

CHAPTER - V

SUN IMAGES: STUDIES
IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF
ICONOGRAPHY

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The study of religion cannot advance to any extent without an analysis of iconography, particularly in India where image-worship forms the very pivot of the popular religion. The artistic pieces provide us with encouraging facts for the proper assessment of the particular ideas, concepts and practices of each cult. The study of Sun-cult in early Bengal would remain incomplete in the absence of descriptions of iconography of the Sun god.

The growth and development of the cult of Sūrya necessitated the making of his images in various materials. However, it is presumable that long before the inception of any cult, the Sun god and his manifold aspects were being represented by means of various symbols from the Vedic times onwards. These symbols were necessary for the proper performances of the ancient Vedic rites. In the religious ceremonies of the time, Sun was represented by a wheel, which very effectively symbolized the apparent movement of the Sun. Sometimes, the imagery was less clear; thus, a round golden plate or a firebrand stood for the Sun.¹ Among the extant antiquarian remains of the Vedic and early post-Vedic period one can recognize the symbolical forms of the deity. A spoked wheel and its different forms are commonly found on the punch-marked coins, the origin of which has been traced by Cunningham

prior to 1000 B.C.² Some of the spoked wheel symbols can well be taken to symbolize the Sun god. Sun also finds representation as a 'rayed disc' on ancient Indian coins.

On a number of very early types of punch-marked coins, small-elongated hexagonal bars of silver appear with several marks, which look like unsophisticated representations of a lotus. Also on other ancient coins, occur a few symbols that seem to be the variant forms of a lotus.³ Lotus is closely connected with the Sun from the earliest period. The association of lotus with the Sun was because of the fact that the opening and closing of the flower timed with the rising and setting of the Sun. The Purāṇas emphasize the connection, and enjoin the execution in art of a twelve-petalled lotus, on different petals of which figures of the diverse aspects of the solar deity are to be placed with the divinity *Bhāskara* on the central pericarp (*karṇikā*). Thus, in Indian art the Sun god was represented by various symbols. When he came to be represented anthropomorphically, the wheel and lotus were not left out: the wheel became one of the major symbols of *Viṣṇu*, an *Āditya* and lotus was positioned in both the hands of the Sun-icons. Moreover, the wheel and the lotus appear as solar emblems separately on several coins, seals, clay tablets and copperplate inscriptions of the Gupta period afterwards.⁴

Passing on to Bengal we cannot say with certainty whether the iconic representation of *Sūrya* in ancient *Vaṅga* preceded its worship in symbolic form as was in vogue in different parts of India where a wheel, a round golden plate, a lotus, flower, etc. were commonly used by the Vedic ritualists in the performance of sacrifices. Neither have we come across at the present state of our knowledge any punch-marked nor cast-coins containing the representations of these objects like the ones ('200 B.C. to the end of

the 1st century B.C.’ according to Allan) of the Uddehika and Pañcāla Mitra chiefs like Sūryamitra and Bhānumitra, which bears on their reverse sides the solar disc, placed on a pedestal. The representation of Sun through the symbol of wheel continued several centuries before Christ down to the 4th century A.D., as it is known from the Susunia Rock inscription⁵ (4th century A. D.) discovered at Bankura, West Bengal, where *Chakrasvāmin* (Viṣṇu) is represented by a wheel. The epigraphic records discovered so far in Bengal hardly contain any indication as to when the image-worship of the Purāṇic Sun god had its beginning. However, before we analytically describe the representative types of Sun images from Bengal in terms of an evolutionary process of iconic representations, a few observations need to be made about some of their specialties for a better comprehension of the subject.

I

Vast majority of the Sun-images from Bengal are products of the developed phase of the Bengal art and even an informal appraisal of them would bring out the more or less stereotyped elements of their iconography. The largest number of Sūrya images is found in standing posture. In this position, the divinity is always in *samapādasthānuka* pose, except in one (Pl. 6b) where he is in *tribhaṅga*.⁶ Seated images of the god are indeed very rare, only three representing the god in *vajraparyāṅkāsana*.

The god usually holds two full-blown lotuses by their stalks, which rise to the level of the shoulders. Another feature (mostly noticeable in the East Bengal images) is a pair of daggers tucked on either side of the bejeweled waist belt. A fewer images in East Bengal and almost all from west and north Bengal would show the god with a long sword in a scabbard dangling on the left and held by a diagonal sword-trap. In one image only,

the sword is placed on the right side.⁷ An extra small dagger is found tucked on the right in a few of the north-west Bengal images. A *chatra* is depicted at the top of the *prabhāvalī* in many images from East Bengal.

The god is adorned with *kirīṭamukūṭa*,⁸ the ornamented *kaṭibandha* (*avyaṅga*) and various other jewelry. The breastplate (*kañcuka*) is prominent, the interlacing outlines of which while passing round the shoulders, either make the form of a reef knot on the chest or a designed armour giving an impression of a diaphanous garment for the upper body. The former is a characteristic cognizance for most of the solar icons from East Bengal and in such cases, the *yajñopavīta* is not visible on the body. In the north Bengal specimens, the *upavīta* is always present, which is, however, a long one like in the majority of Viṣṇu sculptures from the same region. In the northern and eastern India, the lower body of the divinity or at least his feet are left uncarved or covered up with high boots. Even the attendant gods and goddesses are similarly represented. Nevertheless, there are a few images in Bengal that demonstrate the bare feet of Sūrya.⁹

The principal attendants of the Sun god are the pot-bellied bearded Piṅgala, the recorder of good and bad deeds of creatures and the youthful Daṇḍī or Daṇḍanāyaka, standing on either side. However, they are conspicuous by their absence in a number of Sun images.¹⁰ According to the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* and *Sāmba Purāṇa*, Piṅgala and Daṇḍa are to be represented on the right and left of Sūrya respectively. The vast majority of the Bengal images follow this direction. However, the *Agni Purāṇa* places Piṅgala on the left side and Daṇḍī on the right, the compliance of which is found in a few images only. Piṅgala,¹¹ is always represented with a pen and inkpot in his hands, while in the two hands of Daṇḍī the attributes are either *khadga*,

kheṭaka, *śakti* and *akṣamālā* in one hand and the gesture of *abhaya* or *kaṭihasta* in the other. According to the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, they are also to be dressed in *uḍḍicyaveśa*. Generally, both of them wear the *karaṇḍamukuṭa* but occasionally *kirīṭamukuṭa* as well. Sometimes Piṅgala is adorned with the *jaṭāmukuṭa*.

An uncertain number of the wives of Sūrya are met in the texts. They are *Dyaus*, *Pṛthivī*, *Mahāśvetā*, *Saraṇyū*, *Sureṇu*, *Rājñī*, *Nikṣubhā*, *Nisprabhā*, *Chāyā*, *Savarṇā*, *Saiñjñā*, *Suvarcasā*, *Prabhā*, *Sandhyā*, *Ūṣā*, *Pratyūṣā* etc. It is difficult to say definitely whether these are synonyms or individual personalities as are variously made out in some of the Purāṇas. According to the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, the goddess in front of the Sun god is *Mahāśvetā*.¹² The two *cāmaradhāriṇīs* on his sides, according to the *Agni Purāṇa*, are *Rājñī* and *Nisprabhā* (or *Nikṣubhā*). The two arrow-shooting attendants have been identified as *Ūṣā* and *Pratyūṣā*.¹³ Interestingly, some sculptures¹⁴ show four arrow-shooting females, two of them occasionally on horseback. However, quite a number of sculptures do not represent such females at all.

Many Sun sculptures from Bengal show Aruṇa driving the Sun god's chariot with a whip in his right hand and holding the trunk of a *makara* with the left. An image¹⁵ shows the god accompanied only by Aruṇa driving the seven-horsed car (Pl. 9a). The trunk of the *makara* has been interpreted by many scholars in different ways. According to N. B. Sanyal, 'Aruṇa, the charioteer, has his seat on the head of a *makara*'.¹⁶ N. K. Bhattashali¹⁷ described it as 'a curious gaping biped' and equated it with 'the *Nāga*' or the *bhujaṅga-rajju* of the *Matsya Purāṇa*, which serves to rein the seven horses¹⁸ In this connection, we may refer to the description of the Sun's chariot as found in the *Viśvakarmā-Śilpa*¹⁹: '*evamuktarathastasya makaradhvaja iṣyate*' ('His chariot thus

described should have an ensign of *makara*'). Therefore, the *makara* in question is nothing else but the ornamental *Makara*-head of the chariot mentioned in the iconographic text. The idea is clearly discernable from the profile of the war chariots with similar *makara*-heads illustrated on at least two terracotta plaques from Pāhārpur temple.²⁰ However, in three images from East Bengal,²¹ Aruṇa is seated behind a peacock. In two of them, the bird is shown in profile while Aruṇa holds its neck by his left hand. This is simply a replacement of the *makara-dhvaja* by the *mayūra-dhvaja*, which is very common with the front-heads of the palanquins and boats of the same region even in the present day.

In the developed Sun-icons, the chariot of the deity is drawn by seven horses with Aruṇa seated or half-embedded into the *ratha*. One Sūrya image from Bengal shows only one horse,²² another with four horses,²³ the third (Pl. 4a) with eight²⁴ and the rest with seven. However, no horse is seen in a number of Sun images. It is difficult to suggest that the absence of the horses or the chariot in solar sculptures is signs of early specimen.

The largest number of Sūrya images is two-armed, though his images or those of his different aspects with four hands and (very rarely six) are also not unknown. Two four-armed images of Sūrya (VRM nos. 734 & 654) are known from Bengal and both show the god seated. The introduction of more than two hands came to be an important aspect of the development of the Sun-image in the early and late period.²⁵ The *Matsya Purāṇa* (Vaṅgavasi edition),²⁶ *Viṣṇudharmottara*²⁷ and *Sūryopaniṣada*²⁸ (a very late work) prescribe that the Sun god should have four arms (*Caturbāhu*). The *Viśvakarmā Śāstra* describes many of the *Ādityas* having four arms with their respective emblems two of which must be lotus flowers, held in the front right and left hands. MacDonnell²⁹ is of

the opinion that these two additional hands were carved to hold the emblems and the natural ones were employed for any action or pose, i.e. *abhaya-* and *varadamudrā*. However, S. V. Venkatesvara³⁰ disagrees with him. In fact, the additional hands were needed for action. Later on, due to the influence of Tāntricism and other sects of Hinduism Sūrya was also shown, though very rarely, with six, eight, ten or twelve hands. The combined images of the Sun god with other Hindu gods come under this category.

The fact that Sūrya is one of the 12 *Ādityas* was very much in the mind of the Bengal sculptors of the mediaeval period. Naturally, we have over a dozen of images where the god is depicted along with eleven other *Ādityas*, the latter placed on the upper part of the *prabhāvalī*. They are, in fact, miniature versions of Sūrya himself, all two-armed and carrying two full-blown lotuses in their hands. They may either be standing or sitting irrespective of the posture of the Sun god. Some times, Gaṇeśa is added to them. That Sūrya is also one of the nine *Grahas* was also very much known. Quite a number of images show Sūrya surrounded by miniature *Grahas* that is specifically directed by the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*.³¹ Two images show on the *prabhāvalī* the miniature representations of the Hindu Triad, the eight *Dikpālas* and the *Aṣṭanāgas*. About the depiction of various deities with the Sun god, the *Matsya Purāṇa* mentions the fact rather briefly (*nānādevaganairyukta*). The *Agni Purāṇ* (51) after describing the figure of Sūrya continues with the details of the other *Ādityas* and their *Śaktis*, the *Grahas*, the *Dikpālas*, the *Aṣṭanāgas* etc. It is deserving of note that images with representations of additional deities are more numerous in east Bengal. An important iconographic feature found in various texts is the great effulgence (*mahāteja*) of Sūrya, which occur in several images by two or three layers of flames issuing out from the body of the divinity.

Having noticed the general as well as some specific iconographic characteristics, we now proceed to discuss about the Sun images in Bengal as far chronologically as possible. It may be noted that in most cases motifs such as Vidyādhara, *kīrttimukha*, *gaja-śārdūla* and other general decorative elements have been ignored.

II

Sūrya is not depicted in human form in early Bengal art until a comparatively late period. Before the evolution of real cult-icons of the Sun god, there are a few human representations of the Sun on the terracotta of the Maurya-Suīga period. The earliest representation of the Sun god in human form is found in a beautiful terracotta mould datable to c. 2nd century B.C.

2nd Cent. B.C. Terracotta Winged Sūrya from Tamluk:

The beautiful terracotta from Tamluk (Midnapore), which displays a winged male figure³² standing in frontal pose datable to c. 2nd century B.C., deserves mention at first (Pl. 1a). Each of the two hands placed on the waistband (*kaṭisūtra*) holds long stalks of full-blossomed lotus (*vikaśita padma*). The figure wears round-shaped earrings as well as a beautifully fashioned *kaṇṭhī* decorated with floral medallions. It is also shown with a stylistic *śirastraka* slightly tapering to an ornamented top and armlets and beaded round-shaped bracelets arranged in four strands. The figure wears a thick waistband the middle of which is characterized by the presence of knotted *kaṭisūtras* in small cylindrical forms acting as the *kaṭisūtragranthi*. The waistband is further furnished with small tinkling bells. The waist-girdle worn by the figure is slightly different from the ones worn by

other figures of divinity. The most interesting feature is the delineation of the wings beside the upper parts of the arms. Two conical-shaped objects depicted in the form of cluster of plantains representing the row of bananas are displayed on either side of the lower part of the stela. A pitcher-like auspicious object with ear of corn sprouting forth from it is placed on the pericarp of the petalled lotus.

The association of wings with the image of Sūrya seems to find its origin in the Ṛgvedic concept of the Sun. He is described as the beautiful winged celestial bird *Garutmān* in some of the Ṛgvedic hymns³³. *Suparṇa* (well winged) is no other than the Sun itself. Therefore, we may conclude that the figure stands for Sūrya (the Sun god) in one of its earliest representations in iconic form in terracotta. Two full-blown lotuses held by the figure is again a pointer to his identity as the Sun. The round-shaped *karṇa-bhūṣaṇas* seem to resemble *Sūrya-mukhī* (helianthus annuus) flower, which has been traditionally been associated with Sun worship in Bengal. The plantain tree is also traditionally connected with Sun worship. It is, thus, clear that the winged figure represents the Vedic Sun god Sūrya at its nascent stage of iconic development.

The representation of Sūrya in the form of a winged human figure,³⁴ was not, however, a new one in the context of greater Indian art as such. In the sculptural panels of Bhārhut³⁵ (Sanchi) datable to 2nd century B.C., there are beautiful representations of winged human figures carved out in Chunar red sand stone. It is true that the basic idea of identifying the Sun god with the beautiful winged celestial bird *Garutmān* (*divyaḥ sa Suparṇa Garutmān*) came from the Ṛgvedic hymn (1.164.46).

