - Ghumarwin	29	Pathankot - Gaggal	77
Bilaspur - Naina Devi	70	Pathankot - Nurpur	24
Bilaspur - Sundernagar	43	Kinnaur	
Bilaspur - Swarghat	48	Kalpa - Rekong Peo	13
Chamba		Kalpa - Pooh	71
Chamba - Bharmour	65	Kalpa - Sangla	51
Chamba - Dalhausie	43	Kalpa - Nichar	90
Chamba - Dharamsala	169	Kullu	
Chamba - Khajjiar	17	Kullu - Bhuntar	9
Chamba - Pathankot	119	Kullu - Chandigarh	280
Dalhausie - Pathankot	80	Kullu - Katrain	22
Hamirpur		Kullu - Manali	41
Hamirpur - Nadaun	28	Kullu - Mandi	69
Hamirpur - Sujampur Tira	26	Kullu - Manikaran	45
Kangra		Kullu - Raison	13
Dharamsala - Andretta	54	Manali - Baralacha la	195
Dharamsala - Baijnath	56	Manali - Keylong	115
Dharamsala - Chandigarh	252	Manali - Leh	473
Dharamsala - Gaggal	11	Manali - Rohtang pass	51
Dharamsala - Jwalamukhi	58	Lahaul-Spiti	
Dharamsala - Kangra	17	Keylong - Udaipur	45
Dharamsala - Kullu	195	Keylong - Kaza	187
Dharamsala - Manali	235	Keylong - Koksar	45
Dharamsala - Mandi	125	Keylong - Rohtang pass	64
Dharamsala - Palampur	40	Keylong - Leh	360

Mandi

Mandi - Chandigarh	208
Mandi - Jogindernagar	56
Mandi - Pandoh	16
Mandi - Pathankot	213
Mandi - Sarkaghat	51
Mandi - Sundernagar	26

Shimla

Shimla - Ambala	166
Shimla - Chamba	378
Shimla - Chandigarh	117
Shimla - Dalhausie	436
Shimla - Dehradun	240
Shimla - Delhi	370
Shimla - Dharamsala	252
Shimla - Jeori	155
Shimla - Kalka	92
Shimla - Kalpa	260
Shimla - Karcham	207
Shimla - Kaurik	375
Shimla - Kaza	412
Shimla - Kullu	240
Shimla - Manali	281

Shimla - Mandi	156
Shimla - Nahan	140
Shimla - Naldehra	22
Shimla - Narkanda	65
Shimla - Pathankot	295
Shimla - Pooh	278
Shimla - Rampur	130
Shimla - Rekong Peo	240
Shimla - Rohru	115
Shimla - Sumdo	337
Shimla - Tapri	198
Shimla - Tattapani	51
Shimla - Theog	31

Solan

Solan - Chail	43
Solan - Dharampur	16
Solan - Kasauli	32
Solan - Nalagarh	82
Solan - Parwanoo	38

Una

Una - Amb	32
Una - Chintpurni	53

APPENDIX IV

List of HPTDC Hotels in Himachal

Bilaspur	
Swarghat	Hotel Hilltop (Budget) Ph: 01978-284112
Chamba	
Chamba	Hotel Iravati (Deluxe) Ph: 01899-222671
Chamba	Hotel Champak (Budget) Ph: 01899-222774
Dalhausie	Hotel Gitanjali (Budget) Ph: 01899-242155
Khajjiar	Hotel Devdar (Deluxe) Ph: 01899-236333
Hamirpur	
Hamirpur	Hotel Hamir (Budget) Ph: 01972-222608
Kangra	
Chamundaji	Yatri Niwas (Budget) Ph: 01892-236065
Dharamsala	Hotel Dhauladhar (Deluxe) Ph: 01892-224926/27
Dharamsala	Hotel Bhagsu (Deluxe) Ph: 01892-221091/92
Dharamsala	Hotel Kashmir House (Deluxe) Ph: 01892-222977
Dharamsala	Yatri Niwas (Budget) Ph: 01892-223163
Jwalaji	Hotel Jwalaji (Deluxe) Ph: 01970-222280, 222601
Jwalaji	Yatri Niwas (Budget)
Palampur	Hotel T-Bud (Deluxe) Ph: 01894-231298
Kinnaur	
Kalpa	Kinner Kailash Cottage (Deluxe) Ph: 01786-226159
Kullu	
Kasol	Tourist Hut (Budget)
Katrain	Anglers Bungalow (Budget)
Katrain	Cottage River View (Budget)
Kullu	Hotel Silver Moon (Deluxe) Ph: 01902-222488
Kullu	Hotel Sarvari (Deluxe) Ph: 01902-222471
Manali	Log Huts (Premium) Ph: 01902-253225/26
Manali	Hotel Beas (Budget) Ph: 01902-252832
Manali	Tourist Lodge (Budget) Ph: 01902-252832

