

CHAPTER-III

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF SUN

GOD AND ASSOCIATED

FEATURES

ICONOGRAPH OF THE SUN- GOD AND ASSOCIATED FEATURES

Iconography is the offspring of the ideas and craving of man to give a form to the formless. It is the concrete realization of the process of anthropomorphisation or humanization of the divinities. The worship of Sūrya, the light incarnate is perhaps the most ancient, most impressive and the most popular one and realizing him in the iconic form is perhaps the most interesting one in the process. In the initial stage the sun-god was worshipped in his natural atmospheric form as is clear from all available sources. Different potteries, seals, sealing etc of the time represented his symbolically. But with the passage of time and with the gradual development of mankind, we notice the transformation of the Sun from its atmospheric and symbolic form to anthropomorphic figures.

The available literary sources and the actual specimen of solar representations are unanimous on the fact that the anthropomorphic representation of the sun-god was preceded by the symbolic representation on coins and seals¹. The non prevalence of the iconic tradition of the sun during the R̥g. Vedic and later vedic phase is attested by the description of the R̥g-Veda and the later – vedic texts¹ themselves. They do not give any reference to the image of the sun, on the other hand the Brāhmanas³ give direct references to the symbolical depiction of the sun-god, not to his human form. The Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana give⁴ us information about the complete anthropomorphisation of the Sun, but they contain no evidence for his iconic tradition. Even the Sutras⁵ which refer to the prevalence of the general iconic tradition, remain conspicuously silent about the sun-

image. Even the early Purāṇic texts⁶ follow the same path. All these prove that it was as late as the early purāṇic age that the iconic tradition of the sun-worship had not began. He was only from the 5th century A.D. onwards that we start availing references to the regular images of the sun⁷. This fact is directly attested by one expression of the Sāmba Purāṇa, where it is stated⁸ that in ancient times there was no image of the Sun. The sun was worshipped by his followers in his circular disc form as on the sky. On account of all these evidences and references it will be no wonder to conclude that there was only symbolical representation of the Sun-god in the pre-historic and proto-historic periods before the evolution of regular image.

Cult Icons of the Sun :

It is in the Rig. Vedic Period itself that humanization of the Sun god found its conception. Though the worship of the Sun was in its atmospheric form seeds of anthropomorphism of the god is found in the Rig. Veda itself. The concept of accepting & the Sun as a 'god' led the vedic people to think of him in anthropomorphic traits. He was conceived as the son of the sky and the dawn. He was provided with a chariot drawn by seven horse. He was provided with a family and the like. The process of humanization of the sun god in human form was accelerated during the epic phase, where we find references about the appearance of the Sun god. He become quite human in dress talk and action. Instances of the epics⁹ show the appearance of the Sun god before Karṇa, Kuṅṭī, Yūdhishṭhira, Rāma etc. in human form, with this humanization he was associated with a fully developed family consisting of wives, sons, daughters and attendants. It is a fact that though the sun,

god got completely anthropomorphised, we do not find any reference¹⁰ to any sun-images. The early purānas also maintain the vedic and epic tradition. They contain the reference of the humanization of the sūrya from the legend of Śatrajit¹¹, Rājyavardhan¹² etc. However, it is the later purānas, which contain the reference of different image and temples.

The humanization of the god pressurized the man to materialize his ideas of providing a form to the formless. As a result the iconic tradition started and Sun was given shape in stone.

The description of the vedic, Epic, and Puranic texts attribute certain symbols and designs like the wheel; the lotus, the royal disc, the śvastika, the six-armed device etc. with Sūrya.

Some of the coins of the foreigners like the Indo-Greeks, the Kushānas etc. contain human figures, though such representation are conspicuously absent in the indigenous coins. This human figure may identified with the deity himself or a great-devotee of the Sun-god.

Cult Icons of the Sūrya :

It is only 5th century A.D.¹³ that the sacred literature started giving reference about the Sun-images. But the actual specimen of Sun Images¹⁴ are found only from one or two centuries before the Christian era. Strangely enough none of the known iconographic texts¹⁵ provide us the descriptions of the features of the Sun-image of this period.

Before the evolution of the real cult icons of Surya, we find human representation of the Sun on the potteries and terracottas of the Maurya-Sunga period. These figures may be regarded as the real precursor and torch bearer of the sun-images of subsequent period. The

first phase in connection with solar iconography started in 2nd- 1st century B.C. and continued upto 2nd century A.D. During this period we find four representative piece of sun images, one from Bodh-Gaya, another from Bhaja, the third one from [ā]a Bhagat and the fourth one from Anaṅtagumpha. The images of this period according to Cunningham¹⁶ were influenced by Hellenistic tradition. But Banerjga has refuted this view and has suggested that these images are in conformity with vedic tradition and the presence of the Sun's attendants like Ūṣā and Pratyusā, the chariot etc. points to the Indian origin.

