

Images of Sūrya's Consort And Her Worship

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Almost all the major Brahmāṇical gods are worshipped along with their consorts throughout the country, viz. Śiva with Pārvatī or Umā, Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī, Brahmā with Brahmāṇī or Sāvitrī, etc. This fact is frequently found mentioned in Purāṇas. Their images are also differently prescribed to be made in canonical treatises and so they are represented in art. Not only this, but even these consorts of the gods, better known as *devīs* or *śaktis*, are also popularly worshipped separately and independently; collectively (as Saptāmatṣkās) as well as individually. The *śilpa* texts also prescribe the making of their separate images. It is corroborated with a large number of their images and temples dedicated to them in every nook and corner of our country. But surprisingly, the consort of Sūrya does not enjoy this honour. Her independent worship is seldom mentioned in literature and so is the case of her independent images. Neither canonical treatises prescribe her separate images to be made nor Indian art represent her.

The probable reason, we think, is due to more than one names and consorts of Sūrya mentioned in literature. In different works, the number of the wife of Sūrya is differently given, such as - **One** (*Rgveda*, X.17.1-2-Dyau or Śaraṇyu, the double of whom was Savarṇā; *Harivamśapurāṇa*, 1.9.1-2 - Saṁjñā well known as Sureṇu and the double of Saṁjñā was Savarṇā; *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, III.2.2-7 - Saṁjñā, the shadows of her Chāyā and Aśvinī; *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*; 103-104 - Saṁjñā, the double of her Chāyā; *Vārāhapurāṇa*, XX.2-19 - Saṁjñā her double Savarṇā), **Two** (*Agnipurāṇa*, ch.51 - Rājñī or Saṁjñā and Niṣprabhā or Chāyā; *Sāmbapurāṇa*, ch.10 - Rājñī and Nikṣubhā; *Bhaviṣyapuāṇa*, Brahmā, 79.18, folio 81 - Rājñī, Saṁjñā, Dyau, Tvaṣṭrī and Prabhā for one real consort and Chāyā, Nikṣubhā and Mahīmayī for her duplicates), **Three** (*Matsyapurāṇa*, XI.2 - Saṁjñā, Rājñī and Prabhā - *tasya patnī-trayaṁ tadvat saṁjñā rājñī prabhā tathā*) and **Four** (*Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, III.69 - Rājñī, Nikṣubhā, Chāyā and Suvarcasā; *Caturvarga-cintāmaṇi*, ch.4 - Rājñī, Savarṇā, Chāyā and Suvarcasā).

In sculpture rarely four but mostly two female figures, identified as consorts of Sūrya, one on each side below, are found represented with their lord Sūrya on the same

panel behind Daṇḍa and Piṅgala, the main attendants of the god. These figures of the consorts are quite smaller in size and lower in position like other attendants. Such images are found throughout the country. In these images no specific or individual consort can be identified. However, if these two are accepted as consorts, their representation may be explained in the light of the *Agnipurāṇa* (51.2), which ordains two consorts holding fly-whisk to be made, one each on both flanks of Sūrya. Although Sūrya's real wife was one that is Saṁjñā or Rājñī but because Chāyā had played her role for a long time and produced children as well, her separate identity was accepted both in literature and art.

What to say of an independent image of Sūrya's consort, even her image in couple form (*dampati*) in close embrace has not been reported from anywhere so far, as we find those of Umā-Maheśvara, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā-Brahmāṇī, etc. In these couple images the consorts, at least, enjoy the position of the *śakti* of their lords.

But roughly about thirty to thirty-five years ago we came to know about an inscribed and dated metal image of Rannādevī, identified as Rājñī, the consort of Sūrya at Bombay (now Mumbai) discussed in this paper below. Thence-forth we began to search out other similar images of Sūrya's consort. In 1998 we happened to be in Ahmedabad for a lecture series. There certain books in Gujarati were presented to us. After getting the reference to a couple of stone images of Sūryāṇī in some books we could not refrain ourselves from continuous correspondence in this endeavour. This effort pleasantly resulted in bringing out before us a number of images of Sūryāṇī, some of them having dated inscription on their pedestals and still under worship. All these images of Sūryāṇī and her worship belong to only Gujarat. Still we do not find their presence in other parts of the country,

Here, we discuss the following categories of Sūryāṇī images -

- A. Two flanking consorts on separate panels
- B. Consorts found alone but belonging to the same category
- C. Sūrya with only one consort
- D. Independent Sūryāṇī Figures without Sūrya, seated and standing
- E. Worship of Rannāde or Rājñī

In Gujarat Sūrya's consorts have been represented in different ways as noted above. The media for carving Sūryāṇī images, no doubt, in most of the cases was stone, but wood and metal, brass or bronze, were also used. Three figures, two in stone and one in metal, are carved with the individual name of Rannādevī (Rājñī) whereas on one stone image the word 'Sūryāṇī' is found, which does not appear to be the corrupt form of a name of any

consort of Sūrya mentioned in literature. Therefore, it seems to be a general term derived from her lord Sūrya as Śivānī from Śiva, Vaiṣṇavī from Viṣṇu, Brahmāṇī from Brahmā, Indrāṇī from Indra, etc.