Chandraketugarh terracotta sculpture of 1st century B.C. / A.D.:

Another beautiful terracotta sculpture of 1st century B.C. / A.D., from Chandraketugarh,³⁶ 24-Parganas (Pl. 1b) is very significant. The object represents a regally posed male figure seated on a chariot in European style. The chariot is drawn by four galloping horses, which is unique in Bengal. Two of the horses are centrally placed and the rest of the two shown in profile. He has behind his head a circular nimbus and also wears a turbaned crown typical of the period and a garland with a pendant. The figure is flanked by two females, who passionately cling to the main figure by the neck. The chariot stands on a raised circular platform on the left corner of which is found a funny torso of a monstrous demon (the symbol of darkness?) being pierced through by the sharp-edged rolling wheel of the chariot.

The figure wears a pair of circular ornate earrings that reach its shoulders. The oval-shaped face, the strongly accentuated ridged eye-brow, the very protruding round eyes, the straight nose (though not very prominent), the relaxed lips and divine smile- all indicate the characteristic features of the Kuṣāṇa period. The round-shaped turban-like headdress and the elaborately ornate nimbus also reveal the characteristic features of the Kuṣāṇa period. All the iconographic features along with the sacred thread thrown across the right shoulder of the bare-bodied figure indicate its immediate association with divinity.

In the Ṛgvedic hymns, the Sun god is often described as moving on a car drawn by one, seven or several ruddy horses.³⁷ There are a number of Sūrya images belonging to the early centuries of the Christian era, which show the god seated on a chariot. That the terracotta figure under discussion, represents the Sun god Sūrya becomes evident if

we take into account the iconographic motifs of some Sūrya images of the period found in different parts of India. One Sūrya image comes from the Saptasamudri well (D 46) which is now in the Mathura Museum.³⁸ Here the Sun god is seated on his haunches inside a one-wheeled car drawn by four horses. He holds a lotus bud in his right hand and a scimitar in the left. He is clad in heavy tunic and top boots are traceable in his partially visible legs. He has a Sun disc behind his head and a pair of wings attached to his shoulder. Another such image of Sūrya is depicted in the relief from Bhājā Vihāra³⁹ near Pune, Western Ghats. It shows the god as riding a four-horsed chariot along with two women. The wheels of the chariot pass over grossly proportioned nude demons. The illustration of the Chandraketugarh Sūrya image under discussion is remarkably similar to the Bhājā Sūrya image in stone. A part of the terracotta chariot with remnants of four horses discovered from Bhīṭā of the same period is a close parallel of the present specimen. Again, in a relief on the stone railing at Bodh-Gayā, the Sun god is found riding a one-wheeled chariot drawn by four horses with two arrow-shooting female figures on either side. It appears that somehow the style of depicting the Sun god spread from western to eastern India and even inspired the Bengal artists to produce the terracotta plaques referred to above.

The sacred thread worn by the bare bodied figure is very much thick in shape and consists of three strands. The style of its representation is distinctly found in the sculpture of Agni hailing from the same Chandraketugarh area. In the *R̥gveda* (10.88.6), Sūrya is identified with Agni, another important god of the Vedas.

One of the significant findings in this terracotta Sun image is that Aruṇa, the charioteer of the Sun god appears, only in its upper bust between his dangling legs. He

wears a small cap-like headdress. It serves as an example for the continuance of the art tradition through the ages with the Kashipur (24 Parganas) Sūrya image discussed below. The two female deities flanking the Sun god may stand for Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā. They are adorned with circular earrings and have their respective coiffure arranged in the shape of cap-like headdress.

We may now examine the factors behind the Sun-images mentioned above. According to Cunningham,⁴⁰ the four horses and the general execution in the early Sun images largely bear a resemblance to the representation of Helios - the Greek Sun god. J. N. Banerjea, however, suggested that the Ṛgvedic description of Sūrya as drawn by one, three, four or seven horses might have led to this sort of representation. In the *Ṛgved.*⁴¹ the number of horses of the Sun's chariot is seven and no particular importance is given to number four. Iconographic literatures of India specifically mention seven horses for chariot of the Sun god. On the other hand, the Irānian Sun god Mithra traverses⁴² the wide firmament in his four-horsed chariot and the Greek Sun god Helios has been famous for his quadriga. It is well known that Mithra was represented in human form for the first time in the Hellenistic courts in association with Greek Sun god - Helios. Therefore, it is suggested that the Sun images of the early period came to be evolved under the Hellenistic impact. In this tradition, the Mithraic tradition was already mixed up. However, the influence of the Hellenistic tradition was confined to the four horse-motifs only. The features of the Sun god along with attendants like Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā and the chariot are very much Indian in character. The absence of the Central Asian features like high boots, Irānian coat, etc in these sculptures clearly shows that these images derived the alien impact through the Hellenistic stream⁴³ and not directly. In the succeeding

period, the images were modeled under the influence of the Central Asian tradition, which probably entered India in the wake of the Kuṣāṇa invasion.

1st Cent. A.D. Terracotta *Udīcyaveśī* Sūrya from Hadipur (24 Parganas):

A 1st century A.D. terracotta seal with a male figure on one side (Pl. 2a) has been found from Hadipur (North 24 Parganas)⁴⁴. The figure stands facing to front in rigid *samapādashānaka* pose on a slightly raised platform. There are lotus plants on its right side and a banana tree on its left side. Behind the plantain tree stands^α horse in an east-west direction. The figure wears a headdress of kausia cap type as well as earrings. A square-shaped small symbol is also noticed on the right shoulder of the figure. The right hand holds the stalk of a larger lotus fully petalled with the pericarp in the centre. A small, full-blown lotus is depicted beneath the right hand on the right side of the larger lotus. On the left side of the larger lotus is found a lotus with its bud only: the left hand is placed akimbo. The figure wears a close fitting jacket forming part of the longer that is gathered at the anklets. It also wears soft-padded boots.

Since the figure in *samapādashānaka* and in flat kausia cap-like headdress holds the stalk of the lotus by one of his hands and wears northerner's dress (*udīcyaveśa*), it stands for the Sun god in one of its most formative stages. The alien influence in solar iconography was now slowly but steadily infiltrating into the mainland from northwestern India. The display of the horse, which is connected with all the Sun gods and the plantain tree, which is also associated with the Sun worship, also confirms the identification of the deity with the Sun god.

As already noted, the figure under review is clad in the tunic and the soft-padded boots, which are the well-known iconographic traits of the Sūrya images of the north.

This is one of the archaic representations of it ever met with in Bengal. In the *Bṛhat-samhitā* (57.46-47), we find one of the earliest descriptions of Sūrya images in the *udīcyaveśa*. The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (Ch, 67.2.16) lays down that he (the Sun god) should be covered with a coat mail and he should wear a northerner's dress. According to J. N. Banerjea, the writers of such texts thus emphasize the foreign origin of this type of Sun cult, which was introduced into India in the beginning of the Christian era or even earlier.

The display of three lotuses is also very interesting. It does not appear to be an isolated art motif of this particular divine figure. On the contrary, it appears to have served as a significant art-motif even for the icon-makers of the successive periods. The Kashipur (North 24 Parganas) Sun image of late Gupta period also shows the deity with three full-blown lotuses in each of its two hands.

2nd Cent. A.D. Terracotta Seal with a round object representing the Sun:

Symbolic representation of the Sun god even in the 2nd century A.D. Bengal is evidenced by a terracotta seal⁴⁵ from Berachampa (North 24 Parganas). It displays a boat with a mast carrying a banner. Above it, there is a round object representing the Sun in the sky. The accompanying legend in Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī has been read as *Bhajotha dijre (or jri) ssudhrdho (-Bhajatha dvijeshu udadhau)*, which means: "You take resort into the Brāhmaṇas (while) at sea". The most important point is the display of the Sun on the seal along with an advice for the seafarers to take resort unto the Brāhmaṇas while at sea. It shows to what extent Sun worship had infiltrated into the various strata of the society in early Vaṅga.

3rd Cent. A.D. Seal staff: aniconic representation of Sūrya

Aniconic representation of the Sun probably continued in the next century as well, which is tracable in a hemispherical terracotta seal ⁴⁶ from Chandraketurgarh and now in the collection of the AMC (AMC.T 8521). The seal datable to c. 3rd century A.D. displays a female figure. She wears an elaborate headdress and stands to front with her right hand akimbo and the left hand stretched out to her left. The left hand points to a staff rising from a water reservoir (with two lotuses) and fitted to a pole, which is topped by a canopy over her head. The depiction of the staff rising from the water and flanked by two lotuses is quite significant. In the *Rgveda* (4.13.5), Sūrya has been called the pillar of the sky. We may also refer to the Sūrya pillar from Nāgārjunakoṇḍā⁴⁷ of the 2nd century A.D. Thus, the staff for the pillar of the sky may be taken as personifying the Sun.

Horse and lotus on a terracotta seal

Theriomorphic representation of the Sun was not also probably unknown in Bengal. On one side of a terracotta seal⁴⁸ is represented a big fully petalled lotus rising from a pond. Also depicted are the two galloping horses, which turn their heads to a person riding on one of them. The presence of the equestrian beside the full-blown lotus may indicate the need of protecting the pond from desecration, which could have excluded its use for religious purpose. The legend *Dhesido (desitah)* in Kharoṣṭhī in left field is very important. The rider might have been instructed (*desitah*) to guard the pond as it was perhaps kept aside exclusively for the growth of lotus flowers. *Rgveda* (10.142.8) also emphasizes the need of digging ponds or tanks for having full-blown

lotuses besides for the supply of pure drinking water (9.110.5). The second horse without any rider may be taken to have symbolically represented the presence of the Sun god.

Early Gupta Phase

The extant Sūrya figures of the early Gupta period are not very many in number. However, they seldom fail to show most of the foreign elements.

Open-bodied booted Sūrya from Harinarayanpur (24 Parganas):

A stone plaque from Harinarayanpur (South 24 Parganas) and datable to early 4th-5th century A.D. shows a male figure (Pl. 2b) in *samapādashānaka*.⁴⁹ The two hands hold two full-blossomed lotuses by their stalks. A flat-cap like headdress crowns the head. The figure is adorned with long earrings, necklace and torque. He is also found as clad in a coat, trousers and boots. Undoubtedly, the figure represents the Sun god in his *udīcyaveśa*. The two pillar-like objects remind us of the Sūrya pillar of the second cent. A.D. from Nagarjunakonda. The image under discussion can definitely be taken as the next significant stage in the evolution of the solar iconography. The beginning in this direction was made by denuding the upper part of the body of the deity of its peculiar *udīcyaveśa* of the time. In addition, this was done without sacrificing the artistic beauty of the iconic representation. The lower part of the *udīcyaveśa* along with the booted feet pales into insignificance under a high-pitched Indianised version. The Sun image of the 5th century A.D. from Indian Museum and the Kashipur (North 24 Parganas) Sūrya image of the 7th century A.D. all show gradual but steady shedding off the northerner's dress, though *avyaṅga* (waist-girdle) and boots are retained in almost all the cases. It

seems that in the pre-Gupta age in Vaṅga, Sūrya in the *udīcyaveśa* was looked upon as having foreign association

It is suggested that the peculiar type of the Sūrya image worshipped all over India from the Gupta period onwards and earlier was derived from an Irānian type.⁵⁰ The extant Sūrya images of the early Gupta period, though not many in number, seldom fail to show most of the alien features as well. However, the gradual idealization of these traits and preponderance of Indian elements had already begun from the late Gupta period. If we describe a few early and late Gupta as well as early and late mediaeval images of the god hailing from Bengal, it will show that the earlier the sculptures the more prominent and less and less idealized are the foreign traits and the Indian elements are comparatively few.

4th Cent. A.D. Sūrya image from Kumarpur (Rajshahi)

The Kumarpur Sūrya⁵¹ is an extremely coagulated specimen (Pl. 3a). The slab of the image is rounded at the top with a high pedestal. On the dado of the pedestal are carved the figures of seven horses standing erect with their forelegs raised high. Above, the charioteer Aruṅa sits in the centre. Behind him is Sūrya in *samapādashānaka* between Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā. The lower portion of each from below the knees are submerged in the pedestal. The two hands of the god are bent at the elbow and raised to the shoulders, clasping stalks of full-blown lotuses (*sanāla-padma*). All are dressed alike in knee-length tunics with a corded belt in the middle. Sūrya's ornaments consist of necklace, earrings, bangles and a cap-like, low *kirīṭa*. Though carrying bows and arrows as usual, Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā are not represented in the archer pose; the former stands

facing front and the latter in slight *tribhaṅga*. All the figures are executed in low, flat relief and their sharp and rigid angles and lines confine the main effect to the surface. The features of Sūrya are broad and heavy, his shoulders wide and straight. All these features together with the long tunic, open round eyes, flat and low head-dress indicate its affinity with the Kuṣāṇa sculptures of Mathura, datable to the 3rd century A. D. Yet, the peculiarity of the features, the kind and quality of the material used, as well as the crude, coagulated and unsophisticated appearance of the example suggest that it is probably the work of a local artist who was remotely touched by the art idiom of Mathura.

The seven horses found in the Kumarpur relief show the departure from the custom of the Kuṣāṇa artists to provide the Sun's chariot with only two or four horses. Sūrya in standing pose may be regarded as a Gupta innovation in solar iconographic tradition.

5TH Cent .A.D. Sūrya image from Niyamatpur (Rajshahi)

The Niyamatpur (Naogāon, Rajshahi)⁵² Sūrya image (Pl. 3b) is executed in coarse-grained sandstone. The deity stands erect on a low pedestal between two dwarfish attendants, Piṅgala and Daṇḍī. He wears a long tunic fastened at the waist by a belt.⁵³ His crown is low and flat with an engraved lotus between triangular plaques above the rim. In his two hands, which are sharply bent at the elbow and raised, he holds a pair of lotuses by the stalks. He stands with his feet close to each other, but from the ankles, the legs appear to move away from each other.

Piṅgala and Daṇḍī stand swaying away from the main deity and unlike him they wear *dhotis* and hold indistinct objects in their hands. Arrow-shooting females, consorts, and Aruṇa along with the wheel and the horses of the chariot are conspicuously absent

in this specimen. The only innovation is the scarf or belt introduced for the first time in these two images. The scarf round the waist is not found in the pre-Gupta reliefs. In its Kuṣāṇa type dress and headgear, position of the two hands and strict frontal standing attitude, the figure of Sūrya is similar to the Kumarpur relief, and also in style not unlike the image of the god from Bodh-Gayā dated in the 26th year of the reign of Dharmapāla. The back slab is plain and asymmetrical.