Manali	Hotel Kunzam (Deluxe) Ph: 01902-253197/98
Manali	Hamta Huts (Deluxe)
Manali	Hidimba Cottage (Deluxe) Ph: 01902-252334
Manali	Hotel Rohtang Manaslu (Deluxe) Ph: 01902-252332
Manikaran	Hotel Parvati (Budget)
Naggar	Hotel Castle (Premium) Ph: 01902-248316
Raison	Adventure Resort (Deluxe) Ph: 01902-240516

Lahaul & Spiti

Kaza	Tourist Lodge (Budget) Ph: 01906-222566
Keylong	Tourist Bungalow (Budget) Ph: 01900-222393

Mandi

Mandi	Hotel Mandav (Deluxe) Ph: 01905-235503
Rewalsar	Tourist Inn (Budget) Ph: 01905-280252
Jogindernagar	Hotel Uhl (Deluxe) Ph: 01908-222002

Shimla

Hatkoti	Hotel Pabbar (Deluxe)
Tattapani	Tourist Inn (Budget)
Rohru	Hotel Chanshal (Budget) Ph: 01781-240661
Sarahan	Hotel Srikhand (Deluxe) Ph: 01782-274234
Shimla	Hotel Holiday Home (Premium) Ph: 0177-2812890-7
Shimla	Hotel Petershoff (Premium) Ph: 0177-2812236
Naldehra	Hotel Golf Glade (Deluxe)
Naldehra	Log Huts (Deluxe) Ph: 0177-2747809, 2707739
Narkanda	Hotel Hatu (Deluxe) Ph: 01782-242430, 242509
Rampur	Bushahr Regency (Deluxe) Ph: 01782-234103

Sirmaur

Paonta Sahib	Hotel Yamuna (Deluxe) Ph: 01704-222341
Renukaji	Hotel Renuka (Deluxe) Ph: 01702-267339

Solan

Barog	Hotel Pinewood (Deluxe) Ph: 01792-238825-27
Chail	Palace Hotel (Premium) Ph: 01792-248141, 248143
Chail	Hotel Himneel (Budget)
Darlaghat	Hotel Baghal (Deluxe) Ph: 01796-248116/7
Kasauli	Hotel Ross Common (Deluxe) Ph: 01792-272005
Kiarighat	Tourist Inn (Budget)
Parwanoo	Hotel Shiwalik (Deluxe) Ph: 01792-232295-97
Solan	Tourist Bungalow (Budget)

Una

Chintpurni	Yatri Niwas (Budget) Ph: 01976-255234
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APPENDIX V

List of Himachal Tourism's Offices

In Himachal

Directorate

The Director Tourism & Civil Aviation
SDA Complex, Block-28, Kasumpti, Shimla-171009
Phones 0177-2625864, 2625924 Fax 0177-2625864

Field Offices

District Tourism Development Officer
SDA Complex, Block-28, Kasumpti, Shimla-171009
Phone 2625926

District Tourism Development Officer
Kullu, Dist. Kullu-175101
Phone 01902-224605

District Tourism Development Officer
Mandi, Distt. Mandi. 175001
Phone 01905-225036

District Tourism Development Officer
Dharamsala, Distt. Kangra-176215
Phone 01892-222198

District Tourism Development Officer
Chamba, Distt. Chamba-176310
Phone 01899-224002

Tourist Information Centres in Himachal Pradesh

Victory Tunnel, Shimla
Phone 0177-2654589

Railway Station, Shimla
Phone 2835087
Railway enquiry 2652915

Bhuntar Air Port, Kullu

Phone 01902-251233

The Mall Manali

Phone 01902-252175

Kotwali Bazaar, Dharamsala

Phone 01892-221232

Fossil Park, Suketi, Distt. Sirmaur

Dalhausie, Distt. Chamba

Phone 018982-242136

Kullu, (Dhalpur)