(A) Two Flanking Consorts on Separate Panels

Kherālū, Distt. Mahesana enshrines in a temple the Sun-god and his two consorts on separate panels. The god (99 x 53.5 cm) usually bedecked with high *kirīṭa mukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāra*, *mekhalā* and a long garland reaching below the knees stands in *samapāda sthānaka* posture on the middle panel and holds in both of his hands the full-blown triple-stalked lotus. The tiny figures of Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā shooting an arrow from bow are seen near the waist of the god, who is flanked by Piṅgala and Daṇḍa below on the right and left near his feet followed by a female attendant. Both the consorts (69 x 30.5 cm) on separate panels stand in *tribhaṅga* holding *bījapūraka* or *santānamañjarī* in their hand towards the god and a stalked lotus in the other hand. These consorts are also attended by a tiny maiden on their both flanks (Fig.10.1).¹ According to Hirananda Sastri, then Director of Baroda State Archaeology, there is an inscription on the pedestal of the middle panel of Sūrya which shows that these sculptures were set up in the Vikrama year 1293 (=1236 CE). But the two lines of the inscription quoted by him do not mention any date. The inscription incised on the pedestal of the central image reads -

- (1)दि गुरावद्येह वदारियाग्रामवास्त
- (2) व्य.....केन.....

Nagarā, Distt. Khambhat : The *Nāradīya-māhātmya*, *Śāṅkhādītya-māhātmya* and *Skandapurāṇa* (Kumārikā khaṇḍa) refer to a well known Jayāditya Sun-temple at Nagaraka village, which is identified with the modern Nagarā village, about 3 km to north of Khambhat. The present Nankaḍā Śivālaya of the village contains two images of the Sun-god and three of his consorts. One image of Sūrya and the two flanking images of his consorts Rannādevī are in the *garbhagṛha* and the other two images are placed against the southern wall. The huge figure of Sūrya (183 cm high), bedecked with high crown, *śrīvatsa* mark on the chest, waistband, long garland, round foot-ornament and boots, holds full-blown lotuses by their triple stalks, which is a typical decorative element in Gujarat. Flanking his feet stand the two Aśvinīkumāras, the heavenly physicians, one on each side. Below the feet of the god there are seven horse-heads symbolizing his chariot. The figure of the Sun-god is rather unusually elongated (Fig.10.2).

The two consorts of the god (150 cm) carved out separately, holding a stalked lotus in the upraised hand towards the god and in the other hand the *bījapūraka* or *santānamañjarī*.

Standing in attractive *tribhaṅga* contour towards the god both goddesses are normally bedecked including the long garland reaching to their ankles and large halo (*padmaprabhāmaṇḍala*). Both these *devīs* are attended by a maid on their both flanks near the feet. Anatomically their carving is better than that of the Sun-god.

The *triratha* or three-fold pedestals of these consorts have five-line inscription in Sanskrit dated V.S. 1292 (=1235 CE) narrating that during V.S. 1290 (=1233 CE) the old Jayādityadeva temple and both the images of Rannādevī were destroyed due to decay and incessant heavy rains (*ati-varṣākālavaśāt-ati purāṇatayā viniṣṭāyāṁ śrī rannādevī mūrtau*), which in V.S. 1292, were caused to be carved and installed by Mahāmātya Vāstūpāla for the propitious glory of his family members. The total inscriptions in original *Devanāgarī* are as under :

(1)

श्रीसंवत् १२९२ वर्षे आषाढ सुदि ७ रवौ श्रीनारदमुनिविनिवासित श्रीनगरकमहास्थाने संवत् ९० वर्षीय अतिवर्षाकालवशादतिपुराणतयाच आकस्मिक श्रीजयादित्यदेवमहाप्रासादपतनविनिष्टायां श्रीरन्नादेवी मूर्ती पश्चात् श्रीमत्पत्तन वास्तव्य प्राग्वाट् ठ० चंदपा(मा)त्मज ठ० चंडप्रसादांगज ठ० श्रीसोमतनुज ठ० आशाराजनंदनेन ठ० कुमारदेवी कुक्षिसंभूतेन महात्म्य श्रीवस्तुपालेन स्वभार्यामहं श्रीसोमपुत्र....भिदेव

श्रीजयादित्यदेवपत्न्या श्रीराजलदेव्या
मूर्तिरियं कारिता शुभमस्तु॥

(2)

श्रीसंवत् १२९२ वर्षे आषाढ सुदि ७ रवौ श्रीनारदमुनिविनिवासित श्रीनगरकमहास्थाने संवत् ९० वर्षीय अतिवर्षाकालवशादतिपुराणतयाच आकस्मिक श्रीजयादित्यदेवमहाप्रासादपतनविनिष्टायां श्रीरन्नादेवी मूर्ती पश्चात् श्रीमत्पत्तन वास्तव्य प्राग्वाट् ठ० चंदपा(मा)त्मज ठ० चंडप्रसादांगज ठ० श्रीसोमतनुज ठ० राजकुक्षिभवा श्रीललितादेवी पुण्यार्थमिति.....दिव्यदेवकीर्तिः श्रीरन्नादेवी-मूर्तिरियं कारिता। शुभमस्तु॥

A pertinent question arises as to why two images of one and the same consort Rannādevī were there? It needs clarification.