The Kumarpur and Niyamatpur images bear remarkable affinity to the Kuṣāṇa Sūrya figures of Mathura as regards their dress and general characteristics; unlike the Mathura images they are, however, all standing and the chariot is absent. A pre-Gupta⁵⁴ date was suggested for them by S. K. Saraswati and Nihar Ranjan Roy. However, an early Gupta period date has been assigned by J. N. Banerjea.⁵⁵ About the absence of so many iconographic features in this image, S. K. Saraswati ascribes it to a period 'when the iconography of the god had not yet been stereotyped.'⁵⁶ However, it may not be taken for granted. Over a dozen of Sun images accompanied by Daṇḍī and Piṅgala only have been discovered, whose dates range from c. 4th to 9th century A. D. Long before the end of this period, the iconographic elements of the developed Sun-icons, had been spelled out in the the *Viṣṇudharmottara* and some other Purāṇas. It is quite likely that the sculptors, in these cases, followed a text like the *Bṛhat-saṁhitā*, which even in the middle of the 6th century A. D. described the god as alone and did not elaborate about the accessory figures at all.⁵⁷

Image on seal:

On a seal attached with the Mallasārul Copper Plate grant⁵⁸ of the time of Mahārājādhirāja Gopacandra (6th century A.D.), is represented *Śrī Lokanātha*. The seal bears in a relief a standing figure of a two-armed deity with a halo-like *cakra* in the background (Pl. 8b). The *cakra* that stands for the wheel of time is traditionally regarded as the solar symbol. The anthropomorphic figure may be identified as that of Sun god as there are traces of the foreparts of some horses below, in front of the figure. On the pedestal, there seems to be carved some devotees.⁵⁹

Late Gupta & Early Mediaeval Phase

The late Gupta and early mediaeval Sūrya images differ from the above in this respect that they are far more elaborate in their presentation than the above. In the icons of the mediaeval times, a definite tendency to the grouping and arrangement of the attendants of the god is discernible.⁶⁰ It will be necessary now to study a few representative types to notice the process of development.

Sūrya image from Kashipur (24 Parganas):

A Sūrya-image⁶¹ in black basalt from Kashipur (24 Parganas) is an excellent specimen (Pl. 5a) of the late Gupta period. The god is standing erect with a halo behind his head, holding lotus-stalks in his two upraised hands and having his legs partially inserted in the *triratha*-chariot pedestal. He wears a belt tied by a knot- a tradition that even lingers through the mid-stream images of India belonging to the Pāla period. Over the pedestal in front of the god sits Aruṇa with his body partially hidden. His left hand is

gathering up the reins of the horses and the right holding a lash. Aruṇa and probably the arrow-shooting female figures, now broken away, are the only companions of the god. The god possesses a sword, the hilt and part of which is dangling by his left side and tied by a loose sling from his right shoulder. This may be reminiscent of the north Indian militarism mainly aroused by the Hūṇa invasion led by Mihirgula in sixth century A.D.; the contemporary artist could not help adapting that northern outfit and armoury for the divine image. Besides, in Hindu pantheon Sūrya or the Sun god often appears as a warrior or *kṣatra* who rides on the back of his chariot driven by seven horses obviously indicating seven colours of the Sunray from east to west, and defeats the menace of darkness. Forming a single row from left to right, the horses put their front legs upwards in a galloping manner. Seven bridles or trappings are attached to them held by the charioteer Aruṇa, whereas the composition renders the effect of a celestial car. The one-wheeled chariot is clearly outlined and 'the way in which the horses are treated and the two demons of darkness (?) are shown beneath the chariot reminds us not only of the earlier technique of Bodh-Gayā and Bhājā⁶² but also of the terracotta plaques discovered at Chandraketugarh. The image seems to have belonged to the period earlier than that of the Sūrya-image of Deorā (Bogra district, Bangladesh) discussed below.

The Kashipur image shows the deity as holding three full-blown lotuses in each of its two hands. We have already found three lotuses in the image of Sūrya in a first cent. A.D. terracotta seal from Hadipur (24 Parganas, North). It appears to have served as a significant art-motif handed down to the icon-makers of the succeeding periods.

Sūrya image from Deorā (Bogra):

The emotionalism of the eastern version is fully evident on the late Gupta image of Sūrya ⁶³ in bluish basalt from Deorā as noted earlier and now preserved in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi (Pl. 5b). The figure of Sūrya is somewhat flat but three dimensional from the ankles up to the shoulders. He is standing with a circular halo with dotted borders round the head. The halo diverges to right and left to form similar but smaller *prabhāmaṇḍalas* behind the heads of Piṅgala and Daṇḍī. The deity holds a lotus stalk in each of his two hands, which sprouts upward parallel to his ears in a bunch of one big and two tiny blossoms. The right hand is broken and above the bridge of the mutilated nose is a round *tilaka*. The broad, powerful torso of Sūrya is bare save for a short necklace of apparently beads. He also wears small circular earrings, bracelets and a flat cap-like crown (*kirīṭamukūṭa*), which is decorated by a lotus device, carved between a pair of beaded bands. The ears are covered with twisted rolls of hair falling from beneath the crown. The god is clad in a *dhōti* tied round the waist by a girdle with an ornamental clasp in front. Along his left side is seen a short sword kept in position by means of a chain, which is intersected by a scarf passing round the waist and is knotted to the right with the ends gracefully arranged on the hip. The boots (or leggings) on his legs are only partially visible. Much of the latter is inserted into the pedestal as we find in the later Sūrya relief from Ellora⁶⁴ or in the Kashipur (24 Parganas) Sūrya of approximately the same or a little earlier date.

In front of the god, Aruṇa is seated cross-legged behind a half-lotus device, holding the whip and reins. Daṇḍī and Piṅgala stand respectively to right and left on side of Aruṇa, wearing similar dresses and ornaments including the flat-topped headgear. The

former is not bearded as in latter images, and carries the pen and inkpot while the latter holds a *śūla* in his right hand and the left hand is on the hip. Two arrow-shooting goddesses Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā are represented behind half-lotus devices to the right and left of the deity. The legs of the attendant figures are also encased in boots, which like those of Sūrya, are partially hidden. On the *triratha* pedestal are the seven horses of Sūrya's chariot carved in profile with the single wheel⁶⁵ (cf. *ekacakram* of the *dhyāna*).

The image under discussion is similar in outline to that of Kashipur. Both the images more or less 'exhibit the sublime spiritualism of the Sārnāth school combined with the emotionalism of its eastern version'.⁶⁶ However, the Deorā image undoubtedly shows some development in the treatment of the iconic type of the Sun god not present in the Niyamatpur and Kumarpur reliefs already described. The latter two had only two attendants, namely, Daṇḍī and Piṅgala. The horses of the chariot had been given in only one image. However, here the number of attendants has increased. In addition to Daṇḍī and Piṅgala on either side of Aruṇa, we also find the arrow-shooting female figures - Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā - on two sides.

The Deorā Sūrya is not much removed in point of date from the Bhumārā Sūrya sculpture, carved inside a *caitya*-window panel of the Śiva temple at Bhumārā but it introduces many new specialties absent in the latter.⁶⁷ It must be noted, however, that the Bhumārā Sūrya was an accessory figure, appearing inside one of the '*caitya*' in a temple dedicated to Śiva, while the Deorā Sūrya seems to have been the principal object of worship in a solar shrine.⁶⁸

Here the Kuṣāṇa dress has disappeared and the image is given a complete indigenous character. However, some other features characterizing the Sun-images of the

subsequent centuries (the Pāla period), e.g. the sacred thread so prominent on the body of Sūrya and his additional attendants in the persons of *Mahāśvetā* and the two queens viz. *Samjñā* and *Chāyā* - have not yet made their appearance.

The way in which the long curls falling on the shoulders are treated and the '*trivalī*' marks are shown on the throat, the plain circular halo with beaded border, scarf passing round the waist, the long sword tied with a slanting strap on the left side, paucity of ornaments and strict simplicity of design – all these as well as the very refined treatment of the whole theme specify it as a fine specimen of Bengal sculpture of the late Gupta period. The circular halo with only a beaded border appears to be but a plain reminiscence of the exquisitely decorated halos of the Sārnāth Buddha images. The deep shadows below the eyes and round the lips accentuate the emotionalism of the full round face.⁶⁹ In point of style and execution, this image from Deorā has general resemblance with those of the panels in the Gupta temple at Deogarh. The Deorā image, as it has been suggested by J.N. Banerjea, S. K. Saraswati and others, may be assigned to the Gupta period.⁷⁰ when the full-fledged image of the god with all his attendants might have been imported in Bengal.

J. N. Banerjea⁷¹ has even gone to the extent of describing the Deorā sculpture as an ideal Sun-image carved in the 6th century, with full details and all the requisites for a Sun-relief. For the first time, the god is shown wearing all the ornaments and attended by all the members of his retinue, *Daṇḍī*, *Piṅgala*, *Ūṣā*, *Pratyūṣā* and *Aruṇa* with seven horses. The image in question seems to have been the principal object of worship in a solar shrine. We have, therefore, little doubt that the Sun worship was introduced in

Bengal in the pre-Gupta period but it was consolidated on a firm foundation during the Pāla rule in Bengal.

Bronze miniature Sūrya image from Deulbādī (Comilla):

A Sūrya figure (Pl. 6a), a bronze or octo-alloy ('*aṣṭadhātu*') miniature⁷², closely corresponds to the Deorā composition in many of its details. However, the main figure of the god is seated, which is usually very rare. He sits cross-legged in a car of one wheel while seven spirited horses are represented underneath the car as drawing it along. There is a prominent girdle round the abdomen of the god. As usual, he holds a pair of lotuses in his two hands. On two sides, sit Piṅgala, with a short beard to right and Daṇḍī to left and Aruṇa is seated behind the *makara*-device of the chariot-head. Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā stand in *ālīḍha* and *pratyālīḍha* at the extreme ends, shooting arrows. No consort is depicted. The Sun god and his two principal attendants are each provided with separate halos behind their heads. The axle and the two wheels of the chariot are fitted quite realistically. The two full-blown lotuses held by their stalks and the jewellery including the prominent girdle round the abdomen retains the touch of the master hand behind the sculpture. The miniature image of the god is undoubtedly a remarkable specimen of the East Indian art of the 7th-8th century A.D.⁷³ S.K. Saraswati⁷⁴ assigns it to the 7th century A.D. The Sūrya image with its composite elements of attendants, charioteer, horses etc. represents not a very distant approach to the full fledged stela composition of the Pāla art.⁷⁵ The image was originally found along with an inscribed image of *Sarvāṅī* from some ruins in the village of Deulbādī, in the Tippera District, some 22 miles south of Comilla and is now housed in the Bangladesh National Museum.

Unaccompanied, booted terracotta Sūrya from Bogra:

The unique terracotta Sūrya ⁷⁶ (21" ht.) from Bogra district in the Mahasthan Museum, Bangladesh is a remarkable piece (Pl. 8a) of sculptural art of the Gupta period from Bengal. The image shows the god completely in round with a plain circular halo behind the head. He wears a flattop *kirīṭamukuṣa*, *hāra*, *kuṇḍalas*, *valayas* and a tunic that covers the body up to the knees and is fastened to the waist by a girdle. The characteristic rolled-scarf goes round the back, the plated ends of which gracefully hang on two sides from the elbows and reaches well below the level of the tunic. High boots cover the legs, the feet being broken at ankles and lost. A sword in the jeweled scabbard is dangling on the left held by a diagonal sword-strap. The lotuses in the hands are gone. No consort or attendant is depicted. As the pedestal is lost, the presence of the horses or the chariot cannot be ascertained.

The sculpture represents the mediaeval type that depicts the Sun god riding on a horse unaccompanied by any attendants. The '*Agni Purāṇa*' (Ch. 51) and the '*Śrī Viśvakarmāvatara Śāstra*' (Ch. 28) describes it in similar language- '*Athavāsvasāmūrudha kārya ekastu Bhāskara*. In the Sun-temple at Konarak (Orissa), such a Sūrya figure known by the name of *Haridāśva* appears in the role of a '*Pārśadevatā*' placed on the outside niche of one of the walls of the main shrine.⁷⁷

Pāla Period

The last part of the eighth century A.D betrays a change in iconic perspective of the Sūrya divinity coming over Bengal. Actually, this marks the period of transition between the Gupta and the Pāla times concerning style and composition.

Early Pāla seated terracotta Sūrya from Pāhārpur:

A stray terracotta plaque⁷⁸ from Pāhārpur represents a divinity with a halo behind the head, seated cross-legged and holding full-blown lotuses into uplifted hands. The god is identified as the only representation of the Sun god at Pāhārpur. It reminds us of similar representation of the god on the Bodh-Gayā railings. The divinity is shown with the upper garment flying above the shoulders in usual Pāhārpur style. This representation may be reasonably assigned to the early Pāla -period i.e. the second half of the 8th century A. D. In the middle and later Pāla period, we find many stone sculptures representing the Sun god, but no seated figure of this type has yet been discovered.

Early Pāla Sūrya from Bhadrakālī (Hooghly):

The representation of Sūrya in a niche on a stone slab probably belonging to the 8th century A.D. from Bhadrakālī in the district of Hooghly delineates a significant iconography of the god inspired by *dhyāna*.⁷⁹ Here the divinity appears in full anthropomorphic form ignoring the prescribed rule contained in the *Matsya Purāṇa*. However, the peculiarity of this sculpture lies in its emphasis on flatness distantly echoing the two-dimensional art of Bhārhut. Another feature of this sculpture not very uncommon in Pāla sculptures is the representation of the deity within a shrine. The niche has two pilasters surmounted by square capitals on both sides. It is ultimately crowned by a pyramidal lintel terminating with architectural shape in the upper end. It is minutely decorated with architectural designs and minor niches within itself shaped as *caitya* windows often with peering human heads or otherwise containing a lotus. Such appearance of the so-called *caitya* windows leads us further to the conclusion that this

sculptured piece might have taken shape in the beginning of the Pāla age, as far as we know that the Pāla kings were ardent patrons of Buddhism. The main niche containing the Sūrya image with its pilaster motifs and the minutely decorated lintel will represent a celestial mansion or palace as if visualizing the concept of a *vimāna*. Again, there is considerable absence of decoration in the composition except the crowning lintel, which recalls the language of the Gupta art and which lingered over decades. Sūrya is represented as wearing a pair of pointed boots, as it will be seen about the sculptures of the Sun god appertaining to Pāla Bengal. Daṇḍa and Piṅgala also wear similar footwear worn by the main divinity and helmets of characteristic form. However, the helmet or crown of the main divinity was going to maintain its dimensional beauty of *kirīṭamukūṣa* as it is seen in the Sūrya image belonging to circa seventh century A.D. In this eighth century image from Bhadrakālī, we find that the chariot and horses along with the charioteer Aruṇa vanish from the scene though the symbolic suggestion may still be there. The god holds a lotus in each hand; the petals of the lotus facing the viewer are open while those of the upraised flower are closed. This is a rare image with its unrecognizable face, which marks the end of the Gupta style as well as the beginning of the Pāla convention.

Early Pāla Sūrya image in South Kensington Museum:

The stage next to that of the Kashipur and Deorā image in the development of the Sūrya motif is very beautifully illustrated by a remarkable sculpture⁸⁰ of early Pāla art in the collection of the South Kensington Museum, London. All the attendants are grouped on either side of his figure, almost in a line. The arrow-shooting figures of Ūṣā and Partyūṣā are shown above their head. Unlike the Deorā and Kashipur sculptures, all the

figures are shown standing out of the chariot pedestal with their legs heavily booted. However, the treatment of the lotus bunch in the hands of the Sun god as well as of the long sword attached by a strap to his left side distinctly reminds us of the two specimens noticed above.

