



International Journal of Sanskrit Research

अनन्ता

ISSN: 2394-7519
IJSR 2015; 1(6): 17-22
© 2015 IJSR
www.sanskritjournal.com
Received: 14-07-2015
Accepted: 16-08-2015

Sanghamitra Sinha
Asstt. Teacher in Sanskrit,
Taldangra Girls' HS School,
Bankura, WB

Solar Worship, Animism: Archaeological Evidences of Ancient World

Sanghamitra Sinha

Abstract

Now a day all worlds go for clean and green environment. The pollution free and renewable energy is the destination for that objective. The solar energy is pollution free, ubiquitous and flow energy. The ancient religion concept evolved through the heliocentric concept. This concept is still persisted in the modern satellite era with changing its motto and dimensions. This writing tried to find out the archaeological evidences of heliocentric concept of state and religious power of ancient world. The heliocentric archaeological evidences such as Sun inscriptions, coins, sun symbols are included in this discussion.

Key words: Sun God, Heliocentric Inscriptions in India, Coins and Solar Symbols

Introduction

Animism and Sun Worship

The animism believes that abiotic components (inanimate beings) possess life and they act like the super power. They are personified and act as human being. From very early of human civilization the energy components like sun, wind, water flow etc. had been personified. They are abstracted as worship by human society from the early days. The animism concept of ancient world started with heliocentric concept (Mifflin, 2006, p.72).

Methodology

This paper mainly based on the Literature review. This literature has arranged in chronological order in the terms of political power with changing dynasties and religious homage of rulers. Most of the part of this paper followed the method of historical approach and the descriptive methodology with the analytical review of historical facts. Here the historical facts and evidences have been analyzed and synthesized with the objective of religious of solar worship.

Heliocentric Worship and its Archaeological Evidences

The archaeological evidences clearly show the scenario of ancient world without any imprints of time on it. Here the discussion covered three principal archaeological evidences as follows:

- Sun Inscription in different Historical Era
- Sun Coin in different part of the ancient world
- Sun Symbols in different Social situation of the world

Sun Inscription

The Solar Inscription in ancient India depicts the popularity of animism as well as Sun worship. It also explained that the economic and political power of ancient world goes hand in hand with religion. Before Second Century BC most the Indian Inscriptions were related to the war and warriors. The era of Solar Inscription in India has started during the era of *Kushana* kings (CA 60 AD on wards). Principal solar inscriptions which are observed in the various part of peninsular India are as follows:

(i) Sun Inscription in *Kushana* Era (CA 60 to 240AD):

Mathura Pedestal Inscription:

Tentative Time of Inscription: Chandra Gupta II (CA 374 - 415 AD)

Correspondence
Sanghamitra Sinha
Asstt. Teacher in Sanskrit,
Taldangra Girls' HS School,
Bankura, WB

Theme of Inscription: This inscription is the maiden format of ancient 'Bhahmi' script (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol XIX, p.96). The main interest of the inscription lies in the fact that it is the first 'Bhahmi' inscription of 'Kusana' period which quotes the month of its dates by its Hindu solar name instead of by the season name, which is invariably the case in other 'Bhahmi' inscription of the period.

(ii) Sun Inscription of Choleera Era (CA 250AD):

There were two sun related inscriptions as follows:

Sevilimedu Inscription

Tentative Time of Inscription: Clole King Vikram Chole Dev

Place of Found: Kailash Nath Temple, Solapur, Maharashtra

Theme of Inscription: This inscription mainly described that the blessing of sun god made the king more powerful and more fortunate (Burgess, 1894, Vol XIV, Canto. 11, p.290).

Kanya Kumari Inscription of Vir Rajendra Dev

The language of this inscription is Sanskrit and this inscription mentioned that the king shows the homage to the lord *Siva* and the Sun (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol XVII, p.21).

(iii) Inscription of Gupta Era (CA 320-540AD):

The Gupta era was plentiful of inscriptions but only there contains solar worship as follows:

Udaygiri Cave Inscription

Tentative Time of Inscription: Chandra Gupta II (401 to 402 AD)

Place of Found: Bhubaneshwar, Orissa

Theme of Inscription: This inscription started with praising of sun god.