The second phase in this connection started in 2nd century A.D. and continued upto 6th century A.D. During this post-Kushāna period we find a happy composition of Greek, Indian and Iranian tradition in the Solar iconography. This period is marked by the introduction of the Magian form of the Sun-Cult, which resulted in the adoption of Iranian features such as high boots, northerner's dress etc. In the Gupta period, we find the beginning of the new type of Sun-image having both alien and indigenous features. A number of Sun-images of this period display foreign elements on the one hand and the Indianization and nationalization of the Gupta art on the other. Thus the Gupta and post-Gupta periods exhibit a sound conglomeration of Iranian and Indian traditions in the evolution of these images. The Iranian coat, high boots, scythean head-dress, the gindle round waist etc. came to be used in the Sun-Image as well as in his attendants – Daṅdhi and Piṅgala of the period show the adoption of Iranian features of the fullest content, while the invariable holding of lotuses by their stalk in both hands by the Sun-images clearly proves the pre-occupation of the Indian elements in them¹⁷. Thus the iconographic tradition started running in full swing

giving rise to a number of the sun-images scattered in different parts of India.

There is no dearth of reference to the Sun in the vast literature of ancient and medieval India. Starting from the R̥g.veda he is found to be represented in his different aspects in the Br̥hmaṇa the Great Epics, the Purānas, the Agamas, and the Śilpa-Taṇtras. Directions of making an image of the Sun-god are found in many old Sanskrit works. However from iconographic point of view as gleaned literary sources, There are several technical literature or silpa sāstras which prescribe the process of the construction of the Sun image and sun temples.

The Brihad Samhita¹⁸, one of the earliest texts states that the Sun gods nose, for head, shanks, thighs, cheeks and breast should be elevated and prominent. He should be dressed in the fashion of Northerner, his body from the feet up to the breast should be covered. He should wear a crown and hold two lotus flowers by their stalks. His face should be adorned with ear-rings. He should wear a long pearl – necklace and a viyāṅga or the sacred waist girdle round his waist. His face should be shown glowing like the luster of the interior of the Lotus. His body should be covered with an armour and his face should be covered with the cheek plate. There should be a prabha mandala shining like a jewel. He should have a pleasant smiling face. Strangely enough, we do not get any mention of his chariot, the horses and other attendants of the God from the text. It gives the measurement of the Sun-icon that “An idol of the Sun, one cubit high is beneficial, one that measures two cubits in height bestows wealth, those of three and four cubits lead to happiness and plenty respectively. Larger limbs leads the

king into trouble, while shorter limbs affects the sculptor with diseases. When of slender belly, it bring famine, when of thin limbs, loss of wealth, when it has injuries the marker will die through the fall of a weapon, when it is bent on the left side it kills his wife, on the right it robs him of his own life. When its edges are turned upwards he will become blind, when bent down-wards, he will have worries. Thus the good and bad effects of all images will have to be assessed as in the case of the Sun god¹⁹. Indirectly Barāha Mihira directed the sculptor to construct the image perfectly, beautifully and as per perfect measurement.

The Agamas i.e. the Amsu-madbhedagama, the Suprabhedagama, and the Purvakarasnagama contain the prescriptions for the construction of the sun-images. The Amsumadhedagama²⁰ suggests that, Aditya, the sun-god should have two and both holding lotuses. He is to be depicted to sit on a seat made of red lotus, padmāsanapitha. His head should be surrounded with a red, halo or rakatamaṇḍala. He should wear only one cloth and the body should be covered with a coat as in northern India. The fabric of the coat should be very delicate in texture, to make portions of the body visible through it. The garment should be of red colour he should wear yojnopavita. His body should be adorned with all ornaments like coronet, Kuṇḍala and necklace. He should wear a Karanda- Mukuṭa on the right side of sūrya, there should stand Ūṣā and on the left pratyūṣā.

The Suprabhedagama²¹ states that the image of Aditya should have two arms and hands, each holding a lotus. The body should be beautiful and red in colour. It should be provided with a Karanda Mukuṭa

and adorned with all ornaments. The halo or prabhāmandala should be of Medium size and long mukata. The goddesses Ūsā and Pratyusā should be depicted standing on the left and right of the god. His bright person should stand on a seat of red lotus, placed in the chariot in the chariot, drawn by seven horses, Aruṇa, the charioteer should be placed in the front.