Sūrya of early or middle Pāla period:

If a comparison is made between the group of sculptures (Deorā, Kashipur and South Kensington images) with the four Sūrya reliefs, one each from Bihar, west, north and east Bengal reproduced in plate LIX of R. D. Banerjee's 'Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture', we can clearly trace the process of the further development of the iconic type. The two sculptures from Bihar and north Bengal are undoubtedly earlier than the two others from east and west Bengal are and they possess some peculiarities of the older group of Sūrya reliefs. The treatment of the broad sword hanging on the left side of Sūrya, the parabolic '*prabhāvalī*' of the two compositions, the '*kulah*' caps on the heads of Daṇḍī and Piṅgala, absence of any elaborate decoration, the separate '*prabhā*'-s (halos) of the Rajshahi Museum figure (R. M., No. Fa 5/176) and the absence of the two queens in the Bihar one (Indian Museum, No. 3924) - all these features prove that they belong to the early or middle Pāla period.⁸¹

Features of Sūrya images of Late or early Sena period:

The profuse ornamentation of the reliefs from Western Bengal (IMC No. Ms. 8) and eastern Bengal (Dacca district), their pointed stela with the '*kīrttimukha*' design on the top centre (absent in the earlier group), the arrangement in several parallel layers of

the companions (shown in different sizes) of the Sun god, the Indianised crowns ('*karaṇḍamukūṣas*') of Daṇḍī and Piṅgala definitely date them in the late or early Sena period. These two Sūrya figures are characteristically representative of the fully developed type of such icons in Bengal, and many of the Sun images in the collection of the different local museums and those of eastern India conform to them in a greater or a lesser degree.⁸²

11th cent. A.D. Sūrya image from Koṭālipārā:

The eleventh century image of Sūrya from Koṭālipārā (Faridpur)⁸³ characteristically represents the fully developed type of such icons in Bengal. The image stands in *samapādashānaka* pose on a full-blown lotus. The lotus issues from *agni-kuṇḍas* on a low pedestal of the *saptaratha* type, which is carved on its face with the figures of seven horses. He is accompanied by Daṇḍī and Piṅgala, standing like Sūrya on lotus-flowers issuing from *agni-kuṇḍas* and holding their usual attributes. *Mahāśvetā* is standing on the lotus in front at the foot of Sūrya, with the right hand in the *abhayamudrā* and the left hand in the *varadamudrā*: below it, is the seated figure of Aruṇa. In front of both, Daṇḍī and Piṅgala stand on the same lotus pedestal. Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā are represented in the same gestures as found with *Mahāśvetā*. There are some additional iconographic features like the swan above the middle horse with its neck being clasped by Aruṇa, the *vanamālā* and a cord tied in the middle of the chest into knots like a *channavīra* in place of the sacred thread. Three kneeling devotees are also carved on the portion of the pedestal in the centre. The whole slab, from the foot to the crown, represents the aureole; its edges emit flames. There is an umbrella at the apex; below it

and on either side is seen the flying *gandharvas*, each carrying a garland along with consorts with folded hands.

Developed Sūrya image from Dacca:

The image of the Sun god in the developed form appears in a black stone sculpture⁸⁴ from Sukhabaspur, Munsiganj, Dacca (Pl. 19a). The god stands erect in his car against a throne background. He holds two lotuses in his two hands, which rise a little above his shoulders. His cloth descends down to the knee and a second piece of cloth is flatly hung in his front. The girdle, which holds his cloth tight round the waist is profusely ornamented and is further decorated with artistic hangings. Two daggers are attached to the girdle on the two sides. The breast is protected by armor; the outlines of which intertwine to form a knot on the breast. The god wears elaborate necklaces and earrings and an artistically worked coronet bedecks his head. The leg of the god is covered by high footwear, the upper fringes of which are artistically carved.

Bearded, potbellied Piṅgala also in top boots stands on the right side of the god with pen and inkstand in his hands. Youthful Daṇḍī, who is also shown in armour and top boots, stands to the left with a sword in his right hand and with the left resting on a staff. The two wives of Sūrya, viz: *Sureṇu* (Saṁjñā) and *Nikṣubhā*, stand respectively on the left and the right side of the god. The goddess *Mahāśvetā* in miniature is placed in front of the Sun god. The two female archers shooting arrows are also shown to the right and the left of Piṅgala and Daṇḍī. The half-bird Aruṇa is driving Sun's chariot of one wheel and seven horses. Below Aruṇa is represented the upraised trunk of *makara* (a mythical animal), which Aruṇa holds in his right hand and which

evidently is serving him in place of the gathered reins of the seven horses. The image is richly ornamented with *kīrttimukha* sign at the top. The centaur-upon-elephant (*gaja-śārdūla*) design is exhibited on the two perpendicular sides of the piece, while above these are a pair of Vidyādhara.

Bare-footed Sūrya images

By the eighth and ninth centuries A.D., there was fairly a tendency in north India to carve Sun images with the features of the god prevalent in Southern India⁸⁵ and Bengal could not remain untouched as well. Three Sun images (Pl. 10b) from Gāzole (Malda)⁸⁶ and one from Maṅgalbārīhāṭ (Naogāon, Rajshahi, Pl. 11a), have the most conspicuous feature of the South Indian Sun-images. The Sun god has no covering or boot on his feet. However, Sūrya images with bare feet in eastern India are extremely rare. Evidently, the sculptor must have followed a South Indian text for these bootless images as the north Indian authorities prescribe deterrent punishment for such violation. Other feature of the Sun god such as lotuses and the seven horses of his chariot obviously follow the north Indian tradition. These examples, too, show the attempts to bring the synthesis of the two different traditions of the carving of the Sūrya - reliefs prevalent in the north and south of the country. The cause of the difference between the characteristics of the Sun-reliefs prevailing in northern and southern India was mainly regional. The factor of time and place was mainly responsible for their distinction.⁸⁷ The same conclusion can be drawn from the *Sāmba* and the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, which give minute details about the carving of the Sūrya images. The carving of the feet, even of its fingers and nails - is also prescribed

and their respective measurements are given in detail. It may be interesting to note that both these texts belong to northern India.

As is well known, most of the images of Sūrya are endowed with booted legs according to the accepted north Indian tradition. However, as already pointed above, a few images without the depiction of footwear has been discovered from Bengal, where the influence of the southern iconography is unmistakable.

Barefooted standing Sūrya figures from Malda:

A specimen, discovered from Gāzole⁸⁸ (Malda district) and dated in the 11th century A. D., shows the god as standing in *sampādasthānaka* pose on a lotus-pedestal and holding the stalks of lotus in his two upraised hands. The attendant couples, respectively to the proper right and proper left sides, are placed on a halo of low relief. Miniature figure of *Mahāśvetā* and Aruṇa are present. The most striking feature is that neither the Sun god nor his attendants (Aruṇa, Daṇḍī, Piṅgala, Saiṁjñā, Chāyā, Mahāśvetā) wear any boots. In other respects, the image bears resemblance to those wearing boots.

4-armed bare-footed Copper Sūrya from Rajshahi:

A unique bare-footed copper Sūrya⁸⁹ has been discovered from Maṅgalbārī, Dhamoirhāṭ, Naogāon (Rajshahi). The deity is four-armed and seated in *sukhāsana* on a lotus on a raised platform placed on the chariot. In his upper two hands, he holds two lotuses by the stalk, while the lower right and left hands show the *varada* and *abhayamudrā* respectively. Aruṇa sits behind the god, holding the reins of the seven

horses carved below the lotus throne. Sūrya is clad in a *dhoti* and a double-stringed *upavīta*. His ornaments consist of earrings, necklace and bangles. His legs are bare and not covered by boots.

Eleven *Ādityas* in Sun images

The *Dvādaśādityas* also came to be worshipped as component parts of the solar religion.⁹⁰ Representation of eleven other *Ādityas* along with the main deity became a feature of the Sun-image in the tenth-eleventh century A.D. The iconographical traits of these may be seen in brief. All *Dvādaśādityas* have been given four hands⁹¹ while the *Viśvakarmāśāstra*⁹² gives only two hands to Pūṣan and Viṣṇu. However, in actual sculptural representation, variance may be noticed. The images of the *Ādityas* are shown either on the sides of the Sūrya (usually set up behind the image of the Sun god), or eleven of them are carved on the *prabhāvalī* of the Sūrya -image, thus bringing the entire number to twelve. The worship of the twelve *Ādityas* separately was not much in vogue.

Quite a number of images,⁹³ almost all from East Bengal, portray the god (Pl. 11b) accompanied by eleven *Ādityas*, Piṅgala, Daṇḍī, three consorts, Aruṇa and the seven horses, though with minor differences among them. The Sūrya image from Pākilāra (Comilla)⁹⁴ of a later phase of the Pāla art represents the eleven *Ādityas* in miniature as standing in the background (Pl. 12a). In the black stone image⁹⁵ collected from the village of Kulkudi (Gosānihāṭ, Faridpur) in the BNM (no.60) (originally discovered in the Sandwip Island of the Noakhali district), the eleven *Ādityas* are represented in miniature on either side within circles of foliage (Pl. 12b). Six of them are placed on the proper left and the remaining five of them are on the right. In addition to

eleven *Ādityas*, some other Brāhmaṇical deities are also often shown in the Sūrya image.

In an excellent image⁹⁶ found from the river Gumti in the hamlet of Pākīlāra near Mainamati post office, the central deity Sūrya is flanked by Gaṇeśa as well (Pl. 13a). The Kulkudi Sun image depicts a potbellied, 2-armed and bearded standing figure holding a lotus-stalk in the right hand and a *kamaṇḍalu* in the left. This figure has been identified as Agni.⁹⁷ No consort is depicted in the stone image from east Bengal⁹⁸ in the BNM (No.79). Daṇḍī is represented without any sword in a fine image of the Sun god found at Rājair (Faridpur)⁹⁹ while the Sun image from Pākīlāra depicts him with a sword in hand instead of a club. Most of the images show two arrow-shooting females, while two images represent four, two being on horse back.¹⁰⁰ In the stone image from East Bengal¹⁰¹ (BNM No. 79), on either side of the god are represented four arrow-shooting females, two of whom are on the horseback and placed below the *Ādityas*. The Kulkudi Sun image represents two equestrians below the sixth circle on either side, shooting the rays of the Sun in the form of shafts to the farthest regions of the universe. In a few of these specimens, the special scarf with floral designs passes by the front and looks like the *vanamālā* of Viṣṇu. In addition, in the same images the short *yajñopavīta* is unusually carved on the *kañcuka* or coat of mail covering the upper body. In the image from Rājair (Faridpur), the exquisitely carved *kañcuka* clings to the body of the god like a piece of finely embroidered muslin. The images from Vikrampur (Dacca)¹⁰² as well as from the river Gumti in the village of Pākīlāra are depicted with the umbrella sign at the top¹⁰³ while the Pākīlāra Sūrya image represents the *kīrttimukha* above in the place of the parasol. The Kulkudi image bears a short inscription of the 12th year of the reign of King Govindacandra (1032 A.D.) of the Candra dynasty of east Bengal. Here the Sun god has

been invoked as the 'maker of the day and the god of the persons afflicted with the *takman* (skin-diseases).¹⁰⁴ The figures of twelve *Ādityas* are also reported to have been discovered at Tribenī, District Hooghly.¹⁰⁵

Eight *grahas* in Sun images

Representation of the other eight *grahas* along with the main deity also became a feature of the Sun-image in the tenth-eleventh century A.D. The images of the *grahas* are shown either on the sides of the *Sūrya* or on the *prabhāvalī* of the *Sūrya*-image, thus bringing the entire number to nine.

***Sūrya* images with eight *grahas* from Southwestern Bengal:**

Four images,¹⁰⁶ all from the southwestern Bengal, represent the deity accompanied by the eight *Grahas*, four on either side (Pl. 14b). Piṅgala, Daṇḍī, Aruṇa, the seven horses and the two arrow-shooting females are present but no consort is depicted, probably because of emphatic focus on the *graha* aspect of *Sūrya*. However, in one image of this category from Vikrampur (Dhaka) two consorts are depicted as well (Pl. 15a).

Seated *Sūrya* with seated *grahas* from Bairhattā (Dinajpur):

The Sun worshippers of ancient Bengal, no doubt, preferred to see their god in standing posture but they were not very averse to the seated posture of the deity as well. An inscribed black stone image¹⁰⁷ of the Sun god (Pl. 16a) hailing from Bairhattā (Dinajpur) and belonging to the 12th century A. D. is interesting because it contains some novelties not present in the other group. It is a seated variety, which is comparatively rare. The pedestal inscription calls the god 'Sūrya' and describes him as 'remover of all

diseases' ('*samasta-roḡānām haritā*'). The deity is seated in '*padmāsana*' in a chariot drawn by seven horses, with flames issuing from his head and torso. He holds the lotus flowers in his hands (broken) as usual. Covering of the body and the legs has been faintly suggested. The god is accompanied by Piṅgala, Daṇḍī and three consorts; all are seated, the upper half of *Mahāśvetā* being broken. He is also flanked on two sides by the two arrow-shooting females. Miniature figures of the eight other *Grahas* are also seated on the *prabhāvalī*, four on either side of the central deity. There are, on each side, an arrow and a crescent with a ball on it supported by a shaft. The sculpture is a bit heavy and crude in its style and execution.

Sun images with other Brāhmaṇical deities

Sūrya with Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa & other figures from Dinajpur:

The image from Bansihari (W. Dinajpur)¹⁰⁸ in the SAGC shows the miniature figures of Viṣṇu and Gaṇeśa on the left side of the *prabhāvalī* and two defaced figures on the right (Pl. 13b). The deity riding a seven-horsed chariot is also usually attended by Piṅgala, Daṇḍī, Aruṇa, 2 arrow-shooting females and 2 consorts on either side.

Sūrya images from Vikrampur with the Triad, *Aṣṭadikapālas* & *Aṣṭanāgas*:

Two identical images¹⁰⁹ from Vikrampur (Dhaka) show the god in the company of Piṅgala, Daṇḍī, 3 consorts, Aruṇa and the 7 horses as usual. However, on the top of the *prabhāvalī* are seated Brahmā, Maheśvara and Viṣṇu (Pl. 14a). The Triad is flanked by the *Aṣṭadikapālas*¹¹⁰ with their respective mounts, four on each side. On the two edges of the lower part of the slab are the *Aṣṭanāgas*¹¹¹ in *añjali*, four on each side, with their half

human and half snake-bodies (*sarpa-pucchākṛti*). The inspiration for these two images might have come from the *Agni Purāṇa* (51).