(B) Consort found alone but Belonging to Same Category

In Gujarat, we come across a number of single and independent female figures in *dvibhaṅga* or *tribhaṅga sthānaka* posture holding in one hand a long triple-stalked lotus and a *bījapūraka* in the other. Apparently, they are quite similar to those found with the Sun-god just described above. Their attributes, the triple-stalked lotus and *bījapūraka* help them to be identified with the consorts of Sūrya. Brief mention of a couple of such figures seems to be necessary.

The Khambhat College Museum has in its collection two almost identical female figures, both being datable to c.13th century CE. One of them (75 x 22 cm) stands in *tribhaṅga* posture, holds the typical stalked lotus in her left hand and the *santānamañjarī* fruit in her *kaṭi-vinyasta* right hand. Adorned with triple tiered *mukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *keyūras*, *stana-hāra*, multi-stringed *mekhalā*, *ājānulambinī mālā*, the goddess looks very attractive with her large round breasts and countenance (Fig. 10.3).⁴ The one-line inscription of 25 characters on the pedestal could not be read due to being badly ribbed and worn out. But the beginning word 'Sūryāṇī' is very clear.⁵ Thus, this word not only identifies the figure with the consort of Sūrya, but also suggests a name, which is not found in literature. It appears to be a general term for the wife or consort of Sūrya quite similarly as Śivānī, Bhavānī, Vaiṣṇavī, Brahmānī, Indrānī, etc.

The second similar image of Sūryāṇī holds the typical *sanāla padma* in the right hand and the *bījapūraka* in the left. She stands in *dvibhaṅga* to right. She is adorned with a *catuṣka mukuṭa*, large round *kuṇḍalas*, *graiveyaka* or *kaṅṭhā*, *stana-hāra*, multi-stringed *mekhalā*, *keyūra*, *kaṅkaṇa*, *nūpura* and a very long (*ājānulambinī*) *mālā* reaching to her ankles. The back-slab is a pillared panel with its round top decorated with *kapiśīrṣaka*-like *kaṅgūrās* or battlements.⁶ Although the figures and their attributes are similar but the delineation of the back-slabs and long garlands are different from each other. While the back-slab of the previous figure is plain, that of the latter is decorated. The long *mālā* of the previous figure passes through her legs whereas that of the latter passes over both the legs.

The exchanged position of the attributes in their hands and the protruded contours of their waist make them to be once associated with each other as consorts of Sūrya between them. According to J.P. Amin, both these figures found from different places seem to have been once installed in the same temple which is now probably extinct.

Nānī Vaḍāla in Bhavanagar Distt. yields a 10th century sculpture of the consort of Sūrya in two pieces, now housed in the Gandhi Smriti Saṅgrahālaya (previously Watson Museum), Bhavnagar. Standing in *dvibhaṅga* to right she holds the typical lotus in her right hand and the *bījapūraka* in the left. She is tastefully decked with four-tiered crown (*catuṣka mukuṭa*), *keyūra*, *stana-hāra*, *mekhalā* of four strings, *kaṅkaṇa* and *nūpura*. Between her legs the ending part of her waist-band (*kaṭi-vastra*) dangles in serpentine style. Below near her feet sits a maid attendant facing the goddess on either side; the one on the left seems to be in *añjalimudrā* (Fig.10.4).⁷

It seems to be necessary to mention here that a sculpture of Sūrya standing in *samapāda sthānaka* posture and quite similar in art style and size is also in this museum.

He has an unusually small halo around only his crown. He is decked with *kuṇḍala*, *graiveyaka*, *hāra*, *mekhalā*, *keyūra*, *kañkaṇa*, *nūpura*, a very long garland (*pralamba hāra*) and *uttarīya* waving on sides. He holds in his *kati-vinyasta* right hand the typical triple-stalked lotus and in his left what appears to be a *kamaṇḍalu* or water vessel. He is flanked by the two attendants on each flank near his feet (Fig.10.5).⁸

The figures of Sūrya have usually been prescribed to be made with lotuses in both of his hands and that is a characteristic feature of his identification. This figure in the Gandhi Smriti Sangrahālaya has also been identified as Sūrya. Presently, we do not know its provenance, but if this figure of the god also hails from Nānī Vaḍāla, the manner of holding the lotus by both the goddess and the god clubbed with similar modelling of both figures tend us to believe that it is a figure of the Sun-god and both of them, even on separate panels, may have been once associated like images of Kherālu and Nagarā described above.

(C) Sūrya with Single Consort

Pleasantly, we have come across some sculptures of Sūrya with only one consort and that too of his own stature. These examples certainly show the Sun-god in his *dampati* form, which is quite unusual and rare, normally not found everywhere. One each such example in stone, wood and metal is described here.