The Pūrvakaranagama²² prescribed that sun-god should be shown seated in his chariot drawn by seven horses and driven by the charioteer, Aruṇa. The body of the Sun should be covered with a coat of mail (Kacukancita – Vighrahaṃ) and his legs having Katakas (Pādausakatakau). He must have a charming face. It mentions the name of twelve Ādityas. They are described as two armed and two eyed. They stand on lotus and hold lotuses in their hands. They wear red garments, the sacred thread and ornaments. It prescribes the carving of the Ādityas in the Sūrya maṇḍala.

The Rupamaṇḍana²³ of Maṇḍana of Rajputana states that the figure of Āditya should be sculptured with all auspicious signs in his body should be adorned with all ornaments. It should have only one face and two hands either of them holding a White lotus. The god should stand in the middle of the orb of rays and should wear red garments.

The Silpratna²⁴, a canon of iconography gives the directions that Ravi, the sun-god should be represented on a lotus seat placed in an one

wheeled chariot, which should be drawn by seven horses and all joined with straps. His body should be red in colour and highly lustrous. He should have two hands in either of which he holds a lotus. His earring, diamed and Kiriṭa (Crown) should be made of "Puṣparāga" or ruby. His body should be carved beautiful and charming his garlands must be red in colour. The charioteer Aruṇa should be depicted. It adds two figures as Dvārapalakas named Maṇḍala (Daṇḍin) and Piṅgala on each side holding sword and shield.

Mr. N.N.Vasu quotes a few lines related to the construction of Sun-image from a manuscript called "Viśvakarmaśilpa"²⁵. According to it the chariot of the Sun god has one wheel and is drawn by seven horses. This great chariot of the Sun is known as "Makaradhvaja". He holds a lotus in each hand. He wears an armour. His breast is covered with a coat of mail. His slightly curling hair is dressed and decorated with gold ornaments and jewels. He is surrounded by a halo of light and has good hair and apparel. The figure of Nikṣubhā and that of Rājñī are to be placed on his right and left sides respectively along with all sorts of ornaments and beautiful hair-dressings. He wears a crown, Daṇḍa is represented as one faced and skanda as having a bright conch-shell. These two figures with form of men are placed in front. This text also gives the figure of varachāha on a lotus, who is to be represented as a shining horseman.

The purāṇas are all replete with the different principles for the construction of Sun-icons. The Agni purana gives a very good iconographic description of Sun-god iconographic description of Sun-god. It prescribes two types of sun images. According to it the sun

should be placed on either a chariot or a horse. The chariot is of single wheel and drawn by seven horse. He holds two celestial lotus-flower in his two hands, the embums of light on his right hand side stands his attendant Kuṇḍi, holding in his hands a pen and an inkstand symbolizing competition of the age of the universe and recording of merits and demerits his porter piṅgala with mace in hand, the symbol of his master's divine soverlighty Rājñī and Naiksubhā should be placed either side of the God carrying chowris or Bhāskara, the sun-god should be shown alone on horse back²⁶. Since Kuṇḍi is also a name of piṅgala there is no justification of placing there is no justification of placing piṅgala on both the sides. It seems that on the left side Daṇḍi was to be placed but due to mistake piṅgala is mentioned.

The Matsya purāna gives a very vivid description of the iconography of the sun-god. In one place it speaks that, the sun-god should be made as seated on a lotus with two hands holding two lotus flowers²⁷. His image should be made with beautiful eyes, seated in a chariot are holding a lotus. There should be seven horses and one wheel or cakra in the chariot of the Sun. A coronet beaming red should be placed on the head. He should be decorated with ornaments. The complexion of his body should be that of the inner part of a lotus, and eyes should be pleasing. He should be adorned with beautiful mukata. His body should sometimes be shown covered with a cuirass, colaka. His should have two piece of clothes and his feet whould be made brilliant or covered with rays. The figures of his attendants with rays. The figures of his attendants Daṇḍi and Piṅgala with sword in their hands should be placed as guards on his both sides. Near the image of the Sun, an image of Brahmā or Dhatr, the creator with a pen should be represented. The

image of the sun should be surrounded by a number of Devas. His charioteer Aruṇa should be represented with the complexion of a lotus-leaf. The two Asvins or the horse 'Sovalaya' and 'Griva', should be placed at the extreme sides. The seven horses are shown luminous and yoked to the chariot of the Sun should be tied together with the string of the serpents, sarparajjā. The image of the god should be represented either seated in the chariot or on the lotus.