Phone 01902-224605

D.C. Office, Rekong Peo, Distt. Kinnaur

Outside Himachal

New Delhi

Chanderlok Building, Janpath

Phone 011-23324764

Mumbai

36, World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai-400005

Phone 022-22181123

Chennai

28, Commander-in-Chief Road, Chennai-600001

Phone 044-25385689

Kolkata

2H, 2nd Floor, Electronic Centre, 1A, BAC Street, Kolkata-700072

Phone 033-22219072, 22370597

Chandigarh

ISBT, Chandigarh

Phone 0172-708569

Pathankot

Opp. Railway Station

Phone 0186-220316

Ahmedabad

Phone 079-27544800

Bangalore

Himachal Emporium

Phone 080-2287659

APPENDIX VI

List of Officers who can be Contacted

Phone number of officers who should be contacted in case of any emergency and also for rest house bookings are given below:

District Shimla (0177)

Deputy Commissioner	2653535	ADM (law and order)	2657005
ADM (protocol)	2653436	ADC	2657003
SDM (urban)	2657007	SDM (rural)	2657009

Theog (01783)

SDM	238202	Tehsildar	238242
Ex. En. (PWD)	238376	Ex. En. (HPSEB)	238247
DFO	238264		

Rampur (01782)

SDM	233002	Tehsildar	233003
Ex. En. (PWD)	233017	Ex. En. (HPSEB)	233019
DFO	233107		

Chopal (01783)

SDM	260014	Tehsildar	260039
Ex. En. (PWD)	260033	Ex. En. (HPSEB)	260021
DFO	260026		

Dodra Kwar (01781)

SDM	276201		
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District Mandi (01905)

Deputy Commissioner	225201	ADM	225205
ADC	225203	SDM	225207

Ex. En. (PWD)	223913	Ex. En. (HPSEB)	236074
DFO	235360		

Rohru (01781)

SDM	240009	Tehsildar	240088
Ex. En. (PWD)	240087	Ex. En. (HPSEB)	240259
DFO	240035		

Jogindernagar (01908)

SDM	223895	Tehsildar	222023
Ex. En. (PWD)	222033	Ex. En. (HPSEB)	222008
DFO	222100		

Lahaul & Spiti (01900)

Deputy Commissioner	222501	SDM	222225
Tehsildar	222258	DFO	222235

Kaza (01906)

ADM	222202	SDM	222302
DFO	222263		

Kullu (01902)

Deputy Commissioner	222727	ADC	222226
SDM	222596	Tehsildar	222696
Ex. En. (PWD)	222515	DFO	222510
Ex. En. (HPSEB)	225212		

Manali (01902)

SDM	254100	Tehsildar	252286
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Banjar (01903)

SDM	222253	DFO	222226
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Ani (01904)

SDM	253344	DFO	245874
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Kinnaur (01786)

Deputy Commissioner	222252	SDM	222253
Tehsildar	226021	DFO	222358

Pooh (01785)

ADM	232222	Tehsildar	232315
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Sangla (01786)

Tehsildar	242278		
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Dharamsala (01892)

Deputy Commissioner	222103	ADM	223321
ADC	223322	SDM	223315
Tehsildar	223314	Ex. En. (PWD)	223167
Ex. En. (HPSEB)	224997	DFO	224887

Palampur (01894)

SDM	230595	Tehsildar	230594
Ex. En. (PWD)	230561	Ex. En. (HPSEB)	230578
DFO	232630		

Baijnath (01894)

SDM	263656	Tehsildar	263126
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Chamba (01899)

Deputy Commissioner	225371	ADC	222540
SDM	222278	Tehsildar	222268
Ex. En. PWD	222229	Ex. En. HPSEB	222429
DFO	225839		

Dalhausie (01899)

SDM	242122	Tehsildar	240516
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Churah (01896)

SDM	227033	Tehsildar	227026
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Bharmour (01895)

ADM	225035	SDM	225027
Tehsildar	225055	Ex. En. PWD	225003
DFO	225043		

Pangi (01897)

Resident Commissioner	222221	SDM	222222
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Index