Maithana village (Distt. Surendranagar) has a *Pañcāyatana* temple group. The central temple, said to belong to c.8th-9th century, enshrines in its *garbhagr̥ha* the single Sūryānī figure along with her lord Sūrya on the same pedestal. Both the god and the goddess stand in *samapāda sthānaka* posture. Sūrya holds in both of his hands the stalked lotus while the goddess holds the stalked lotus in her left hand and the *bījaūraka* or *santānamañjarī* in the right. Both have a long garland reaching below their knees. The body of the goddess in length is almost similar and befitting to her lord. In all, three attendant figures stand near the feet of the deities, one between them and the two on their outer flanks. The modelling and delineation of the sculptures do not confirm them to be carved during 8th-9th century. These are much later.

Mahā-Lakṣmī Temple near Traṇ Darwaza at Pāṭan enshrines the standing images of Sūrya and his consort to his left on separate panels. The attributes in their hands are as usual. It is the only known image of Sūrya couple in wood, which is smeared with oil. According to a legend, these images were brought from Śrīpāla in vs 1202 informs Dr. B.J. Sandesara and K.B. Dave of Pāṭan. This female deity is presently called by worshippers Rānāde or Rannāde.¹⁰

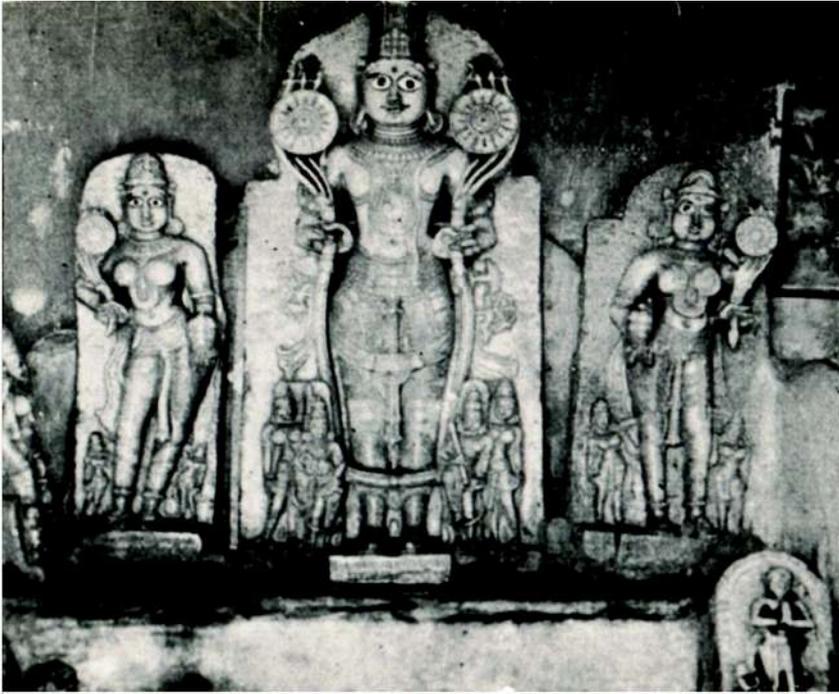


Fig.10.1: Sūrya with two consorts, Kherālū (Mahesana), Gujarat, 13th cent. C.E.



Fig.10.2: Sūrya with two consorts, Nagarā (Khambhat), Gujarat, 13th cent. C.E.



Fig.10.3: Sūryānī, Khambhat College Museum, Gujarat, 13th cent. C.E.



Fig.10.4: Sūryānī, Nānī Vadāl (Bhavanagar), Gujarat, Gandhi Smriti Saṅgrahālaya, 10th cent. C.E.



Fig.10.5: Sūrya, Gandhi Smriti Saṅgrahālaya, Bhavanagar, Gujarat, c. 10th cent. C.E.

The State Museum, Lucknow displays in one of its galleries a beautiful bronze sculpture (acc.no.44.28, 18 x 13 cm) representing Sūrya and his consort, both in a separate frame but on one pedestal. Beneath a pillared conical arch stands the Sun-god in *samapāda sthānaka* posture on a lotus, holds in both hands the full-blown lotus by its triple stalks. He is decked with a high conical crown, *kuṇḍalas*, multi-stringed *mekhalā*, *dhotī*, boots and *pralamba hāra* reaching to his ankles. The mark of *śrīvatsa* is very prominently placed in the middle of his breast. He is flanked by a maid attendant on either side holding a similar lotus in her hand towards the Sun-god and the other placed on her thigh. Within the other frame of the similar pillared arch, which is a bit short in size, stands the goddess in *abhaṅga* posture with the contour towards the god; bedecked with similar head-dressing, large and round *kuṇḍalas*, *stana-hāra*, multi-layered wide *mekhalā*, *keyūra*, *kaṅkaṇa* and *sārī*. The long ends of her *uttariya* are seen coming down on the ground through her arms. She holds the typical stalked lotus in her right hand and a fruit of *bījapūraka* in the left (Fig.10.6)¹¹ Although the provenance of the image is not known, the modelling particularly the faces of the deities and the style and design of the frame display affinity with the figure on another brass image from Gujarat discussed below. As such, in all likelihood this metal sculpture under discussion also seems to belong to Gujarat tradition.