Mr. N.K. Bhattasali quotes²⁸ some direction from the *Matsya P.* (chap. 261, P.902) for the construction of an image of the Sun-god. The sun god should be placed on a car with one wheel and seven horses and he should have lotuses in his two hands. His luster should be purplish like the inside of a lotus. The lotuses in his hands should rise over his shoulders. His body should be covered by attendants, Daṇḍi and piṅgala with sword in their hands. The god Vīdhāta (the god-*brah̄mā*) should be placed on one side with a pen in his hands.

At still another place the book²⁹ reveals that the feet of the sun god should never be conceived or represented either in his *dhyāna*, or in his picture or in making his image.

Mr. Gopinath Rao³⁰ cites a passage from the same *matsya purāna*. According to it, *sūrya* should have a fine moustache, four arms and the dress of an inhabitant of the northern countries his body should be covered by coat of mail. He should have a girdle called "Paliyāṅga". He should use sun-beams as bridles to his horse. Piṅgala should stand on his right and Daṇḍi on his left and piṅgala should hold a style and a palm-leaf in his hands. These two should also be dressed in the Northern fashion. Two of the hands of *Sūrya* should hold lotuses, the remaining two may hold

shield and lance, or be placed over the head of the two attendants. The sons of sūrya i.e. Revanta, Yama, and the two Manus as well as the planets should be shown around sūrya.

The Visnu Dharmottara Purāna³¹ more elaborately gives information and direction on the construction of solar iconography. According to it, the image of Ravi, the sun god should be an auspicious one having beard. His colour should have four arms. He should wear a girdle or abhyaniga. His rays (Raśmayah) should be shown in his right and left hands, which resemble a garland with all kinds of flowers. On his left, there should be the figure of the good looking and well-formed Dandin and on his right there should be extremely tawny coloured figure of piṅgala. Both these should also be brilliantly dressed. The sun-god should be shown with his hands on their head. Piṅgala should be represented with a pen and a paper in his hands and the god danda should be carved carefully carrying a shield and a spear. There should be a simha-dhvaja or lion-standard represented to the left of the God. His four sons Revanta, Yama and the two Manus should be shown on his both sides. His four wives the goddesses Rājñī, Niksūbhā, Chāyā and suvarcasā should be made. He should be shown seated on a magnificent one wheeled chariot with seven horses of the chariot of the Arka (Sun), with the reins held in his hands, he sustains the entire universe. The lion in his standard is the visible representation of Dharma. The god sustain all the world controlled by his reins. His wives are Rājñī, Rikshubhā, Duā, Chāya, Bhū, Prabhā and severcasā. The god is red-coloured. He is the abode in his hands. His tejas can not be borne by people. So his body is kept concealed (Gudha gatra)

The 'Tantrasāra'³² prescribes that the luster of the god resembles the colours of a golden lotus or a new leaf or a coral. In his lotus like hands he holds a beautiful Khatvāṅga, two lotuses, a wheel (Cakra), a lance (Sakti) a snare (pāsa), a very brilliant hook (Sṛṅgi) a rosary (akṣamālā) and the skull (Kapāla). He has four charming faces. He wears a diadem made of jewels and he is shining with the necklace.

The Śilpa pañcaratna³³ throws light on the image of Sūrya. It represents the god with all the attributes of Viṣṇu. According to the text, "Sūrya" should be decorated with a radiant headdress, armlets, bracelets and a necklace, descending down to the feet. His waist should be adorned with ornaments. His face should be bejewelled with excellent earrings. He should have a beautiful chest, and his hands should carry a conch-shell (Saṅkha), a discus (cakra), a lotus (Padma) and a mace (gadā). His body should be faultless and bright as lightning. His silken garments should be yellow in colour and he should sit on a lotus. The Samba Purana³⁴ gives the details of the iconographic feature of the sun god. It states seven types of Arcā (image which Tāmri, Pārthivi, Sailajā, Vārkhī, and Ālekhyā i.e. the image made of gold, silver, copper, earth, stone, wood and portrait or drawn on paper respectively. It also gives information regarding the size of the sun image and its carvings. It states that sun images should be of one cubit, or of two cubits, or of three cubits or of three and half cubits³⁵. Thus are considered auspicious ones. An image of one cubit is called saumya, one of two cubits is Dhanyada; that of three cubits is Sarva-Karmaprada and that of three and half cubits called Kṣhemakarikā (doer of good and welfare). The images which is very fine from all sides, front, middle and downward, is called Gāndharvī. It further gives details of the measurement of every part of