Sūrya with Ādityas, garhas, Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya, zodiacal signs, 6 males & 9 females:

The unique black stone image¹¹² (Pl. 20a) of the Sun deity worshipped in the house of the Gosvamis at Sonarang (Tangibadi, Dacca) is the most elaborate image of the Sun god in the eastern districts of Bengal, nay, in the whole of Bengal. The god is accompanied as usual by Piṅgala, Daṇḍī, Aruṇa, 7 horses, 3 consorts and 2 arrow-shooting females. Except the *kīrttimukha* at the top of the *prabhāvalī* and the figures of the two flying *Vidyādharas* on either side of the head of the god, there is not a single other redundant detail over the whole sculpture. However, the number of miniature figures that crowd the piece makes up the want of decorative details. Below the *kīrttimukha* are shown the eleven *Ādityas* in addition to the present central deity. Over the elaborate halo around the head of the god are six seated cross-legged two-armed male figures. These figures possibly represent the *Saptarṣi-maṇḍala* i.e. the combination of seven Ṛṣis including the central figure who is no other than Maricī and the other Ṛṣis being Atri, Aṅgirā, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vaśiṣṭha. It may be mentioned here that Bhattasali (*JBBS*, p. 172-173) could not give satisfactory identification of these images. Later on Enamul Hoque also remained silent about the identification in question (*BSHI*, p. 191). Then on the right side of the *prabhāvalī* are the eight planets, twelve zodiacal signs and miniature figures of Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa. To the left of the god, seven female figures are sitting cross-legged, one above the other, and two more closer to the

Sun god, each one of them making various gestures by her two hands. Bhattashali allegedly took seven of them as representing the *Seven Mothers (Sapta mātṛkā)*. Mlle de Mallmann thinks that they are the nine *Śaktis* namely *Dīptā, Sukṣmā, Jayā, Bhadrā, Vibhūti, Vimalā, Amoghā, Vidyutā and Sarvatomukhī* who are mentioned in connection with Sun worship in the *Īśānaśiva-gurudevapaddhati*¹¹³ and this seems to be more logical.

III

Syncretic Images of the Sun god

On literary¹¹⁴ as well as archaeological¹¹⁵ evidences, it may be demonstrated that there has been occasional identifications of Sūrya with Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu and also with Buddha. The *Pañcāyatana pūjā* marks the climax of this trend. Clear connection of the individual members of the triad with the Sun god is demonstrated by several interesting image types of composite character that have been found in Bengal. These are mostly mediaeval in point of date and emphasize the absorption of the other cult deities in the Sun. We can refer now a few medieval sculpture of composite character.

11 Cent. A.D. 6-armed Sūrya– Brahmā:

A beautiful stone Sūrya of the 11th century A.D.¹¹⁶ from Mahendra. Kushmandi (West Dinajpur), and now preserved in the collection of the Varendra Research Museum, presents an entirely new iconographic type of the divinity (Pl. 20b). The image agrees with the usual two-armed standing Sūrya figures of the 11th century A.D., as far as the attending figures are concerned. However, its prominent difference from them lies in the number of its hands. Four-armed standing and seated Sūrya images, though rare, are

known from parts of central and eastern India; but this one is endowed with six hands. His natural hands hold the two full-blossomed lotuses as usual, while the four additional hands show the *varadamudrā* (with lotus mark on the palm) and rosary (*akṣamālā*) on the right and *abhayamudrā* (with *padmāṅka*) and water pot (*kamaṅḍalu*) on the left. The pointed slab with the *saptaratha* pedestal contains at the base the figures of the seven horses, drawing the Sun god's chariot. The god is represented in *udīcyaveśa*, standing with his customary attendants. The head of the god is framed by a nimbus and the back slab, with a decorative pillar-like upright on each side, is sparsely ornamented. At the apex of the stele is a *kīrttimukha*, spewing rosettes and creepers between *Vidyādhara* couples in the midst of cloud motif.

The nearest textual approximation to this type is the description given of Dhātrī, the first in the list of the *Dvādaśādityas* in the *Viśvakarmāvatāra Śāstra* as quoted by T. A. Gopinatha Rao.¹¹⁷ The Dhātrī aspect of the Sun god holds lotuses in its two natural hands, a lotus garland (or a fillet of lotus seeds) in its (back) right hand, and a water-vessel in its (back) left *(*Dakṣiṇe pauṣkarī mālā kare vāme kamaṅḍaluh Padmāvyām śobhitakarā sā Dhātrī pratjamā smṛtā*). However, the increased number of its hands, its solar features and rosary and water-vessel (two of the well-known emblems of Brahmā) in two of its hands bring it in line with the groups of syncretistic icons being noticed here. This image may be regarded as a composite representation of Brahmā and Sūrya.¹¹⁸ Iconographically, it may be compared with the three-headed and eight-armed Chidambaram figure, probably combining in Sūrya the members of the orthodox Brāhmaṇical triad, according to H. Krishna Sastri¹¹⁹ or with the so-called Trimurtis found in Bundelkhand region.¹²⁰ S. K. Saraswati tentatively identified the 6-armed image with

the 4-armed Dhātrī, which is not quite satisfactory.¹²¹ Dhātrī is, no doubt, one of the Ādityas, but Dhātā or Vidhātā is also one of the synonyms of *Brahmā Prajāpati*, and both these characters appear to be symbolized in this interesting sculpture.

12th Cent. A.D. 3-headed 10-armed Mārtaṇḍa -Bhairava from Manda :

A unique three-headed and ten-armed sculpture (Pl. 21b) datable in the 12th century A.D. has been discovered from the neighborhood of Manda (Rajshahi).¹²² It is preserved in Rajshahi Museum in Bangladesh. Carved partly in the round, the deity stands *samapādasthānaka*. Of the three faces, the central one has a serene expression, but the right face is distinguished by its horrible appearance (*ghora*) with beard, three eyes, open mouth and protruding teeth. The face on the left side is also three-eyed. All the three heads have the *jaṭāmukuta*. The two-eyed placid face resembles that of Sūrya, but the side faces, three-eyed, bearded and mustached, are like those of *Bhairava*.

From the broken off stumps, the image appears to have been originally twelve-armed. Only six hands, three on each side at the back, have survived intact. Its front two pairs of hands are broken, but two full-blown lotuses with stalks are visible in the uppermost pair of hands. The three hands, which are intact on the right side, carry respectively from the top *śakti*, (spear) *trisūla* (trident) and *khaṭvāṅga* (staff with a skull). The corresponding attributes in the three left hands are *nīlotpala* (blue lotus), *damaru* (drum) and *sarpa* (snake). These are all characteristic attributes of Śiva, and thus the Saivite character of the image is quite evident. On the screen behind the main image is depicted a mass of high flames issuing from heads and shoulders, which suggests its association with the *Bhairava* aspect of this god.

The back slab is pointed at the top and the base of the *saptaratha* pedestal is carved with the figures of seven horses. Above the horse in the middle, inserted within a wheel, is Aruṇa seated on the head of a *makara* between Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā, standing respectively in *pratyālīḍha* and *ālīḍha* and holding bows and arrows. In front of the deity and on his *padmapīṭha*, stands *Mahāśvetā* between his legs, with the customary attributes in her two hands. To the right and left respectively are Rājñī and the pen and inkpot bearer Piṅgala endowed with *jaṭāmukuta*, and *Nikṣubhā* and Daṇḍī carrying a sword. The legs of each, excepting those of Aruṇa, are encased in high boots. All the figures in the group are profusely adorned, and clad in *dhotis*. Over the chariot drawn by seven horses, the god in *dhoti* with raised folds and scarf wears sacred thread, top boots and jewellery. On the top are a *kīrttimukha* and two flying Vidyādhara.

The image does not correspond to any known iconographic text. However, iconographically it conforms, largely, to the *dhyāna-mantra* of *Mārttaṇḍa* variety of Sūrya as quoted in the *Sāradātilaka Tantra*^{122a}. This variety of the Sun god is significantly referred to there as *Vallabhārḍha*¹²³ that means, "Half of Śiva (*Bhairava*)," thus pointing to the composite nature of the iconic concept.

K. C. Sarkar¹²⁴ tentatively identified the god with the 4-faced 8-armed *Mārttaṇḍa-Bhairava* given in the *Sāradātilaka Tantra*¹²⁵ and ever since it has been referred to as such. The present image actually may be taken as a four-faced one, the face at the back remaining uncarved. The text prescribes the *khaṭvāṅga*, *padma*, *cakra*, *śakti*, *pāśa*, *śṅṅī*, *akṣamālā* and *kapāla* as attributes in hands and requires all the four faces to be three eyed. Mlle de Mallmann drew our attention to two descriptions of a syncretic image of Sūrya and Śiva, one from the *Agni Purāṇa* and the other from the *Matsya Purāṇa*, both

with four faces and eight arms but differing from the *Sāradātilaka Tantra* descriptions of attributes in hands.¹²⁶ The Bengal image does not follow any of these texts. Nor does it agree with the details of the few similar images discovered from elsewhere in India.¹²⁷

In the Purāṇas, many 'stotras' are mentioned identifying Śiva with Sūrya.¹²⁸ In one entire chapter (73rd) of the *Agni Purāṇa*, elaborate description has been given about the rituals of Sun worship. It is stated there that the worship of the Sun god should be performed by the recital of a *mantra*, named *Samhāriṇī*, in which Śiva has been identified with Sun.¹²⁹

In fact, this kind of worship of the Sun started because of the growing Tāntricism, which was spreading fast everywhere in the country, especially in eastern India in the early medieval period. In the *Bṛhat-tantrasara* of the celebrated Kṛṣṇānanda Āgamavāgiśa, there is a section on ' *Sūryamantra*' where we come across the identifications of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva with Sun god.¹³⁰ There is hardly any doubt, however, that Sun worship in its Tāntric form laid particular emphasis on the identity of the Sun with Śiva. The concept of the identity of the Sun with Śiva was not confined merely to the early medieval period, but it continued in the subsequent centuries. The *Sūryamaṅgal Pāñcālī* composed in the late medieval period refers to God Sūrya alias Śiva adorned with *dhutura* flowers, as taking stamonium and his companions are sixteen hundred *gopī*. Thus, both the deities Sūrya and Śiva stood for fertility symbol and agriculture and identical. It has been sought to explain in the backdrop of Surya image inscription "Om Svasti śrī-Śiva-devādityaḥ".^{130a} Most probably, this attitude led to the development of the concept of the composite deity, *Mārttaṇḍa-Bhairava* whose description, as is well-known, finds a prominent place in the *Sāradā-tilakatantra*.¹³¹ In

the *Kālikā Purāṇa* also, Sūrya has been referred, at least once, as *Mārttaṇḍa-Bhairava*.¹³²

Therefore, the identification of Śiva and Sūrya in the *Samhārinī mantra* of the *Agni Purāṇa* and the figure of *Mārttaṇḍa-Bhairava* clearly indicate the Tāntric influence on Sun worship.

Four-armed bare-footed Sūrya- Viṣṇu:

A black chlorite sculpture¹³³ (26.7 x 19 cm) of unrecorded provenance depicts the Sun god as four-armed, nimbate and seated cross-legged in *padmāsana* (Pl. 21b). Aruṇa is similarly seated in front on a chariot, which is being drawn to left by seven horses carved in profile and placed upon a low platform. In his upper hands, the god carries a pair of lotuses. The lower right and left hands hold the *śaṅkha* and *cakra* respectively. The god has the bare feet in front of which is seated *Mahāśvetā*. The ornaments worn by the god are plain and not engraved and his headgear is a low *kirīṭa*. The example appears to be a syncretic icon, combining the elements of Sūrya with those of Viṣṇu. It may be added that the combination of Sūrya with Viṣṇu most probably led to the depiction of Sūrya without shoes, possibly keeping in view of easy acceptability of the devotees of both the cult-gods.

10-armed Sūrya-Lokeśvara:

Apart from Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, reconciliation and rapprochement between rival gods and their creeds is also traceable from the direct association of Bodhisattva Lokeśvara with other Hindu cult divinities including the Sun god.

A fragmentary (only the head and upper part of the torso with multiple arms, some intact and others broken, are preserved) relief¹³⁴ of medieval Bengal is said to be a

striking combination of Sūrya and Lokeśvara (Pl. 22a). Of the ten arms, six are gone. Of the remaining four hands, a pair of right and left hands holds two full-blown lotuses. The other pair holds the *akṣamālā* and an indistinct object. The god has one head with the *jaṭāmukuṭa*. There is a seated figure of the two-armed *Dhyānī-Buddha Amitaābha* in miniature on the crest of the image. J. N. Banerjea tentatively identified the image as a combined representation of Sūrya and Lokeśvara.¹³⁵ However, the *jaṭāmukuṭa* as the headgear and *akṣamālā* in one of the hands of the deity deserve a much deeper dig for a more satisfactory identification. Both these iconographic elements are connected with the god Brahmā, a fact that may tempt us to trace in this image the combination of Sūrya with the former. However, it is very difficult to arrive at any definite conclusion in view of the loss of the attributes in other six hands. Anyway, if the identification of the sculpture as *Sūrya-Lokeśvara* has to be accepted, it would be better to find in it the amalgamation of Sūrya and *Jaṭāmukuṭa-Lokeśvara*. In this connection, it may be mentioned that one of the main forms of the Buddhist *Avalokiteśvara-Lokaṇātha* in Bengal was *Simhanāda-Lokeśvara*, the healer of leprosy¹³⁶ who took the form and features of Sūrya.

IV

Navagraha Worship

The worship of the Navagrahas was much in vogue in early Bengal. Yājñavalkya lays down certain details about the images of the Grahas. He says that the figures of Sūrya, *Soma* (Moon), the son of the Earth *Maṅgala* (Mars), the son of the *Soma Budha*, (Mercury), *Bṛhaspati* (Jupiter), *Śukra* (Venus), *Śaṇi* (Saturn), *Rāhu* and *Ketu* should be made of copper crystal, red sandal (wood), gold (in the case of *Budha* and *Bṛhaspati*),

silver, iron, lead and bell-metal respectively. Their figures were also to be drawn on canvas in their respective colour or in *maṇḍalas* made of scented paste (sandal-wood-paste). Besides *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti*, many other works namely the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, *Agni-Purāṇa*, *Aṁśumadbhedāgama*, *Śilparatna*, *Rūpamaṇḍana* etc. give different descriptions about their forms.

The iconographical representation of Navagrahas does not seem to follow canonical texts. If we compare a number of texts from the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, *Agni Purāṇa*, *Matsya Purāṇa*, *Śilparatna*, *Mānosollāsa*, *Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇam*, *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*, *Rūpamaṇḍana*, *Nispaṇṇayogāvālī* etc. with some extant sculptures many of which were found from Bengal,¹³⁷ it will be noticed that the latter not only depart from the former in most cases but also differ in some respects among themselves as well. According to these texts, the individual Grahas could be two-armed or four-armed and they could be with or without mounts. The attributes in hands and the nature of mounts could also vary. However, the list of the divinities in all these sources consisted of the stereotyped nine Grahas, namely, *Ravi* (Sun), *Soma*, *Maṅgala*, *Budha*, *Bṛhaspati*, *Śukra*, *Śaṇi*, *Rāhu* and *Ketu* (the ascending and descending nodes of the moon), albeit occasionally with various synonyms. Except the first two and the last two of the names, the remaining ones are all planets.

Separate representations of any particular one of the nine planets are extremely rare. To date we know of only two, which are on two of the plaques of the plinth of the Pāhārpur temple: one is of the *Candra* and the other is of *Bṛhaspati*. Debala Mitra noticed^{137a} that the *Graha* images of Bengal and Bihar considerably accorded with

the *Agni Purāṇa* in respect of attributes but she assigned the wide disagreements with regard to the mounts to different sources of inspirations.