Indore Copper Plate Inscription

Time: 465- 466 AD

Indore, Madhra Pradesh

This inscription depicted that may that Sun, the rich source of rays that pierce (*the darkness which is*) the envelope of the earth, protect human being — whom Brâhmans, of enlightened minds, (*have recourse to*) according to due rite, (*and thus become*) the mutters of praises in meditation, which are directed solely to Sun; whose limit, either vertically or from side to side, neither the gods nor the demons could ascertain; (*and*) by having recourse to whom, mankind, when they have lost control of themselves through much disease and agitation of the mind, acquire consciousness (*again*). This inscription praised the Sun as a divine lamp (Fleet, John F, 1888, p. 71-72).

Mandasore Stone Inscription

Time: 493 AD, During the Gupta king Kimar Gupta

Place: Mandashore, Madhya Pradesh

Theme: This inscription depicts that the sun, who nourishes the whole of the three worlds with (*his*) rays diffused in all directions; who, when he is raised, is praised by and who grants (*their*) desires to those who worship (*him*)! May that

Sun, decorated with glorious beams, protect the human being, who shines, day after day, with the mass of (*his*) rays flowing down over the wide and lofty summit of the lordly mountain of dawn, (*and*) who is of a dark-red colour like the cheeks of intoxicated women (Fleet, John F, 1888, p. 84-88).

(iv) Sun Inscription During Chalukya Era:

Four Pillar Inscription: (CA 540-711 AD)

This inscription described that the charity belong the lord of Srikurman, as long as the moon and the sun exist (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol.V, p.31)

(v) Sun Inscriptions During Pal Era (750-1174 AD)

The *Pal Era* was dominated by the Buddhism and Jainism. That is the main reason not to found heliocentric inscription in that era. Only *Badal* Inscription was found in Pal Era which shows the existence of Sun Good (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol.2, Canto.5.p.160).

(vi) Solar Inscriptions from Various Parts of India:

Hai Gupha Cave Inscription (1st Century AD) of Kherbel:

Now Kherbel is in Orissa and it is three mile away from Udaygiri hill. The Sun Symbol has observed in this inscription (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol. 20,p. 74).

Bagh Cave Inscriptin (2nd Century AD):

This inscription has found during the archaeological excavation in Patna of Bihar. The equilateral cross (Swastika) sun symbol has observed on that inscription (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol.13, p.163)

Habilini Inscription of Iswanverma (6th Century AD):

This inscription was found in the Kolar Dist (Gopal Krishna Temple, Habilini Taluk) of Maharashtra. In this inscription Sun Good has observed as soldier (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol.7, p.24)

Isanverma Haraha Inscription (689AD):

In this inscription shows that the sun is the prime source of king's power (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol.14, Canto.11, p.98)

Monor Inscription of Mangalrase of Vinoyaditya (7th Century AD):

This inscription has found in Peninsular India. The construction of a sun temple in South India was mentioned in this inscription (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol.28, p.21).

Tipuluru Inscription of Vicramaditya II of (8th Century AD):

The script of that inscription is quite similar to the Konnar and Talagu Script.

This was found from Kuddapath Dist. of Andhrapradesh. This is made by black granite rock and sculpture of the sun good was observed here (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol.30, p.12).

Addanki Stone Inscription (9th Century AD):

Now Addanki lies in the Guntur Dist of Warangle area (Andhra Pradesh). (Hultzsch, 1981, Vol 19, p.271). This inscription narrated the facts of construction of sun temple and sun good.

Inscription found from Vilsa (Twins inscription) (9th Century AD):

This inscription was found in the river bank of Betraborti river of Gwoliar of Madhrapradesh. This inscription described the sun worship and about the sun temple.

Pandonothi Inscription from Ukkironkottai (10th Century AD):

This inscription was found in the Tinniveli village of south India. This inscription described that lighting of the lamp in front of sun worship (Hultzs, 1981, Vol.33, p.283).

Chhattapa Sun Inscription (11th Century AD):

This Inscription begins with one of the several forms of the Siddham-Symbol which is followed by the passage *om namah Suryaya*. (Hultzs, 1981, Vol 30, p.215)

Madanpur copper plate Inscription of Srichandra (1012-23 AC):

This inscription was found in Madanpur village of Dhake, Bangladesh. The picture of the SunGod has depicted here (Hultzs, 1981, Vol.28, p.51).

Joynad Stone Inscription of Parama Jogdeb (11th Century AD):

This inscription praised the Sun Good ((Hultzs, 1981, Vol22, p.54)

Leiden Inscription of Rajraj (11th Century AD):

This inscription has preserved in Leiden University's museum in Holland. This inscription depicted the chart of solar family.