the body of the sun image. It is stated that the wives of the Sūrya should be shown on his two sides, Rājñī on the left and Nikṣhūbhā on the right. Both the Asvinikumāras should be shown on both of his sides. Daṇḍi and Piṅgala should be placed respectively on the left and right of the Sun-god, Rajña (Kārtikeya) Toṣa (Hara), two Kalmāśa birds (Pretādhipa and Garuda), Jāṇḍakāra (Citragupta), Māthara (Yamaraja), Prapnuyan (osean), Kaśutaya (Aruṇi, Kubera, Soma, and vināyaka are his other attendants. The Sāmba Purāṇa also contains the plan of a temple dedicated to sun god ³⁶.

The Bhavisya Purāṇa³⁷ gives almost the same iconographic description as of the sāmba purāṇa. It speaks that the sun image should be in proportion to the door of the sanctum (i) It should be lower by one eighth than the door of the sanctum. The "Piṇḍikā" should be three fifth and the image should be of two-fifth of the size. (ii) The image should be of eighty four angulas or the image should be of one, two, three or three and half cubits. The head was to be of twelve angulas and the chin, forehead and the nose should be one third of the face respectively. Ears should be of the size of the nose. The eyes are of the size of two angulas each. The pupil should be depicted in one-third of them. The length of the forehead and the height of the head should be equal. The circumference of the head should be of twenty-two angulas. The navel is to be the size of mouth (Mukhamatra). The chest should be of the size of the head of its size. The thighs would be of the size of hand and calves would be of the same size. It also gives reference to the size of the feet, fingers, anklets etc just same as in the Sāmbapurāṇa. The same purāṇa at another place restrains the devotees from depicting the feet of the Sun god. Just as the prescriptions of the Sāmba Purāṇa the Bhavisya

Purāṇa also describes that materials like gold, silver, copper, clay, stone, wood and painting should be employed to represent the image of Sūrya. It also gives a long list of trees useful to carve an image.

An account of the Bhaviśya Purāṇa³⁸ also informs us about the attendants of the sun god. According to it piṅgala who records the good and bad deeds of people is god Agni or Fire and he should be placed in the right and Daṇḍi.

On other hand skanda, the commander of the army of heaven, should be placed on the left. There is provision for one Aśvinkumara on either side. The goddesses Rājñī and Niksubhā are also placed on either sides of the Sūrya. According to it a lady standing in front of the Sun is Mahāśvetā, which is a name either of the goddess Durgā or of Śarāvati.

These most precious technical canons or technical sections of different text are serving the purpose of guides to guide the sculptors and architects to construct the image of the deities. However the iconography of the Sun god is peculiar in some features in comparison to other gods and goddesses of Hindu pantheon. The use of Avaiyāṅga, the use of high boots, the udīcyā veśa controversial to the iconography of the sun god.

Regarding the use of Avaiyāṅga, we find that many of the Indian Sun image show him wearing girdle around his waist. The sastric texts like the Brhatṣamihitā, the Bhaviśya Purāṇa and the Veśnu Dārmotar Purāṇa etc. Use the word "Viyāṅga" or "Aviyāṅga" for it some scholars identify this "Avyāṅga" with the Persian contemporary "Ariyaonghan". Scholars point out foreign influence on the sun images. But a close study of the

sun images of different places of different period suggests indigenous origin of the use of waist girdle. Because (i) it is found carved in the sun images of Gupta and post Gupta period. The Avyāṅga is not found in the image of Sun god carved in the Kushāna period (ii) If at all the avyāṅga is used due to Persian influence only, then we would not have found the depiction of avyāṅga in the South Indian image of Sun, which remained free from Iranian influence.

(iii) Other deities of the Hindu pantheon are also depicted as having a girdle. The image of Bodhisattvas and of Visnu are found using girdle on the waist. Even the Vedas refer to the use of Muñja-mekhala by the Brahmanchāri, which receiving the Savitri during the ūpanayan. All these prove that the use of girdle was already known to the Indian tradition. It might be possible that the use of girdle in India and that of Iran might have been of independent origin. If at all the Iranians insisted any influence, it was only in a superficial way.