- Accidents (and rescue) 50
Accommodation 38
Administration 36
Airports 38
Altitude (and distance) 40
Annadale 159
Ardhnarishwar 177
Atholi 126
- Bagi Pul 209, 210, 211
Bajjnath 85, 93
Baleni pass 71
Banjar 206, 209
Banni Devi 105
Bara Bhangal 89-92, 183
Baralacha pass 199, 202
Bardharni Devi 183
Barot 182, 184, 186
Barua pass 161-64
Bashleo pass 209
Baspa valley 161, 174
Beas 23, 29, 178
Beas Kund 195, 197
Bharmani 26, 94, 96
Bharmour 31, 34, 39, 67, 80, 83, 85,
94, 96-98, 105, 108-109, 111
Bhimakali 167
Bhootnath 177-88
Bhrigu 27, 35, 202-203
- Bhuntar 189, 190
Bijli Mahadev 190
Billing 93, 183-84, 186
Bir 186
Boileauganj 155, 156
Brahamputra 15
- Carigneno 153
Catchment Area forest 154
Chamba 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 34,
35, 39, 41, 42, 63, 65, 69, 71, 77,
79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 94, 104,
115, 116, 117, 118, 129
Chandar Tal lake (Kullu) 198, 199
Chander Koop 35, 83
Chandar Tal lake (Spiti) 27, 35, 199-
202
Chanderkhani pass 192-93
Chandranahan 163
Chanshal pass 34, 163
Chask 135
Chask Bhatari 115, 133-35, 144
Chaura Maidan 155-56, 159
Chaurasi 94
Chenab 23, 29, 104, 116, 125
Cheni pass 31, 115
Cherry 120, 125-26
Chharabra 153
Chhota Bhangal 183

- Chirgaon 161, 163
 Chitkul 174
 Chobia 31, 108-111
 Chopal 158
 Churdhar 158
 Crossing a mountain 31-35

 Dal (lake) 27, 81
 Dalhausie 18, 24, 65
 Dashohar 27, 35, 203-04
 Dehnasar 35, 42, 183, 186-88
 Dhalli 153
 Dhancho 96-98
 Dharamsala 24, 35, 38-39, 61, 65, 71,
 79, 81, 87
 Dharwas 127
 Dhauladhar 16, 18, 21-22, 29, 31, 34-
 35, 61, 63, 69, 71, 81-83, 87, 122
 Dodra Kwar 34, 165
 Drakund 83

 Fairlawns 153
 Food & fitness 42-43

 Gaddi 31, 39
 Gaj pass 35, 71-74
 Ganga 15
 Gauri Kund 97, 99
 Ghadasru lake 26, 35, 42, 100-102
 Great Himalayan National Park 205-
 206
 Gulabgarh 126-27
 Gurdhar 135, 144

 H.T. road 167-71
 Hadsar 26, 96, 98, 109, 111
 Hamta pass 199
 Hatkoti 161
 Hatu Peak 160
 Health & fitness 57-59
 Hidimba Devi 190
 Himachal 16, 18, 20, 21-44

 Himachal, reaching 37-38
 Holi (sub-valley) 83, 85, 87, 97
 Hudan 130, 132
 Hudan lake 130

 Inderhara pass 27, 36, 74-77
 Inner Line permit 40
 Ishtiari 127

 Jagatsukh 198
 Jalori pass 206, 208-209
 Jalsu pass 27, 85-86
 Janjheli 180
 Jhatingri 182
 Jogindernagar 182-84
 Jotnu 27, 98-100

 Kalah pass 27, 97-98
 Kali Bari 154, 155
 Kalicho pass 31, 105-108
 Kalka-Shimla railway 148
 Kalpa 169, 171
 Kalyani helipad 153
 Kamal Kund 99
 Kamand 178
 Kamna Devi 156
 Kamru Nag 178
 Kangra 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 29, 31, 34,
 35, 41, 42, 61-65, 69, 71, 83
 Karcham 175
 Kareri 81
 Karsog 159, 182
 Kasauli 18, 24
 Katheru temple 109
 Keylong 105, 108, 120, 122-23
 Khajjiar 65
 Kharamukh 83
 Khirganga 215
 Killar 116, 120, 126-27, 129-33, 136,
 139
 Kinnaur 16, 21, 27, 29, 31, 34-36,
 161, 167

- Kinner Kailash 36
 Kinner Kailash *parikrama* 172-74
 Kiryuni Dhar 141, 143
 Kishtwar 126
 Koksar 120-23
 Kufri 151
 Kugti (village) 98-99
 Kugti pass 27, 31, 111-13
 Kullu 16, 18, 21-23, 25-27, 29, 35-36, 42, 186, 189, 195
 Kullu Sarahan 209
 Kundli pass 79-80
 Kunt Bhauyog lake 179
 Kunzum 104
 Kwarsi 77, 80

 Lahaul & Spiti 21, 27, 34, 104, 116, 122-23
 Lahaul 16, 22, 27, 29, 31, 35-36, 39, 104-105, 111, 120
 Laka Mata 85
 Lakkar Bazar 150
 Lam Dal 26, 34, 42, 71-74, 83