Navagraha Panels:

Most of the Navagraha images show the Navagrahas in panels where the divinities are placed in a particular order. Over a dozen of them depict Gaṇeśa accompanying the planets, placed at the beginning of the row. This peculiarity is seen in the Bengal sculptures alone. It is quite natural that the introduction of Gaṇeśa, who as *Vighnāntaka* wields power of putting obstacles and removing them, into the group, was to strengthen the corporate cult to avert evils and obtain success. However, the iconographic texts seem to be silent about this alliance of the *Grahas* with Gaṇeśa, against the fact that the latter was specifically directed to accompany the group of the *Mātṛk. ās.*

An excellent specimen of the 11-century A.D. Navagraha slab¹³⁸ (17" X 3'3") in black chlorite stone from Kankandighi under the Mathurapur P.S. of the Diamond Harbour sub-division (Khari. 24-Parganas) is a very good representative specimen of the group-presentation (Pl. 23a). In it, the images of the nine planets, as prescribed by the Hindu astrology, with that of Gaṇeśa, are elegantly carved in relief. They are standing in graceful pose in a row on lotus pedestals, with Gaṇeśa at the beginning. Each of the figures has over the head an oval halo with lotus border and a snake-head-like design between them, and wears a sacred thread and a short skirt tied round the waist by a girdle. Their other peculiarities from the left are noted below.

1. *Gaṇeśa* stands in *ābhaṅga* pose, wears a *jaṭāmukūṭa*, a pair of bracelets of beads, and

holds in his right hand a rosary and in his left a battle-axe.

2. *Ravi* stands in *samabhaṅga* attitude, wears a *kirīṭamukuṭa*, a necklace, a pair of bracelets and a *vanamālā* hanging up to the knees, and holds, as usual, in his either hand a lotus stalk terminating in two lotuses, just above the shoulders.
3. *Soma* stands in *ābhaṅga* attitude, wears a *kirīṭamukuṭa*, a necklace, a pair of bracelets, a pair of armlets and holds a rosary in the right hand and a *kamaṇḍalu* in the left.
4. *Maṅgala* stands in the same pose as the above image, wears a *kirīṭamukuṭa* and other ornaments like the image of the moon and holds a rosary in the right hand and a spear in the left.
5. *Budha* stands in *tribhaṅga* attitude with his left leg half bent, wears a peculiar headdress and other ornaments as in the above two images and holds with his two hands an arrow. Along the left side is a big bow, placed on his shoulder, extending up to his feet.
6. *Bṛhaspati*, a pot-bellied figure with long beard, stands in *ābhaṅga* pose, wears a *jaṭāmukuṭa* and other ornaments like *Budha*, and holds a rosary in the right hand and a *kamaṇḍalu* in the left.
7. *Śukra* stands in *ābhaṅga* attitude, wears a *kirīṭamukuṭa* and other ornaments as in the above images, and holds in his right hand a rosary and in the left a *kamaṇḍalu*.
8. *Śaṇi* stands in a peculiar attitude, owing to his paralytic affection caused by a curse, wears a *kirīṭamukuṭa* and other ornaments like *Śukra*, and holds a rosary in his right hand and a staff his left.
9. *Rāhu*, the big-mouthed figure has only the upper part of a human body. He is seated on

a chariot, and wears a headdress like modern tiara and other ornaments as in the above images, has a pair of big moustaches, and holds with his two hands an unfolded book.

He has a small eye on the forehead and a hood of snakes over the *mukuṭa*.

10. *Ketu* is in a human figure, in *ābhaṅga* attitude with the lower part like a serpent tail.

He wears a *mukuṭa*-like tiara and other ornaments as in the body of *Rāhu*, has a hood of snakeheads over the *mukuṭa*, and holds a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left.

Below the lotus, on which the above images of the planets stand are carved in low relief, the stems and leaves of the lotus plant in scrolls, with the main stem in the centre and the *vāhanas* (mounts) of the planets within and below them. Among the *vāhanas*, the following are from the left, within the stems and leaves of the lotus plant: A lion, swan, boar, deer, elephant, jackal, buffalo, fish, vulture, and the following are beneath them: a mouse, horse, ram, peacock, dog, swan, frog, ass and chariot. Over the halos of the images of the planets, there is a border in relief with three decorative designs, one in the centre and two on the two sides like *Makara* heads, placed back to back. Upon that, on the upper and on a portion of the side edges or the slab are depicted flames of fire. The beautifully designed long rectangular slab with the main figures inset in very high relief, seems to show that the whole composition was itself an 'object for regular worship in times of *graha-yāga* and not a 'door-piece' (Pl. 23a).¹³⁹ Similar Navagraha panels (but without the stems and lotus plant in scrolls in the pedestal) have been discovered in the districts of West Dinajpur,¹⁴⁰ Rajshahi,¹⁴¹ Maldā,¹⁴² and Birbhum¹⁴³ Those from Rajshahi and Madnabati are dated in the 11th and 12th century respectively.

In one panel from north Bengal in the AMC, ¹⁴⁴ very unusually Gaṇeśa and the *Grahas* begin their order from the proper left. The panel ¹⁴⁵ from Akhilya (Rajshahi) in the BNM (No. 67.41) shows additional miniature figures of the Hindu Triad and eight other divinities, probably the *Dikpālas*, on the upper part of the slab (Pl. 24b). One fragmentary panel in the SAGC ¹⁴⁶ shows Gaṇeśa, Ravi and Soma, but the *vāhanas* are not represented.

A few panels ¹⁴⁷ show the Navagrahas standing without the presence of Gaṇeśa or the *vāhanas* (Pl. 24a). Two other fragments ¹⁴⁸ may belong to this type, which does not show the *vāhanas*, and the Gaṇeśa-ends are broken. One of these last two specimens (the sandstone panel in the BNM) appears to be of late Gupta period and nearer in date to the IMC fragmentary specimen from Sāmāth. ¹⁴⁹

In most of the Navagraha slabs hitherto discovered, all the images of the planets are found standing side by side, though there are a few where they are depicted in seated postures. The sandstone panel in the SAGC ¹⁵⁰ broken into two pieces, seemed to be a door lintel from some shrine. It shows the Navagrahas in seated position as in the case of the most of the Graha-panels from Orissa. Gaṇeśa is absent and no *vāhana* is represented.

Individual Grahas:

The separate and detached figures of the Navagrahas are very rare throughout India with the exception of the Sun god. The reason may be attributed to the fact that they were not independently worshipped, as even now the Hindus do not worship separately under the belief that this may offend the other planets. As already noted, only two detached images of the planets have been discovered until now from Bengal. These are

Nos. 60 and 61 on the basement of the Pāhārpur temple and belong to the seventh or 8th Century A.D., the period of the second group of the stone reliefs at Pāhārpur.

On the western wall of the main shrine at Pāhārpur is depicted a male¹⁵¹ who is standing quite erect between two plantain trees and holding a water pot (*kamaṇḍalu*) in the left hand, which hangs down, and a rosary (*akṣamālā*) in the right that is raised up. He wears a ' *jaṭāmukuṭa*,' very artistically arranged, and no ornaments at all; a prominent crescent (*ardhacandra, indukalā*) mark appears over the crown of matted locks. The only god wearing a crescent on the head is the god Śiva and on this ground only R. D. Banerji described the image as 'Śiva conceived as *Somanātha*, the lord of the moon'^{151a} and K. N. Dikshit too described it as that of *Śiva-Candraśekhara*.¹⁵² However, S. K. Saraswati pointed out the absence of two of Śiva's invariable cognizance such as the *ūrdhvaliṅga* ('penis erectus') and the third eye vertically placed on his forehead. He referred to a *dhyāna* in the *Agni Purāṇa*¹⁵³ and correctly identified the image as that of *Candra* (moon-god), the second planet.¹⁵⁴

Next to the image of Candra at Pāhārpur, there is another sculpture¹⁵⁵ on the western wall. It represents a slightly pot-bellied, two-armed, male figure standing erect on a plain *triratha* pedestal with a kneeling devotee with folded hands to his right, wearing a ' *jaṭāmukuṭa* ' and the dress of a Brāhmaṇical sage. He has two hands; in the left, raised to shoulders, he holds a manuscript (*pustaka*) and the right, disposed in *varada*, exhibits a rosary (*akṣamālā*). His hair is carefully arranged upward with a knot in the middle. He wears a scarf or a skin, tied to the waist by string girdle, and an *uttarīya* is seen covering a part of the body. No ornaments bedeck his person. A devotee kneels on the right in *añjali*. Two trees, perhaps plantain trees, appear on two sides in the

background and an arch with the facade decorated with lotus rosettes is seen above his head.

Both R. D. Banerji¹⁵⁶ and K. N. Dikshit¹⁵⁷ described it as a representation of the god Brahmā. It seems that the manuscript and the rosary as attributes were responsible for such description. It was S. K. Saraswati again who, in the absence of additional faces and hands, did not agree to such identification and perhaps correctly identified it as the *Bṛhaspati*, one of the planets, after comparing it with his characterization in the '*Viṣṇudharmottara*'. The text (111,69.3) lays down that '*Bṛhaspati*, the preceptor of the gods, should be made of a complexion like that of molten gold and two-armed, a manuscript and a rosary being placed in his two hands' (*..dvibhujāśca Bṛhaspatiḥ pustakamecakṣamālāñca karayostasya karayet //*). This description, however, does not tally with the '*Agni Purāṇa*' account of *Bṛhaspati*.

A fragmented black stone icon (100 x 59 cms.) from Kandan (Malda District) and now in the Malda Museum¹⁵⁸ shows a male figure (Pl. 26b) standing on lotus pedestal in a slight *ābhāṅga* posture. The slightly bent proper left leg comes a bit forward, while the proper left leg kept behind goes up until it meets the beautiful bend near the waist. The proper left hand clings to the waist and carries a *kamaṇḍalu*. Just above the elbow, we find a *keyūra* or armband. The proper right hand is bent at the elbow with the open palm facing the devotee and a rosary is placed between the palm and the thumb. The figure wears a fine cloth, which covers the region between the knees and the waist. The torso also carries shallow indented lines starting from the proper right and going upwards to the left suggesting *uttariya*. The waistband of the figure carries floral decorations with a full-blown flower at the centre.

On two sides of the standing figure, we come across pairs of plantain trees. The back-slab of this fragmented figure shows a lotus petal rim and rows of pearl decorations. It is interesting to note that the pedestal of this sculpture shows two full-blown lotuses on two sides, lotus stalks and foliage all in shallow engraved lines. Iconographically, this figure would be identified as that of *Bṛhaspati*. The figure is broken above. On the grounds of modeling and general appearance, this piece seems to be a product of second half of 11th century.

VI

Images of Revanta¹⁵⁹

Revanta is one of the sons of Sūrya, some of the others being Yama, the twin Aśvins, Vaivasvata Manu, Sāvarṇi Manu and Śaṇi. According to the Purāṇas, he is the principal son of the Sun god. It appears that people preferred to worship mostly Revanta, the son begotten on Saṁjñā and therefore, he is found depicted more by the sculptors than others are.

The chapter on *Pratimā-lakṣaṇa* in *Bṛhat-saṁhitā* lays down that 'Revanta riding on horse back is (shown) engaged with his companions in the sport of hunting' (*'revanto śvārudha mṛgayākṛdādi parivārah'*).^{159a} The *Viṣṇudharmottara* description is more meager which states that 'the Lord Revanta should be like Sūrya, (and) on the back of a horse' (*'pṛṣṭhe śce Sūryavatkāryo revantaśca tathā prabhuḥ'*).¹⁶⁰

The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* and the *Kālikā Purāṇa* throw some more light on this deity. According to the former, Revanta delivers people from the natural calamities like the terrors of forests, great conflagrations, apprehended invasion or loot by enemies and robbers and bestows upon his worshippers welfare, riches, happiness, kingdom, health,

fame and advancement.¹⁶¹ *Kālikā Purāṇa*¹⁶² lays down that the image of Revanta should be placed on a white horse with his hair tied up by a cloth. The deity should be dressed in a coat of mail and should carry a sword in his right hand and a whip in the left. It also recommends his worship by kings and says that he should be worshipped in either an image, or a water-vessel, at the gates according to the rites of Sun worship (Ch.V. 49). The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* says, “*Revanto nāma yo-rkaṣya rupenarkasamaḥ sutah*”.¹⁶³ Images of Revanta were previously taken as *Kalki*.¹⁶⁴ It was B. B. Bidyavinod who for the first time made his correct identification. N. K. Bhattashali, N. N. Sanyal and J. N. Banerjea further elaborated on the iconography of him.¹⁶⁵

The worship of Revanta seems to have been much in vogue in eastern India. Raghunandana quotes a passage from the ‘*Kalpataru*’, which took it from the ‘*Brahma Purāṇa*’, and records the worship of Revanta with pomp and ceremony.¹⁶⁶ A few images of this god have been discovered in Bengal. These images largely agree among themselves. The equestrian deity is invariably two-armed and always surrounded by attendants one of whom holds a parasol over the head of the god. The horse is caparisoned and the legs, armour and ornaments of Revanta are exactly like those of his father. It appears from the better-preserved specimens that the sculptors had different aspects of the god to emphasize upon and the extant images may at least be divided into two types.

As many as nine images representing Revanta have been found in different parts of Bengal. From among these nine images, four are from *Puṇḍravardhana* (three from Dinajpur and one from Malda) and one each from *Rādhā* (Birbhum), *Vaṅga* (

Vajrayogini, Dacca), *Samataṭa* (Baḍkāmṭa, Comilla) and *Candradvīpa* (Chancharipasa, Bakarganj: Pl. 26a).

The earliest sculpture of Revanta in Bengal, dated to the 9th century A.D. and made of gray sandstone, has been found from Shadea, Dinajpur that once formed a part of ancient *Varendra*. The example¹⁶⁷ agrees in essentials with the Itahar (Dinajpur) image of Revanta detailed below. However, all the accompanying figures except that of the umbrella-bearer are absent. The second image¹⁶⁸ of Revanta (Pl. 25a) belonging to the 10th cent. A.D. comes from Sonapur, Itahar of the same Dinajpur District. In this relief, Revanta is represented on a richly caparisoned horse. In his right hand, he holds against the chest a drinking-vessel (*pān-pātra*) and the reins (*raśmi*) of the horse in the left. The deity wears a *dhoti* as well as ornaments: his right leg is encased in a high boot while the left is invisible. Under his right leg, a dog is seen running along with the horse that tramples on a boar with the left foreleg. Over his head is a high umbrella held by an attendant from behind, which thus indicates his royal rank. There are also four other attendants, three of them armed, and the fourth holding a cloth bag with his hand dipped into it. In the rounded base there is, between two trees, a frieze of three dancing musicians, a female dancer with her right hand in the *abhayamudrā*, an archer and a boar. The scene obviously depicts a royal hunting (*mṛgayā*) with usual revelries.