Secondly, controversies are there regarding the dress of the Sun god. Scholars identify the dress used by the images of sun-god in early Kushāna and Gupta period, with the tunic worn by the Kusāna King and call it Udicya vesa³⁹ but this interpretation does not seem plausible. Because, Barāha Mihira has mentioned Udicya Vesa as the dress of northerners (Udicya Vesa muttara Pathaveśam), not as the dress of the Kusānas. The Brāhmins of the northern part of the country are referred to as the "Udicyas" in the Satapatha Brahmana⁴⁰. We have reference that the Rg. Veda describes solar gods Varuṇa, Savitri and Indra as wearing coat of mail or armour. Mahabharata also refers the Sun-God as wearing Kavaca and Kundala. Matsya Purāna states the use of Colaka,

the *visvakarma vatāra sastra* contains the reference to the covering of the body of Surya by a coat of Mail (*cañcuka Kavaca*). The *Purva Karanagama*⁴¹, a South Indian work also refers to a *Kancuka* as used to cover the body of Sun god. So, all these literature, both early and late, northern or southern. Prescribe garment for the sun god. In the initial stage the image of the Sun-god was carved simply with a *Kavaca* or armour. But in course of time, garments were also depicted in the image, which was called as "*Udicya Veśa*". The sun god was provided with an armour as if in the form of a warrior going to destroy the demon of darkness. The *Kusāna* and the post-*kusāna* sculptor replaced it with a garment as if to represent the sun as a ruler, seated majestically in his chariot. That is why, we find most images of the post gupta period shown wearing a coat of mail. It was not at all any foreign impact, but development in the indigenous tradition as prescribed in our religious scriptures.

Another problem lie in the use of high boots by the Sun-images. Scholars are of the opinion that it is only due to the foreign influence in North Indian Sun Cult. Long boots are found worn by the Sun god. This feature as is told is because of the influence of the Hellenic Sun god. Apollo – Helios⁴², who reraly represented as wearing boots. Some scholar also suggest the influence of persian Sun-god Mithra on the Solar image of India. But the fact is that the carving of image of Sun was quite late Parsia⁴³, much later than the image of India. So their impact on Indian tradition is out of question.

To our knowledge, the iconographical texts and the ancient literature do not contain any reference fo the depiction of boot on the

feet of the image. Rather, our religious scriptures forbid the depiction of the feet of the Sun god. They all prescribe either to conceal his legs inside the chariot or the charioteer and other figures or not to carve the lower part of the god at all. Accordingly in the earliest images of Mauryasunga period. The feet are not shown. Later images show the feet without clearly bringing out the toes, ankles etc. Some times the rough out line of the lower part appear as if resembling the blegging or boots.

In this process of covering the legs or hiding them by some means or the other, the sculptors of the time might have thought of providing boots to the Indian sun god. If at all we consider it as foreign influence it was only superficial.

There are a number of legends, stories and myths surrounding the Indian tradition of sun-worship from the Rg. Vedic period. Macdonell⁴⁴ suggests that ten entire hymns of the Rg. Veda are dedicated to the celebration of Sūrya only. It refers to the seven horses or mares dragging the chariot of the sun. This number remained stereotyped even in the later puranas and in the local traditions. The Rg. Veda gives the name of Uṣaś, Saranyu, Chhāyā etc. as the wives of Sūrya and the Aśvins, Yama and Manu as his sons. Son is described as an Āditya, being and son of Kāśyapa and Aditi.

The legends recorded in the Vedas were remoulded in the Purāṇas. The Bhavisya, Viṣṇu, Matsya, Kūrma, Garuḍa and other puranas contain the legends about the Sun-god. They contain a legend about how Sun-god got a beautiful shape. According to the story, Viśvakarmā had a daughter named Sureṇu, variously known as Rājñī, Samjñā, Tvaṛtri,

Prabhā and Prajñā etc. She married to Sūrya and became the mother of Yama and Manu and of a daughter named Yumunā or Yami. But she could not tolerate the burning heat of Sūrya and fled to her fathers house leaving her earthly double called Chhāyā, Nikṣubhā or Savarṇa to attend to Sūrya. From her sun-god got two more sons, the śavarni manu and Śani and a daughter named Tapati. But the step-motherly behaviour of Chhāyā towards the children of Sūrya exposed her personality and Sūrya with great anger proceeded in search of Sūrya. Viśvakarmā informed him that Sūrya was wandering in the form of a Mare in the colder region of the North. He also advised him to make some re-modelling in his present shape in order to recover his wife. Sūrya agreed with his proposal and Viśvakarmā, the divine artificer, placed Sūrya on his lathe and produced a beautiful form from Sūrya's burning body. But his legs remained as they were before. With this improved form and appearance, the sun-god went to Sūrya in the shape of a horse and got three sons by her, i.e. the divine twin Asvins and Revanta, the Lord of horses and horse men.