 Mahakali Dal 100
 Mahu Nag 182
 Malana 191-92, 195
 Manali 29, 38-39, 120, 122, 189, 190, 195, 197, 198, 199, 202, 203
 Manali pass 197-98
 Manali-Leh 122-23
 Mandi 21, 23, 25, 26-27, 35, 37, 61, 176-78, 182
 Manikaran 195, 213
 Manimahesh 26, 35, 36, 42, 94, 96, 97-100
 Mansarovar 15
 Mashobra 151, 153, 157, 159
 McLeodganj 24, 63-65, 71, 74, 81
 Mindhla Devi 130
 Minkiani pass 35, 71, 81-83

 Mountain sickness 50-55
 Mrikula Devi 124

 Nag Dal 26, 35, 83
 Naggar 193-95
 Naitwar 165
 Nako 35
 Naldehra 153
 Namgia 171
 Narkanda 160, 167, 210
 Nayagram 85, 88-89
 Neelkanth 27, 35
 Nirmand 208-210

 Palampur 89, 184-86
 Panchvakra 178
 Pandu Pul 215
 Pangi 16, 29, 31, 36, 115-17, 130
 Parang La 34
 Parashar lake 178-79
 Parmar 132-33, 141, 142, 161
 Pathankot 18, 37, 61, 65, 126
 Pin valley 216
 Pir Panjal 16, 21-22, 31, 34, 36, 69, 115, 122
 Pir Parvati 213-16
 Pooh 172
 Pulga 215
 Purthi 120, 125

 Rashol 195
 Ravi 16, 21, 23, 29, 36, 63, 66, 69, 83
 Renuka lake 27, 35
 Rewalsar lake 27, 179
 Ribba 172
 Ridge 148, 151, 156
 Rohli 120, 125
 Rohtang 35-36, 115, 120-26
 Rupin 34, 165-67

 Sach pass 31, 36, 115, 117-20, 129-30

- Saichu 133-35
 Sangla 34, 165-67, 174, 175
 Sanjauli 148, 150
 Sansari Nallah 127
 Sarahan (Chopal) 158
 Sarahan (Shimla) 167-69
 Saryol Sar 42
 Satluj 15, 21, 23, 29, 63, 159
 Satrundi 118-19
 Scandal Point 148, 154
 Seraj 180, 204-205
 Setting camps 57
 Shali peak 156
 Sheetla Mata 127
 Shibaling pass 175
 Shikari Devi 180
 Shimla 18, 21, 24, 29, 34, 37, 39, 145,
 148, 156, 161, 167
 Shipki La 31, 169-71
 Shivaliks 16, 18, 21, 23, 63, 69
 Shivratri 177
 Shoja 206
 Shour 125
 Shrikhand Mahadev 36, 210
 Sidh Mandir 126
 Sirmaur 21, 27, 35
 Solan 21
 Solang valley 195
 Spiti 16, 18, 21, 22, 31, 34, 36, 189
 Sukhsar 179
 Summer Hill 154-55, 159
 Suraj Tal 27, 35, 199-202
 Sural 136, 137, 139
 Surviving in wilderness 55
 Talang pass 87-88
 Tara Devi 157-58
 Tarna Devi 177
 Tattapani 153, 159
 Telecommunication 39
 Ten Essentials 46-48
 Tentu pass 197-98
 Thamsar pass 89-93
 Tindi 120
 Tingloti 139
 Tourist offices 38-39
 Travel Agencies 39
 Travel tips 43-44
 Trekking season 35-36
 Trella 118
 Triloknath 108, 123
 Triund 74, 76
 Twan 133-36
 Udaipur 120, 123-24
 Waru 88-89

Himachal, the land of snow, is one of the most beautiful states of India. Its landscape is rich and varied: from the fertile plains to lush green meadows, from thick forests to barren mountainscape. The elevation ranges from 350 m to 7000 m. It has a lot to offer to both first-time trekkers and experienced mountaineers. Many of its valleys, passes and landscapes are still unknown, waiting to be explored and experienced. 65 treks mentioned in the book cover more than hundred destinations, but these are just the tip of an iceberg, there are hundreds others.

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This trekking handbook with 44 maps and numerous coloured photographs is a storehouse of information and will be of immense help to all trekkers, travellers and general readers.

Minakshi Chaudhry did her Masters Degree in Journalism and Mass Communication besides Masters in English Literature, L.L.B., and Postgraduate diploma in Personal Management. She has keen interest in studying nature, people's lifestyles, customs and different aspects of culture in Himachal. This book is a product of her extensive trekking and travelling in Himachal Pradesh for a decade. She travelled long distances on foot and crossed high mountain passes to reach inaccessible hamlets. She is married to an officer of Himachal Administrative Services.

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