The third icon¹⁶⁹ of Revanta (Pl. 25b) carved in black basalt again comes from another area (Ghatnagar) of the Dinajpur District. This 11th century A.D. sculpture presents him in a very interesting manner. On a double lotus, the booted god rides on horseback with his feet in the stirrups, a whip (*kaṣā*) in his right hand, reins of the horse in his left and a parasol held up by an assistant over his head. A broad-headed sword

hangs on his right. The deity is apparently in the midst of two robbers ready to attack him. In front of the god, stands the first robber who has seized the horse by the head and is flourishing a dagger in his right hand. Behind him and his mount is a tree on which is the other robber with a dagger in hand. Just above the head of the horse is represented a dwelling cottage and a couple seated inside. The pedestal shows a seated woman cutting a fish with a fish knife (*banṭi*) and behind her is a man with a sword and a shield approaching as if to lay hands on her. In the base are also the figures of a woman in *atibhaṅga* standing on a lotus with an indistinct object in her hand and a kneeling worshipper. Thus, the figure of Revanta in this composition closely conforms to his description in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (85.46-49), but the surrounding scene differs from the Bihar images, which seem to follow the *Bṛhat-saṁhitā*. The depiction of the peaceful domestic scene as well as perils of life on the same slab was, perhaps, an attempt to delineate the power of the god who, according to the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, looks over the safety of his worshippers from the menace of thieves and robbers. Incidentally, it may be noted that the motif of a woman cutting a fish also occurs in the pedestal of the *Hārīti* image housed in the Bangladesh National Museum. In view of this, the above-mentioned female standing in *atibhaṅga* seems to be the representation of *Hārīti*, wife of *Kubera* whose attendants are the *Guhyakas*. The confusion about the kingship over the *Guhyakas* between *Kubera* and Revanta or the urge for prayer to the mother-goddess *Hārīti* who is the patroness as well as the stealer of children, for protection of offspring against danger, might have contributed to such representation.

A black stone idol of the divinity¹⁷⁰ datable to the 10th -11th century A.D. has been recovered from *Badkāmṭā* (ancient *Karmānta*) in the present Comilla district

(Bangladesh). It represents the hunting episode with more realistic details. To the left of the equestrian booted deity, (seen underneath the belly of the horse) an archer, beside who stands a dog, has shot an arrow that has struck a boar fleeing ahead. Another smaller boar is represented in front of the wounded one. Below Revanta is a man with a sword in his right hand. To his left stands a woman, perhaps his wife, with a frolicsome child at her feet. In the front panel are seven women bearing flowers and fruits, and water in a pitcher. Below them, stand four male attendants. two of them with swords in their hands, the third a club, and the fourth a hawk. The presence of so many men, women and children with *naivedyas* indicates Revanta's role as the protector of people from the terror or natural calamities that involved nearly all sections of the society.

The artists of the Pāla period followed the north Indian tradition in making the images of Revanta in Bihar^{170a} and Bengal. However, they did not show the god flanked by Daṇḍī and Piṅgala and/or with the *Navagrahas* at the top as found in the early medieval Revanta icons of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Even the artists of Bihar and those of Bengal did not always agree with one another about the details of representation. Contrary to the Revanta images from Bihar that face to the proper right,¹⁷¹ all the Bengal images face to the proper left. Bihar's stray depictions of a few things such as a lotus in the left hand of the god, *cāmara* and *kalasa* in the umbrella-bearer's hands and pouring of wine by a female attendant into the cup held by the god¹⁷² are not found in any of the Revanta-images from Bengal. Bengal's uniqueness also lies in representing the god as the protector of his worshippers from the dangers of the thieves and robbers as illustrated in the Ghatnagar image, which happens to be the only sculpture in the whole of India with such a distinctive feature. Frequent danger of armed robbery

faced by the people with enormous riches most probably gave impetus for such a representation as laid down in the *Skanda Purāṇa*.¹⁷³

Constant representation of the wild boar as a game in the image of Revanta engaged in the sport of hunting is quite significant.¹⁷⁴ For an equestrian offspring of the mighty Sun god, it would have been natural to go for big game hunting like lion, tiger, etc. Besides, hunting a wild pig was neither theologically sanctified nor would it be in consonance with the concept of *mṛgayā*. On the contrary, a boar symbolism could have been fruitfully appropriated to highlight the boar incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. Revanta, therefore, appears to have been addressed to the protection and well-being of his devotees, has had a social statement uttered through the particular animal symbolism. The pig itself is value-neutral except that it is a species of a quadruped genus, but the 'import' as a symbol hints at the particular layer of the social strata, which is subsisting on cultivation and hence craves the indulgence of a protective deity to save the means of subsistence from predators.

VI

Attendants of Sun god

Besides Revanta, images of the attendants of Sūrya have also come to be known. However, it is not certain whether they were meant for the purpose of worship.

Piṅgala:

One bronze image¹⁷⁵ of Piṅgala (Pl. 27a) belonging to the 12th Century A.D. is found in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi. The bearded and pot-bellied figure stands in *tribhaṅga* on a double lotus. He holds a pen in its right hand and an inkpot in

the left. The figure is clad in a *dhoti*, which is secured around the waist by a cloth band. It also wears an *upavīta* and *uttarīya*. His legs are encased in high boots and a scarf is thrown over the two arms. The hair is piled high at the back of the head and secured by a jeweled band decorated with five upright plaques. The ornaments consist of a pair of round earrings, *keyūras* and bangles.

Daṇḍī:

An image¹⁷⁶ of Daṇḍī (Pl. 27b) made of bronze and belonging to the 12th century A.D. is also housed in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi. The figure stands in *tribhaṅga* on a double lotus with the palm of right hand bent inwards and supported against the chest by means of a strut. The left hand holds a sword with its point raised upwards. The figure is clad in a *dhoti*, which is secured round the waist by a jeweled band. He wears round earrings, armlets, bangles, a tall crown and a headband. The legs are encased in high boots.

Thus, the solar iconography of early Bengal largely confirms the literary traditions of the solar cult as represented in the Vedic, the Epic and the Purāṇic records and other Indian texts. Interestingly, no punch-marked nor cast-coins showing Sun-disc on a pedestal have yet been discovered in Bengal. It appears that the iconic representation of Sūrya in ancient Vaṅga preceded its worship in symbolic form as was in vogue in different parts of India. The anthropomorphic representation of the Sun god even in the pre-Gupta period have been visualized in three forms: a celestial winged bird *Garutmān*, a god riding a chariot drawn by horses and the god in tunic and boots under the Magian impact. The concept of Sūrya pillar was probably known to Bengali artists in

the 3rd/ 4th century A.D. In the innovatory process, later Sun-images show slow but steady removal of the northerner's dress with the waist-girdle and the booted feet being retained in all the cases. However, bare-footed Sūrya was also not unknown. The next stage in the evolution of solar icons was greater amplification and embellishment of the Sun-figure and the depiction of more of his attendants. Neither in the pre-Gupta nor in the Gupta period was Sūrya ever seen as an accessory figure. During the last two or three centuries of the so-called Hindu rule, Sūrya was not only represented as combining with other gods but also shown as an accompanying figure of the major cult-gods.

Notes and References

1. *JISOA*, XVI, p. 51.
2. *Coins of Ancient India*, (Rep.), Varanasi, 1963, p. 43.
3. Allan, J., '*Coins of Ancient India*'; cf. some indigenous coins of Taxila.
4. *JISOA*, XVI, p. 53.
5. *CBI*, p. 41.
6. The image from Bankura is now housed in Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Parishad, Biṣṇupur (Bankura).
7. The stone Sūrya image from Gaṅgāsāgar of 24-Parganas. at the Museum of Art. Philadelphia; No.27.9.1; St. Kramarisch, *Indian Sculptures in the Philadelphia Museum of Art*, pp. 90-91. pls. 24, 25
8. The sculpture from Nahapara, (Dhaka) BNM No. 62 shows the god with *karaṇḍamukuṭa*, as laid down by *Amsūmadbhedāgama* and *Suprabhedāgama*.
9. Malda Mus. Cat. RSR 15, 16, 27.

10. Terracotta, Bogra, MHM no.1138; terracotta, Chandraketugarh, AMC no. T6836; stone, Tithi (Dinajpur), AMC no. 168 and stone, Bengal, in AMC.
11. In the *Bhaviṣa Purāṇa*, he is called *Agni* (*IBBS*, p. 164) and in the *Mat. P.*, (VI), *Dhātā* (261.6a).
12. *IBBS*, p.151.
13. *EHI*, 1(2), p. 313; *DHI*, p. 432, 436 etc; *HB-I*, p. 457; *ESB*, P. 25.
14. East Bengal, BNM no. 79; Rampal (Dhaka), BNM no.68.65; Kulkudi (Faridpur), BNM no. 60.
15. Black stone image from Tithi (Dinajpur); AMC no. 168.
16. *VRS-AR*, 1929-30, p. 10.
17. *IBBS*, pp. 169, 171, 172.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Quoted by N.N. Vasu. *The Archeological Survey of Mayurabhanja*, vol. I. Mayurabhanja State, 1911; *EHI*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 302.
20. *MASI*, no. 55, plates LVII. a, b.
21. Sūrya images from Vikrampur (Dhaka) BNM Nos. 61 and 66.31 and from Daharpara (Faridpur), BSP No.429; *BSP- Cat.*, pp.76-77, pl. XVII.
22. *IA*, 1925, p. 170.
23. The terracotta Sūrya image from Chandraketugarh (24-Parganasas), AMC No. T6838; *IA-Rev.* 1955-56, p. 62, pl. LXXII-b; *Lalit Kalā*, No.6, 1959, p. 46; *Modern Review*, 1956.
24. The stone Sūrya image from Satagovindapur (Dinajpur), BNM No.70.558; *BSHI*, p. 188, pl. 160.

25. *JISOA*, pp. 74-75.
26. *JUPHS.*, 1958, Vol. VI, part II, p. 49.
27. *DHI*, p. 437.
28. *JRAS*, 1917, p. 599.
29. MacDonnell, A.A., 'The development of early Hindu Icons', *JRAS*, 1917, P. 599.
30. *JRAS*, 1918, p. 523.
31. III, 67. 9b.
32. Basu, Sakti Kali, *Development of Iconography in Pre-Gupta Vaṅga*, Calcutta, 2004, p.74, fig. 20.
33. *RV*, 1.164.46.
34. Coomaraswami, A.K.. *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*. Boston. 1927. pl. V. no. 16; Agarwala, V. S., *Studies in Indian Art*. Varanasi, 1965, pls. IX, X & XI; Biswas, S.S., *Terracotta Art of Bengal*, Delhi. 1981, p.79, pl. (a).
35. Coomaraswami, *op. cit.*, pl. XII. no. 41, pl. XVI, no. 55.
36. AMC No. T6838: *Indian Archaeology - A Review*, 1955- 56 pl. LXXIIb; *Modern Review*, April, 1956; P.C. Dasgupta, 'Early Terracotta from Candraketugarh', *Lalitkalā* No.6 Oct. 1959, pp. 45-52; Basu. *op. cit.* p. 80.
37. *RV*, 1.115, 3; 7.60.3; 7.63.2.
38. Coomaraswami. *op. cit.*, p.67. fig. 103.
39. *Ibid*, p. 67, fig. 24.
40. *ASIAR*, III, p. 97.
41. *RV*, I.115.3; X.37.3, 49.7; V.29.5, V.45.9; IV.13.3.
42. Quoted by Cumont, F., *The Mysteries of Mithra*, New York. 1956, p. 2.

43. *DHI*, pp. 256-59.
44. *KKBI*, pp. 45-46, Sl. No. 8; Basu, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
45. *KKBI*, p. 57. Sl. 51, pl. XLII. Fig.63; Basu, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
46. *KKBI*, pp. 55-56, Sl. N0. 39, pl. XXXIII, fig. 37A; Basu, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
47. Gupta, S. M., *Sūrya, the Sun God*, Calcutta, pl. 26.
48. *KKBI*, pp. 45, Sl. No. 8, pl. XIX, fig. 8A; Basu, *op., cit.*, p. 87.
49. Basu, *op. cit.*, p. 88, fig. 23.
50. *JISOA*, XVI, p. 68.
51. *SVRM*, p.236, pl.232.; *ESB*, p. 12; *AEI*, pp. 11,21,61,97, pl. 13; *DHI*, p. 435; *HB-I*, pp. 521-22.
52. *AR.-VRS.* 1934-35. p.13. fig. 1; *SVRM*, p. 254, pl. 243; *HB-I*, pp. 521-22; *DHI*, p.435; *ESB*, P.12, fig. 1; *AEI*, pp. 11, 21. pl. 14.
53. J. N. Banerjea wrongly stated the Niyamatpur image to be with bare feet. The high boots reaching just god below the knees are very clear. Cf. *HB-I*, p. 456.
54. *ESB*, pp. 12-13; *HB-I*, p. 521.
55. *DHI*, p. 435; *HB-I*, p. 456.
56. *ESB*, p. 13.
57. *BSIII*, p. 186-187.
58. Sircar. D. C., *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I. University of Calcutta, 1942, p. 372.
59. *MRSCB*, p. 275, Pl. V. Fig. 2.
60. *JISOA*. XVI, p. 62.
61. *ESB*, p.12; *JISOA*, XVI, pp. 80-81; *SWAI-S*, pp. 303-304.
62. *DHI*, pl. XXVIII, fig. 4.

63. *AR-VRS*, 1926-27. pp. 2-3, fig. 1; *ESB*, pp. 21-22, fig- 5; *DHI*, pp. 435.36; *HB-I*, p. 523; *AEI*, pp. 61, 62, 65, 68, pl. 106; *SAB*, pp.61, 63-64, fig. 6; *SVRM*, p. 248-249, pl. 241; *SWAI-S*, p. 303.
64. *EHI*, Vol. I, pt. II, p.313, pl. LXXXVIII, fig. 2.
65. There is a Vedic myth, which tells us that one wheel of the chariot of the Sun god was taken by Indra. Therefore, his chariot is always shown with only one wheel.
66. *ESB*, p. 30.
67. The Bhumārā Sūrya carved inside a *caitya* -window panel of the Śiva temple at Bhumārā has been described by R. D. Banerjee thus: The god is standing and has two hands. There is a plain halo behind his head and he wears a tall cylindrical headdress. In his left hand, he holds a lotus while his right hand is damaged (it must also have held a lotus). The god wears long boots of soft leather and long coat tied at the waist with a sash. He is attended by two men who wear peculiarly long Scythian coats tied with a belt and long boots. They also wear tall pointed conical caps like the Scythians. The figure on the right holds a lance or spear in his right hand while that on the left holds a lotus. The horses of the Sun god either seven or four in number are absent). M.A.S.I., No. 16, The temple of Śiva at Bhumārā , p.13. pl. XIVa: *JISOA*, p. 62.
68. *JISOA*, XVI, p. 80.
69. *ESB*, p. 22.
70. *DHI*, p. 436; *ESB*, p. 30.
71. *DHI*, pp. 22, 436.
72. *ESB*, p. 30; *JISOA*, p. 81; *IBBS*, p.172.