Sūrya-couple in Rajasthan : Quite exceptionally, images of Sūrya and his one consort on separate panel on his left are enshrined in a Sun-temple at Rāṇakapur, Rajasthan (South Mār-wāḍa). Both stand on a *pañcaratha* pedestal against the back-slab with round top. The Sun-god in *samapāda sthānaka* posture holds a triple stalked lotus in both hands. His body is tastefully decorated with the high crown, round *kuṇḍalas*, *kaṅthā*, necklace, *mekhalā* and *pralamba-hāra*. Waving ends of *uttariya* are seen on sides. Below near his feet stand Piṅgala on the right and Daṇḍa on the left, both followed behind by a female figure. All the four attendant figures are shown standing against their separate back-slab with round top. The goddess well decked stands in *tribhaṅga* posture with contour towards the god. She holds a *kalaśa* in her upraised right hand and a *sanāla padma* in the left. Below stands a maid attendant holding a garland with both hands on either side.¹² These solar images seem to be influenced by the adjoining State of Gujarat. But the attribute of *bījapūraka* or *santānamñjarī* is replaced here by the *kalaśa*.

(D) Independent seated and standing Sūryāṇī Sculptures without Sūrya

The Sūrya Temple at Maithāṇa (Distt. Surendranagar), mentioned above, represents two independent Sūryāṇī figures in sitting posture, which have been located in the outer niches (*bhadra gavākṣa*) of the northern and southern walls of the *garbhagrha*.

Seated on the *padma -pīṭha* and bedecked with usual ornaments including long garland the sculpture on the southern wall holds *santānamañjarī* and stalked lotus in her right and left hands. She is attended by hovering Vidyādhara. Both the hands of the figure on the northern wall are now no more, but she is identifiable on the basis of the figure on the corresponding southern wall.¹³ These seated alone figures of Sūryānī, no doubt, make us believe their independent divinity comparable to Pārvatī, Vaiṣṇavī, Brahmānī, etc. Images showing such an independent character, as far as we know, are not available anywhere except Gujarat.

Siddhapur, Distt. Patan yields an independent Sūryānī image which is housed in the Watson Museum, Rajkot. Standing in *samapāda sthānaka* posture like Sūrya on a *triratha pīṭhikā* she is bedecked with high *jaṭāmukūṭa*, round *kuṇḍalas*, *keyūra*, *kañṭhā*, *stana-hāra*, *mekhalā*, *nūpura*, *uttarīya* and *pralamba-hāra* reaching below her knees. A round and beautiful *prabhāmaṇḍala* with *śīraṣcakra* shines behind her head. Both the hands of the goddess are broken out, but a full-blown lotus extant over her right shoulder clearly speaks it to be the attribute of the goddess. She is flanked near her feet on either side by a maid attendant standing in *dvibhaṅga* posture with contour towards the goddess and holding the stalked lotus in their hand beside her, the other being placed on their thigh. Both maidens stand against a *caityākāra* arch (Fig.10.7)¹⁴

A Brass Image of Independent Rannādevī is also known to us. Details of this inscribed image were first published in 1950 by S.C. Upadhyaya, then Curator of the Victoria Museum, Bombay. This standing image (15"x 8" or 37.5 x 20 cm), according to Upadhyaya, was in the custody of Sri B.M. Modi of Bombay.¹⁵ Later it was also published in 1955 by Sri Kanaiyalal B. Dave. According to Dave, the image along with another unique image of Sūrya-dampati was discovered from a small village in the Patan Taluka of the Mahesana District of Gujarat by Amritlal Pandit and was in the private collection of Śri Babubhai Modi, at Bombay.¹⁶ Babubhai Modi and B.M. Modi appear to be one and the same person. The size given by Dave is 12" high x 10", which is a bit different and negligible because both Upadhyaya and Dave quote the similar inscription and date VS 1420 (= CE 1363). The latter also published the photograph of the goddess.

On a *triratha* pedestal and within a frame of the two side pillars with a conical arch above, the goddess stands in *samapāda sthānaka* posture, holds a triple stalked lotus in her upraised left hand and a citron in the right, wears a long garland stretching to her ankles and bedecked with usual ornaments - conical crown, round *kuṇḍala*, *stana-hāra*, *keyūra*, *kañkaṇa*, multi-layered *mekhalā* and *nūpura*. A round bordered halo is seen behind her head. She is clad in *sarī* and *uttarīya*. The goddess has two *cāmaradhāriṇī* attendants

standing on sides against the pillars and holding the fly-whisk in one hand and keeping the other on thigh. (Fig.10.8). The inscription in Sanskrit at the back reads—

श्रीसंवत् १४२० वर्षे चैत्र शुदि ६ रवौ मासोपवासिन्या बाई गाऊ इति नाम्न्या देवी श्रीशाम्बादित्यस्य देवी रनादेविः
पुण्य श्रेयार्थे कारिता।

Trans : “In the Vikrama *Samvat* 1420 (=1363 CE), month of *caitra* sixth day of the bright fortnight on Sunday Gāū Bāī, having fasted for a month caused this image of Ranādevī wife of Śrī Śāmbāditya, to be made for the sake of merit and well-being. May it be all well.”