This legend thus, suggests that Viśvakarma gave a new beautiful form to Sūrya and it also describes Sūrya and Chhāyā as his wives and Yama, the Manu, Śani, the twin Asvins and Revanta as his children. Most probably in subsequent period all the features and his family members of the legend found place in the icon of the Sun.

There are two interesting legends in the Mahābhārata and the Varāha Purāna regarding the introduction of Chhatra and Charmapādukā.

The Mahābhārata⁴⁵ describes the origin of the use of Chhatra and Charmapāduka or Upānah. The story shows that the terrible heat of Sun-god became very unbearable to Reṇukā, the wife of Rṣi Jamadagni, who was engaged in collecting the discharged arrows, when her husband was practicing archery. This enraged the sage who resolved to shoot down the sun-god, out of fear Sūrya appeared before him and pacified him by giving a chhatra and a pair of charmpaduka to be used as sun-guards.

The Varāha Purāṇa⁴⁶ also give a similar story, which describes how queen Rupavati, the wife of king Janaka of Mithilā fell unconscious by the scorching heat of the Sun. Being terrified the Sun provided them with water, chhatra (umbrella) and Charmapādukā (leather shoes) Upānah. Thus, both the legend portray the sun-god as the giver and introducer of the shoes and umbrella in the earth.

These legends, most probably, came into being only to hide the fact of the establishment of Foreign custom in Indian soil. It seems that due to the influence of the Maggipriest the foreign elements like the waist girdle, the top boots etc, came into being, it is significant to note that the images belonging to North India and the texts supposed to be composed in that region only display the use of boots, whereas they are not found emphasized in South India. This clearly shows the foreign imprints in North- Indian images. The story of Viśvakarmā giving a shape to Sūrya, but leaving his legs untouched came to light. The Matsya and Padma Purāṇa etc. instruct the sculpotors not to conceive the feet of the Sun-god, otherwise he would be written with leporosy.

However, all these legends and stories are nothing but a clear cut mask where lies the hidden memories of the infiltration of the Iranian priests and traits into Indian solar iconography.

All these textual descriptions and the evidence of art show that Sūrya is the only Indian deity who at least in North-India is found wearing shoes, boots or leggings. This is, how ever , a peculiar element of solar iconography.

The iconographical study of the Sun is chiefly based on archaeological findings from the whole of India. The vast span of time streteching from 3rd century B.C. to the middle of 14th century A.D. has yielded numerous images of the God which provide a material support to the informations gathered from various literary sources. Orissa, being an important stronghold of sun worship has also supplied a number of sun-images of different types having conformity with the prescriptions laid down by different sacred texts. Some of the images those are intact, highlight clear iconographic features, while other are damaged by the cruelty of man or nature. Further some of them throw some new light on the iconic features of the deity. But inspite of some conceptualdevaitions, his basic iconographic features were maintained throughout. In course of time his iconographical characteristics passed through some process of modifications, obviously to meet the demand of the cult and to satisfy the regional predilections. Thus, the exquisite images of Sūrya are noticed to have displayed different iconic types in distinctive regional styles.

The sām̄ba purāṇa⁴⁷ give a vivid description of the plan of temple construction dedicated to the Sungod. It states that the temple is to be

constructed on a well examined piece of land. The door of the temple should be open to the east. Sun god is to be consecrated in the Ganbagriha i.e. the main sanctum, the bath room of the Sun god should be planned in the Southern part of the temple. There should be a room in the north part for Havana or Agnihotra, Sambhū, Matr̥kās, Brahmā and viṣṇu are to be installed in the shrines erected on the three sides of the temple. The two Mahāsvetā should be placed in front of the Sun god. The Āsvini Kumāras are to be installed outside the door of the Shrine of worship. The attendants of the Sun god are also given proper places, Rājña, Kārtikēya and Toṣa, Hara are to have their shrines. In the third shrine the two kalmaṣa birds, pretadhipa and Garuda should be consecrated. Jandakara or Citragupta and Māthara of Yamaraja should be placed in the south. Prapnuyan and who is the ocean and Kasutaya who is Aruṇa are to be established. Kubera, Soma, Revanta and Vināyaka should be kept in the north⁴⁸. There should be the maṇḍalas for the purpose of giving Arghya to Sūrya in the morning and in the evening⁴⁹.

It also has the prescription for the erection of a Dhvaja or a banner of Sun-god with the representation of Vyāma (Sky) on its⁵⁰. It describes the chariot of the sun god⁵¹ drawn by seven green horses.

All these prescriptions and descriptions of the technical literature, the śilpasāstras and purāṇas are almost maintained in the construction of temples and the images, the burning example of which we find in the sun temple of Koṅārk, Orissa.