73. *IBBS*, p. 172.
74. *ESB*, pp. 31-32.
75. *HB-I*, pl. XXX. fig. 76, LXVIII. fig. 166 etc; Banerji, R.D., *Eastern School of Mediaeval Sculpture*; French, J.C., *Art of the Pāla Empire of Bengal*.
76. *BSHI*, pp. 188-189, pl. 161.
77. *JISOA*, XVI, p. 76.
78. Dikshit, K.N., *Excavations at Pāhārpur*, Delhi, 1938, p. 60.
79. Dasgupta, Subrata Kumar, 'History of the Sūrya Image in Bengal, *Folklore*, December 1967, p. 424.
80. *HB-I*, p.457; *JISOA*, pp. 81-82; St. Kramrisch, *Rūpam*, Vol. 40.
81. *JISOA*, XVI, p. 82.
82. *Ibid.*
83. *Vāngīya Sāhitya Pariṣad Catalogue*. 76-77, Pl. XVII; *HB-I*, p. 457.
84. *IBBS*, pp.169-170, pl. I.XVIII; *BSHI*, pp.185-186.
85. *SWAI-P*, p. 100.
86. Malda Museum Nos. RSR-15. 16. 27; Bhattacharya. Malay Sankar. *Art in Stone: A Catalogue of Sculptures in Malda Museum*. Malda. 1982. pp. 18-20.
87. *SWAI-P*, p. 104.
88. Bhattacharya, M. S., *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
89. VRM no. 734; *AR-VRS*, 1927-28, p. 3, fig. 3; *SVRM*, p.250, pl.242; *BSHI*, p.193.
90. Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, p. 350.
91. *EHI*, Vol. I, pt. II, p. 310.
92. Quoted by Rao, *EHI*, pp. 310-11.

93. (1) Vikrampur (Dhaka) BNM, *IBBS*, pp.170, 3A (iii) a/2; (2) Vikrampur (Dhaka) BNM no.75, *IBBS*, pp.170-71, 3A (iii)a/4; (3); Nahapara (Dhaka), BNM No. 80, *IBBS*, p. 170, 3A (iii)a/3; (4) Ārial (near Nahapara), *IBBS*, p. 170; (5) Rajair (Faridpur), BNM no.77; *IBBS*, p.173.3, pl. LXI.a; (6) East Bengal, BNM, *BSHI*, p.363; (7) East Bengal, BNM, *BSHI*, p.363; (8) East Bengal, BNM, *BSHI*, p.363; (9) Pakilara (Comilla); B.C. Law Volume II, pp. 219, 231, pl. XIXb; (10) Comilla dist., *IBBS*, p.173, No. 4; (11) Kulkudi (Faridpur), BNM No. 60, Bhattashali, N. K., *EI*, Vol. XXVII, 1947-48, p. 25, plate opposite p. 25; *HB-I*, pl. LXX, 169; *BSHI* 190, pl. 165.
94. Ramachandran, T. N, 'Recent Archaeological Discoveries along the Maināmatī and Lalmai Ranges, Tippera District. East Bengal', *B.C. Law Volume*. Part II. Poona. 1946. p. 219.
95. Bhattashali, N. K., *EI*, Vol. XXVII. 1947-48, p. 25, plate opposite p. 25; *HB-I*, pl. LXX, 169; *BSHI*, p. 190, pl. 165.
96. Ramachandran. *op. cit.*, p. 219.
97. *BSHI*, p. 190.
98. *BSHI*, p. 190.
99. *IBBS*, p. 173.
100. In the Sūrya image (2nd/1st cent. B.C.) from Bhājā the god is found escorted by figures on horseback, both male and female, one of which is provided with some kind of stirrups. *JISOA*, XVI, p. 54.
101. *BSHI*, p. 190.
102. *IBBS*, p. 170, 3A (iii) a/2.

103. The earliest representation of an umbrella spread is found over the nimbus behind the Bodh-Gayā Sūrya image of first cent. B.C., *JISOA*, XVI, p.53.
104. Bhattashali, N.K. (Ed.), *EI*. Vol. 27 1947-48, pp. 25-26. The alternative translation of the first line would be “(This is the image of) of the Sun god, caused to be made by the illustrious Lakṣmīdīna. Sircar, D.C., *Bhāratavarṣa*, Chaitra, 1348 B.S., p. 397.
105. *ASIAR*, 1930-34, p. 37.
106. *BSHI*, p.189; Stone, Nanigram (Hooghly). AMC No.31; Stone, Amanpur (Midnapore); Stone, Siddha (Midnapore); Stone, Dalmi (Purulia), *AMTSI*, II, p.41, pl. 291.
107. IMC No. 8601, A16241; *ASIAR*, 1930-34, pp. 256-57, pl. CXXVIIc; *HB-I*, p. 457, pl. XV, fig. 39; *JISOA*, p. 82-83; *JASB*. XXVIII. 1932, pp. 147-150, pl. 2; *BSHI*, pp. 192- 193, pl. 124) seated (Plate 124).
108. Stone. Bashihari, W. Dinajpur in SAGC: *SBHI*. p. 187, pl. 157.
109. BNM Nos. 61 & 66.31; *BSHI*, p. 189, pl. 162.
110. *Indra. Agni, Yama, Nirriti, Varuṇa, Maruta, Kuvera and Īśa.*
111. *Ananta, Vāsuki, Padma, Mahāpadma, Takṣak, Kulīra, Karkaṭa and Śaṅkha.*
112. *IBBS*, pp.172-173, pl. LX; *BSHI*, p. 191, pl. 167; *ELAP*, pp. 92-94.
113. Mallmann de Mlle, *Les enseignements Iconographiques de L'Agni-Purāṇa*, p. 93; *JISOA*, X, p. 239.
114. Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, vol. I, 1927, p. 536; Monier Williams, W., *Religious Thought and Life in India*. London. 1891, pp. 411-12; Majumdar, R.C. (Ed.), *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, pp. 327-28, *Matsya P.*, I. V.3.5,

Brahma P., 33.11.14, *Kālikā P.*, 74.113, *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, Ch. 109.5; *Agni P.*, Ch. 73 and many later Upa-Purāṇas identify Sūrya, Śiva and other gods. *Kuta Mantm* of Java (Quoted by Biswas, D. K. 'Sūrya and Śiva', *IHQ.*, 1948, vol. 24, p. 142ff) shows this religious syncretism.

115. Nirmand copper plate inscription identifies Śiva with Mihira (Persian Mithra), Fleet, J.F., *CII.*, vol. III, pp. 288-89.
116. *AR-VRS.* 1932-33, pp. 15-16, pl.1, fig.1; *DHI.* p. 550, pl.XLVII.3; *HB-I*, p. 457-58, pl. 1.6; *SAB*, p. 207. Fig. X7; *SVRM.* pp. 269-270, Plate 252; *BSHI.* pp. 193-194, pl. 170; *JASB*, XXVIII, 1932, pp. 190-192.
117. *Pratimā-lakṣaṇa*, pp. 86-87.
118. *HB-I*, p. 458.
119. *South Indian Gods and Goddesses*. Madras. 1916. p. 236; fig. 144.
120. *IA.* 1918. pp. 136 ff.
121. *JASB.* XXVIII. 1932, p. 192.
122. *AR-VRS.* 1929.30. Pp.9-10, pl.2; *DHI.* pp.549-550; *HB-I* p. 458, pl. XVI.40; *SVRM.* p. 269, pl. 251; *BSHI.* pp. 194-195, pl. 171.
- 122a. *Sāradātilaka, Paṭala XIV.41.2.*
123. *DHI.* p. 550.
124. Sarkar, K. C., "A New Form of Sūrya from Varendra". *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. VI, No. 1, March 1930, pp. 465-70 and plate.
125. *DHI.* p. 549. Sivaramamurti refers to an image of this iconic form from Konarak in Orissa. See *JAS* (Letters), XXI, 1955, no.2, p.83, fig.17.
126. *ELAP*, p. 106.

127. At Damoh, Bundelkhand, *IA*, 1918, pp.136-138, plate II; at Chidambaram, Madras, *SII*. P. 236. fig. 144.
128. *Agni P.* 73. 16-17 (*Bibliotheca Indica* Ed.) Vol. I, pp. 210-11.
129. *Ibid.*
130. *Bṛhat-tantrasāra* (Basumati Ed.) p. 147.
- 130a. Bhattacharya, P.K., Indian History Congress, *Proceedings of the Thirty-Eighth Session*, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, 1977, p. 791. For earlier reference also see Mitra, Sarat Candra, 'On the Cult of the Sun god in Medieval Eastern Bengal', *Journal of the Department of Letters*, Vol. XV, 1927, pp. 149-200.
131. Biswas, D. K., *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 26, year 1950, p. 168.
132. 74. 113. (Vaṅgabasi Ed.) p. 475.
133. *SVRM*, pp. 247-248, pl. 240; *VRM* 654; *AR-VRS*, 1925-26, p.9; *BSHI*, p. 193.
134. *DHI*, pp. 547-548, pl. XLVIII.3; Bhattacharyya, Dipak Chandra. *Iconology of Composite Images*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 25, fig. 20; *BSHI*, p.195; Chatterjee. Rama. *Religion in Bengal*, Calcutta. 1985, p.379.
135. *DHI*, pp. 547-548.
136. *HBP*, p. 438.
137. Mitra. Debala, "A Study of some graha-images of India and their possible bearing on the *Navadevatās* of Cambodia". *JASB*, VII, 1965, pp. 13-37.
- 137a. *Ibid*, p. 26.
138. *AMC* no, Am. 119; *VRSAR*, 1928-29, App. p. 6. pl. 5; *HB-I*, p. 459, pl. XVII. 43; *DHI*, pp. 444-445, pl. XXXI. fig.2; *Indian Historical Quarterly*. IX. pp. 202-7; *JISOA*, p. 100.

139. Appendices to the *VRS.-Rep.* 1928-29, p. 6, fig. 5.
140. (i)Nayabazar, VRM no. 323; (ii) Daharol, VRM no. 1474; *VRSAR*, 1932-33, p. 15; (iii) SAGC no. S. 232; *JASB*, VII, 1965, p. 14; (iv) SAGC no. S.224; *JASB*, VII, 1965, p. 14; (v) at Sarala; (vi) Bāngadh, SAGC, no. S. 34: *JASB*, VII, 1965. pp. 20-21, pl. X, fig. 10; (vii) at Khamrua.
141. (i) Manda, VRM no. 1580; *VRSAR*, 1936-38, p. 23; (ii) SVRM, VRM no. 2682. Here Gaṇeśa is four-armed, with axe and *aṅkuśa* in the upper hands and a *bijapuraka* and a bowl of sweets in the lower right hand and lower left hand respectively. (iii) A K M M no. 7/p.7.
142. Madnabati, AKMM no. 8/p. ARI.
143. Mallarpur, SAGC, no. S. 167; *JASB*, VII. 1965, p. 22, pl. XII, fig. 12.
144. AMC no. T. 7271; *IA-Rev.* 1960-61, p. 70; *JASB* VII. 1965, p. 21, pl. XI. 11.
145. *BSHI*, p.198, Plate 176.
146. Kushmandi, W. Dinajpur, SAGC no. S. 58; *JASB*, VII, 1965, p. 14.
147. *BSHI*, p. 199, pl. 177. The panels are: (i) Balurghat (West Dinajpur), 11th cent. A.D., VRM no. 50; SVRM, p.271, pl. 255; (ii) Gaur (Malda), IMC no. Gr. 13: *Anderson-Cat.* II, p. 261; *JASB*, VII, 1965, p. 15, Plate II, fig. 2; (iii) Talanda (Nadia), AMC no. T. 3683; *JASB*, VII, 1965, pp. 16-17, plate IV, 4; (iv) Malda. Malda Mus. Cat., p.12.
- 148 (i) Dinajpur Dist., BNM No. 70.1349; (ii) W. Dinajpur Dist. SAGC no. S. 225; *JASB*, VII, 1965, p. 22, pl. XII, fig. 13.
149. *DHI*, plate XXXI.1.
150. Bengal, SAGC no. S. 213/214; *JASB* VII, 1965, pp. 17-18, pl. VI. 6.

151. No. 60; *MASI*, No. 55 (Pāhārpur), pp. 53-54, pl. XXXb; *ESB*, pp. 66-67, pl. IX. fig. 24; *ASIAR*, 1925-26, p.111; *HB-I*, p. 459, pl. LVI, 138; *JISOA*, pp. 97-98; *BSHI*, p. 200.
- 151a. *ASIAR*, 1925-26, p. 111.
152. *MASI*, no. 55 (Pāhārpur), p. 54.
153. 'kuṇḍīkājapyamālīnduh' (Candra should have a 'kuṇḍīkā' (water vessel) and a 'japyamālā' (a rosary of beads), 51.10-12.
154. *ESB*, pp. 66-67.
155. No. 61; *MASI* No.55 ('Pāhārpur'). p. 54, pl. XXXd; *ESB*, pp. 65-66, pl. IX. fig. 23; *HB-I*, p. 459, pl. LVI. 139.
156. *ASIAR*, 1925-26. p. 69. 111.
157. *MASI*, no. 55 ('Pāhārpur'), p. 54, pl. XXXc.
158. *Malda Mus. Cat.*, p. 8, No. RBR-1: *MRSCB*, p. 287.
159. Sarkar, Bijoy Kumar, 'The Worship of Revanta in Bengal'. *Proceedings of the Indiana History Congress*, 64th Session. Mysore University, 2003. pp. 286-294.
- 159a. Ch. 57, V. 56.
160. Bk. III, Ch. 70, V. 53.
161. *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Chap. 108, verses 11, 19-22 (Bib. Ind. Edition).
162. 85, 46-49.
163. 6.79, 78.6.
164. *JASB*, 1909, pp. 391-392.
165. *IBBS*, pp. 174-177; *Indian Historical Quarterly*, III, pp. 469-472; *JISOA*, XVI, pp. 91-93; *DHI*, pp. 442-443.

166. 'Pujyah sāvaiśca Revanto yathāvibhavavistaraiḥ', 'Tithitattva', p. 690.
167. *SVRM*, p. 268, VRM No.1532.
168. *Ibid*, pp. 267-268; VRM No.1531.
169. *Ibid*, p.267; Sanyal, Nirad Bandhu, "A New type of Revanta from the Dinajpur District", *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1927 pp. 469-72 and plate facing p. 469.
170. *IBBS*, p.175; *BShI*, p.196.
- 170a. Sarkar, Bijoy Kumar, 'Bihāre Revanta Pūjā' (in Bengali), *Itihas Anusandhan 19* (Collection of Essays presented at the 20th Annual Conference of Paśchim Baṅga Itihās Saṁsad held at New Alipore College Kolkata, 24-25 January 2004, pp. 131-140.
171. *JASB*, 1909, p. 392, pl. XXX.
172. Sharma, B.N., *Iconography of Revanta*, New Delhi, 1975, pp. 54-57.
173. 44. 1.11.217-18). 1.11.217-18.
174. Incidentally, it is also worth mentioning that Revanta was a favourite god of the Gonds, a tribal clan of Madhya Pradesh, who were fond of hunting animals and eating their flesh (Sharma, B.N., *op .cit.*, pp. 58-59). The overall form of the Revanta images suggests that he was a folk deity of hunting communities and was connected with popular life, but later he was accepted into Brāhmaṇism, bound in blood relationship with the equestrian Sūrya (Ray, Nihar Ranjan, *Bāṅgālir Itihās* (in Bengali), First edition, p. 627). He does not seem to have had that popularity in the orthodox Brahminical circle, and belonged to the folk religion, his cult being an adjunct of Sun worship (*HB-I*, p. 409).

175. *SVRM*, p. 270, pl. 253; VRM No. 167.

176. *SVRM*, p. 270, pl. 254; VRM No. 168.