Upadhyaya describes in detail about all the consorts and off-spring of Sūrya, mentions a number of images of Sūrya and his consorts in Gujarat and describes the form of worship of Sūrya’s consort. He is quite right in ascertaining that Rājñī, one of the consorts of Sūrya, was more popular among women perhaps because she has given birth to powerful sons; and this fact was responsible for the survival of feelings of veneration for Rājñī, even in the medieval times. The *Ācāradinakara* of Vardhamāna Sūri (VS 1469=1412 CE)) mentions Sūrya as husband of Ratnādevī. Upadhyaya very convincingly relates the word Ratnādevī to Rannādevī of the inscription, both originating from the word Rājñī (Rājñī - Rānī - Rannā - Ratnā - Rāṇakade - Ratnādevī). Rannā, Rannāde, Rāṇakade are very popular names of women in Western India. At present, the goddess being worshipped for progeny is named Rannādevī, Rāṇḍala, Rannāde or Rānāde.¹⁷

Rānī Vāv, Pāṭan, Distt. Mahesana accommodates the one and only four-handed image of independent Sūryānī. The goddess standing on a *pañcaratha* pedestal in *samapāda sthānaka* posture, bedecked like Sūrya and holding a triple stalked lotus in her both extra hands leaves little doubt in identifying her with the consort of Sūrya. Although the flower in the upper left hand is partly damaged, yet its remaining part and the posture of the upraised hand of the goddess certainly confirm its presence there. Her normal dangling right and left hands hold *varadākṣa* and *kalaśa* respectively. The beautifully carved goddess having smiling face and adorned with high conical *jaṭāmukuta*, *mastaka paṭṭikā*, *kuṇḍala*, *graiveyaka*, *stana-hāra*, *keyūra*, *kaṅkaṇa*, *mekhalā*, *nūpura*, *ājānūlambinī vanamālā*, *sārī* and *uttariya* is a feast to eyes. It is very impressive image revealing grace, dignity and luminosity behoving a consort of one, whose refulgence lights the whole universe. Behind her face and head there is a large attractive oval-shaped *padma-prabhāmaṇḍala* having garland-bearer figures in its outer face. Below near her feet there stand two female attendants on either side (Fig.10.9).¹⁸ Belonging to the 11th century CE, this is the only known four-handed image of Sūryānī and that too holding lotus in two hands like Sūrya. This sculpture



Fig.10.6: Sūrya with single consort, Metal, State Museum, Lucknow, Acc. No. 4428, c. 14th cent. C.E.



Fig.10.7: Sūryānī, Siddhapur (Pātan), Gujarat, 13th cent. C.E.



Fig.10.8: Sūrya's consort Rannādevī, Brass, Pātan Taluka (Mahesana), Gujarat, 14th cent. C.E.



Fig.10.9: Sūryānī, Rānī Vāv, Pātan (Mahesana), Gujarat, 11th cent. C.E.

is a glaring example of an independent image of Sūrya's consort for worship even without her reference as an independent deity in literature and *śilpa* texts.

Images of Rannādevī holding stalked lotus in both hands like Sūrya are said to be still enshrined at Prabhāsa Pāṭan.¹⁹

R.T. Savalia describes many Sūryāṇī sculptures of Gujarat in the 7th chapter on *Sūrya Parivāra-Mūrtividhāna* of his unpublished large treatise on 'Iconography of Hindu Gods and Goddesses in Gujarat'. Besides those already described above, he also refers to the sculptures of Sūryāṇī from Piparānī, Bhanagol, Dhundhukā, Sanāthal, Noratā, Dhāṅk, Samṭiyal, Junagadh, Salvā, Prabhāsapāṭan, Junagadh Museum, Pāsthar, Thān, etc.²⁰

(E) Worship of Rājñī in Gujarat

In Gujarat, the worship of Sūrya's consort Rājñī under one or the other name of Rāṇḍalamā, Rānāḍe, Rannāde or Rāṇḍala is arranged on the occasion of *yajñopavīta* and marriage for her gift of progeny and protection. It is called *Loṭā Ṭaṇḍavā* or *Rāṇḍala Ṭaṇḍavān*. The family priest arranges *Loṭā* (a small water pot) with coconut on its mouth. Ladies gather together at night and recite *Garbā* in honour of Rāṇḍalamā, all jumping simultaneously. This is known as *Ghoḍo Kundavo* (horse prancing). All of these facts show her connection with Sūrya and identity with Sureṇu, a name of Rājñī who transformed herself into a mare.²¹ According to some other opinion, this sacred ceremony in honour of Rannādevī is performed when a newly married woman becomes *sīmantanī* or pregnant for the first time. During the course of *Ghoḍo Kundavo* they pray to Rāṇḍala mātā for a gift of a male child in her lap to play with saying- "*Goda men khelane vālā de de Rannāde*"²²