References

1. *Journal of Indian society of oriental Art, Varoda, vol-iii, No.2, P. 125, V.C. Srivastava, Sun worship in Ancient India, Allahabad, 1972, ch-ii*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Sātapathā Brāhmaṇa, viii, P.1-10, Ed. London, 1885, P. Brāhmaṇa, xviii, 9.9, Calcutta, 1870, 1874, 1931*
4. *E.W. Hopkins, E.P. C Mythology, Strassburg, 1915, P.85*
5. *P.G.S., iii, 14.8, Varanasi, 1926, V.M Apte, Social and Religions life in the Grihya Śūtras (Rev.ed) Bombay, 1954, P.234*
6. *V.C. Srivastava, The Purāṇic Records on the Sun worship, Purāṇa, xi, No-2, PP.235-41*
7. *Purāṇa, xi, No.2, P.241, fn 99 and P. 246, fn136*
8. *Sāmba P., 29.2, ha pura-Pratima byasit pujuryate Mandali Ravih,*
9. *MBH, iii, 138,18-19*
10. *Hokins, Epic Mythology, Strassburg, 1915, PP.72,73*
11. *Viṣṇu P., iv, B15*
12. *Mārkaṇḍeya P., ix, 76*
13. *R. C. Hazra, Studies of the Purāṇic, Records of Hindu Rites and customs, Dacca,*
14. *Benerjea, D.H.I, Calcutta, 1970, PP.432-33*
15. *The descriptions of the Sun images as given in the Matsya P., (ch. Cclxi, xiiv, I and Brihat Samhitā (ch.57) which contain earliest records of the Sun images don not tally with those found in the Sun image of early series.*
16. *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, iii, P. 97*
17. *J. N. Banerjea, D.H. I, P. 434, (Calcutta, 1970)*

18. *Brihad Samhitā of Varāha Mihira, ch-57, 46-48, Benaras, 1895, 97*
19. *Ibid, ch-Lviii, Verses-49-52*
20. *T.A.G Rao, Elements of Hindu Iconography, vol-I, P, 306*
21. *Ibid, vol-I, P. 90*
22. *As quoted by J.N. Banerjea, JISOA, vol-xvi, 1948, PP. 65-66*
23. *Rao, EHI, Madras, 1914, vol-P. 90*
24. *An Archaeological survey.*
25. *L.P. Pandey, Sun worship in ancient India, 1971*
26. *Agni Purāṇa, 1-3*
27. *Matsya Purāṇa, vol-I (Panini office, Allahabad) P.94*
28. *Matsya P. (E.d) by Sri Jivananda Vidya Sagara, Sarasvati Yantralaya, Calcutta, 1876, P. 161-1-9*
29. *N. K Bhattasali, Ibid, P.151*
30. *Matsya P. , 261, P. 902, Vangavasi Ed.*
31. *T.A.G Rao, E.H.I, vol-I, Part-ii, P.87*
32. *Viṣṇu Dharmottara P., part-iii, ch.67*
33. *Tantrasāra quoted in the Sabda Kalpa-druma, Ed Eamanarayana press, Calcutta, Saka 1809, vol-123*
34. *Brihat Sūtra Sarit Sagara, P. 310, Silpa Pañcaratna*
35. *Sāmba Purāṇa, Sri Venkatesvara Ed, ch-30*
36. *Ibid, ch-30*
37. *Sāmba P., ch29*
38. *Bhavisya Purāṇa, (Bombay, 1959, Brahma Khanda, ch.132*
39. *Ibid, Bombay, 1910, P. 13-29*
40. *Brihat Samhitā, Pt.i and li, 1897, Banaras, P. 782*
41. *S.B xi, 4-4, of Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, 1.3 also Macdonnel and Keith, Vedic.index of Names and Subjects, (1958) P. 871*

42. As quoted by J.N. Banerjea, *JISOA*, vol-xvi, (1948) PP-65-56
43. *Catalogue of the Bronzes, Greek, Roman and Etruscan, British Museum*, By H.B. Watters, London 1899
44. *The Art of Iran*, By Andre Godard, Tr from French by Michael Heron, London (1965)
45. Macdonell, V.M., sect-14, *Varanasi*, 1963, P. 30
46. MBH, *Anusāsana Parva*, ch-95-96
47. *Varāha P.*, ch-208, 1983
48. *Sāmba P.*, ch-29, ch-16 also
49. *Sāmba P.*, ch-16
50. *Ibid*, ch-16
51. *Ibid*, ch-33
52. *Ibid*, ch-16