The popularity of the Rāṇḍala-pūjā especially in some communities of Gujarat is somewhat reflected in the *Vāyupurāṇa*,²³ which refers to installation of Vāḍāditya and his consort Ratnādevī in the region of the Vāḍāvas, which, in the light of the detailed description in the *Skandapurāṇa*²⁴ corresponds to a part of Gujarat with its old name Dharmāraṇya. The Bājakheḍāvāla brāhmaṇa families of Gujarat origin worship Sūrya-Ratnādevī after performance of auspicious rituals like *upanayana* and *vivāha*. No wonder if this community happens to descend from the Vāḍava brāhmaṇas (compare Bāja = Skt. Vāji = horse. Vāḍava issues of Vaḍavā, a mare).²⁵

Now a question arises as to why only one consort, Rājñī out of the four, is worshipped? Clubbed with this, another question is also to be answered as to why both the consort images in the Jayādityadeva Sun-temple at Nagarā (Khambhat) are carved and installed in the name of only one consort, i.e. Rannādevī?

To answer both these questions, we think, we should go by the story of Sūrya's family. In the *Rgveda*, Śaranyu or Tvaṣṭrī, the daughter of Tvaṣṭrā (Viśvakarmā of the Purāṇas) was the only wife of Sūrya. Her duplicate Savarṇā is also mentioned therein. But in the Purāṇas, as we have mentioned in the beginning, the name of Sūrya's real consort is found Samjñā or Rājñī from whom Sūrya had two sons (Manu or Vaivasvata Manu and Yama) and one daughter (Yamī or Yamunā). After some time, owing to the unbearable *tejas* (sharpness, heat and brilliance) of Sūrya, Samjñā ran away from Sūrya leaving behind her earthly double or duplicate called Savarṇā, Chāyā, Nikṣubhā, etc., through whom also Sūrya had two sons (Sāvarṇi Manu and Śani) and one daughter (Tapati). When Viśvakarmā insisted his daughter to return to her husband, she left him and went to Uttara Kuru wandering there in the form of an Aśvinī (mare). Savarṇā or Chāyā naturally loved her children more than those of Samjñā or Rājñī. This enraged Yama who complained to his father Sūrya about the ill treatment meted to him by the mother. On being scolded by Sūrya, Savarṇā could no longer keep the secret and told him about the leaving of his real wife Samjñā to her father. Sūrya then went to Viśvakarmā and after knowing the full facts he went to Uttara Kuru in the guise of a horse to enable himself to approach his wife Aśvinī. Sūrya in the guise of a horse met his wife and had through her three sons (twin Aśvinikumāras and Revanta).

This story contained in the Purāṇas, if taken together, reveals that Sūrya had only one wife and that was Samjñā or Rājñī. Savarṇā or Chāyā or Nikṣubhā was her double form, which is very clear from these words; and finally Aśvinī or Sureṇu was also the transformed form of Samjñā or Rājñī.²⁶ This fact seems to be well known to the people of Gujarat where the consort of Sūrya was pretty more popular as Rājñī perhaps because the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* records that the verbal root *rāj* stands for light, hence Divākara (Sūrya) is called Rājā, also meaning king (*Rājñāh*), and thereby, his spouse comes to be called *Rājñī*.²⁷ Rājñī in one or the other form had given birth to many powerful sons. Perhaps, therefore, she has been more popular among women, and this fact was responsible for the survival of feeling of veneration for Rājñī resulting in her worship.

The tradition of Rannāde worship in Gujarat is very old. According to Harivallabha Bhayani, the earliest reference of Randala is found in the 9th century Jaina work *Padmacarita*.²⁸ Mahākavi Puṣpadanta also mentions in the *Mahāpurāṇa* the name of Rannā as the wife of Sūrya.²⁹ But the sculptural and epigraphical evidences available so far, reveal the popularity at its zenith during the medieval times. The tradition of worship of Rannāde, Rāṇḍalamā or Rāṇḍala is still prevalent among the Hindu Gujarati women in the form of *Rāṇḍala pūjā* in which she is prayed for her blessings to a male child. Savalia also describes in detail the *Rāṇḍala pūjā* being performed today.³⁰ In the folk-lore of Maharashtra as well the Sūrya

couple is called Āditya-Rāṇūbāī, that is Sūrya-Rājñī, but there Sūrya is worshipped in *maṇḍala* form. The name Rāṇūbāī in Marathi is derived from Rājñī.³¹

The present form of the *Rāṇḍala pūjā* prevalent among the Gujarati women appears to be a folk-custom. But the stone and metal images, some of them having dated inscriptions and installed in the Sun-temples, provide sufficient evidence of the common tradition of her worship once popularly performed in the society in general needs further investigation.

References & Notes

1. R.T. Savalia, *Gujarātānī Hindu Deva-Devīnum Pratimā* (Unpublished), pp.337-338.
2. Hiranand Sastri, 'Monuments of Kherālu,' *Annual Report of the Department of Archaeology, Baroda State, 1935-36*, pp. 12-14, Nos.27-28.
3. J.P. Amin, 'Khambhātānī Sūrya Pratimāo,' *Svādhyāya* (Journal of Prācyā Vidyā Mandira), M.S. University, Vadodara, Vol. XI, No.3, April, 1974, pp.220-221, Fig.4; Savalia, *op.cit.*, 335-337.
4. J.P. Amin, *op.cit.*, Fig.4; id., *A Catalogue of the Objects of Khambhat College Museum*, Khambhat, 1989, pp.25-26, Fig. 19..
5. J.P. Amin once states a three-line inscription on the pedestal of the first discussed figure in the *Catalogue of the Khambhat College Museum* (p.26) whereas in his paper in *Svādhyāya* he mentions it to be of a one-line.inscription of 25 characters (p.224).
6. See J.P. Amin, *A Catalogue of the Objects of the Khambhat College Museum*, Reprint 2003, Fig. 19.
7. R.T. Savalia, *Gujarātānī Hindū Deviyonum Pratimā-Vidhāna*, Ahmedabad, 1991, p.285.
8. The Photograph and the whereabouts of the panel are kindly provided by Dr R.T. Savalia.
9. R.T. Savalia, *Unpublished mss*, fn.1, p.326.
10. *Ibid.*, pp.339-340; S.C. Upadhyaya, 'A Fourteenth Century Brass Image of Rājñī, A Consort of Sūrya,' *Journal of U.P. Historical Society* (Lucknow), Vol.XXIII, No. 1-2, 1950, p.215.
11. State Museum, Lucknow, acc.no. 44.28. For this reference I owe to thank Dr. N.P. Joshi, Ācārya, Jñāna-Pravāha, Varanasi.
12. U.P. Shah, 'Some Sūrya Images from Saurashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan,' *Bulletin of Museum & Picture gallery, Baroda, Vol.IX*, 1965-66, p.49, Fig.40.
13. R.T. Savalia, *Unpublished mss*, pp.326-327.
14. *Ibid.*, pp.334-335.
15. S.C. Upadhyaya, *op.cit.*, pp.213-217,
16. Kanaiyalal B. Dave, 'A Unique Metal Image of the Sun from Gujarat,' *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda, Vol.IV, No.4, 1955*, p.406, Pl. 3.
17. S.C. Upadhyaya, *op.cit.*, p.215.
18. R.T. Savalia, *Gujarātānī Hindū Deviyonum Pratimā-Vidhāna*, Ahmedabad, 1991, p.285, Fig. 44;

- Jaikishandas Sadani, *Underground Shrine : Queens .stepwell at Patan, B.J. Institute, Ahmedabad*, 1998, p.40.
19. Shri Umiyashankar Vyas, 'Bhārata men Sūrya-pūjā aura Sūrya Mandira,' *Sūryaṅkā* (Kalyāṇa's Special Number, Vol. LIII, No.1, January 1979), p.321. Shri Vyas describes detailed celebration of the Rāndala-pūjā which continues three to eight days (*ibid*).
20. R.T. Savalia, *Unpublished mss*, pp.325-345.
21. S.C. Upadhyaya, *op.cit.*, p.216.
22. Shri Umiyashankar Vyas, *op.cit.*, pp.320-321.
23. *Vāyupurāṇa*, Upoddhāta, 59.118-24, p.275:
 वाडवादित्य देवेशः स्थापितो वायुना तदा। कामदः सर्वदः सूर्यो प्रभुरीशः प्रतापवान्॥
 सहस्रबाहुः संयुक्तः सर्वायुधविभूषितः। रत्नादेवीयुतः श्रीमांस्त्रयाधारस्त्रयीमयः॥
24. *Skanda.*, Brahma, Adhyāya 31-35.
25. Harhar Bhai Bhatt & Avinash N. Dave, *Śrī Sūryaratnādevī Itihāsa evam Pūjanavidhi*, Jabalpur, 2006. The author is thankful to Dr. N.P. Joshi for both the references nos. 24 and 25.
26. Cf. N.K. Bhattasali (*Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmāṅical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Reprint, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 160-161) summarises "three wives to Sūrya- 1. Uṣas only in Vedas and not in Purāṇas probably because she bore no child, 2. Dyau (also known as Śaraṇyu in Ṛgveda and Rājñī, Saṁjñā, Tvaṣṭrī, Prabhā, Suvarcasā, etc in Purāṇas) and 3. Savarṇā in Ṛgveda (and in the Purāṇas Niṣubhā, Chāyā or Pṛthvī)." Leaving Uṣas apart, there remain two names Rājñī and Savarṇā; the latter is the earthly double of the first. In this way Bhattasali does not seem to be far from our point of view.
27. *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, Brāhma., 79.65-66, folio 82 :
 राजृदीप्तौ स्मृतो धातु राजा राजतियत्सदा। अधिकः सर्वभूतेभ्यो राजते च दिवाकरः॥
 अधिकः राजते यस्मात्तस्माद्राजा स उच्यते। राज्ञः पत्नी तु सा यस्मात्तस्माद्राज्ञी प्रकीर्तिता॥
28. *Journal of Gujarat Research Society*, Vol. V-VI, No.3, 1943, p.159 vide Savalia, *Unpublished mss*, p.304.
29. R.T. Savalia, *op.cit.*
30. *Ibid*.
31. For this information we owe to thank Dr. N.P. Joshi, Ācārya-Jñāna-Pravāha, Varanasi.

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