Anniageri Inscription (1071-1072 AD):

The picture of glowing Sun and Moon both are observed in this inscription.

Ipur Inscription of Gobindobarman (12th Century AD):

This inscription was found in Tenali village of Guntoor dist. of Andhrapradesh. The picture of the sun good and sun symbol as a stamp was found here.

Mahad Inscription of Jogeshwar Debverman (12th Century AD):

This inscription was found in Shonepur Dist of Bihar. In this inscription king Jogeshwar Debaverman proclaimed himself as a scion of the solar dynasty (Hultzs, 1981, Vol.19, p.218, canto. 2&3)

Koni Inscription of Kalachuri Prithideva II (12th Century AD):

This inscription was found in Koni village of Bilaspur Dist of Madhrapradesh. This inscription described the fact that in a day of solar eclipse the king donated a village to his minister in tremor of Sun Good (Hultzs, 1981, Vol.27, p.276)

Six Silahara Inscription (1138-1260 AD) :

This inscription was found in Konkon coast at Maharastra. This inscription is combination of six separate inscriptions; Chanje Inscription, Agashi stone inscription of Haripala deva, Bassein Stone inscription of Mallikarjuna, inscription of Somesvara deva, inscription of yadava Ramchandra. The left corner of each inscription depicted the auspicious Sun Symbol.

Kandokuru Plate Inscription (16th Century AD):

This is basically the land transaction of king Venkotesw raj and the figure of sun good is depicted here. This figurine is quite similar to the gesture of Lord Vishnu (Hultzs, 1981, Vol. 19, p.p.89 , 93, canto,49).

Stone Inscription of Deulbari

The Deulbari is a village situated about 14 miles south of Comilla, Bangladesh. This inscription consists of a fine brass

statue of the sun good , in which the god is represented sitting inside his one-wheeler car, drawn by the seven spirited horses have seen.

Kamrup Copper plate Inscription of King Vidyadeva

It described in verse 17, 'the sun, beholding the sky covered with the enemies heads, as at the stroke of the sword they fly upwards from the great fight of Vaiyadeva, suddenly became alarmed at the thought of these leads being so many Rahu and protected himself by smearing out his own luster with dust'. Here the sun good regarded as the source of pure energy (Hultzs, 1981, Vol.2, p.223).

Bangon Inscryption of Bigrahpal (Vol.27, p.48)

Udaypur Inscription described the incident of solar eclipse and sun temple.

Chatesvara temple Inscription (Vol.29, p.132)

This inscription has preserved in Chattak in Orissa. This inscription shows the sculpture of bowing sun.

Out of above said heliocentric inscription following are also valuable inscription which are found in various part of India as enlisted here as Shonepur Inscription of Mahabhab GuptaII (Sonepur, Orissa), Chottorghar Inscription of Mayer (Hultzs, 1981, Vol.2,p.410), Lahadpur Inscription of Joychandra (Hultzs, 1981, Vol.32,p.305), and Polonnapur Stone Inscription of Vijoybahu I: . Niriullka Inscription of Shantila. The above said inscriptions are the indicators of solar worship of ancient India. The most of inscriptions depicted the sun as a prime source of energy for earth.

Solar Coins in various Parts of World

The ancient coinage is the archaeological evidences of socio political power of the ancient world. The sun symbol in ancient coin age in and outside of India is very common one.

In ancient Egypt, the economy was dominated by exchange method but the use of coinage in Egypt stated after the Roman king Mark Antony (30BC) who invaded the Egypt. For that reason most of the Egyptian coinage is the Roman coin. Ancient Roman kings believed in the 'Sol Invictus' and undefeated Sun. In India, up to 3rd century AD most of seals and coinage made by the clay and by the terracotta art. The terracotta art got damage to humid climatic of Indian Sub continent.

Sun Symbols

The first recognizable sun symbol found in mathematical symbol in Neolithic era (before 2.6 million of years). On the basis of shape and configuration of sun symbols have been classified (table ii).

(i) Symmetrical Circle: This is the oldest Sun Symbol. In recent world this symbol is observed on the flag of Japan, Bangladesh and Australian aboriginal flag. Another ancient solar symbol is the circle which contains a dot spot in center. It is the astrological symbol of Sun, and it is the sign for "sun" in the hieroglyphic script (alphabet). The character for "sun" or "day" in early Chinese script was similar to this symbol (Fig.1& 2)

(ii) Four-fold symmetry: The four-fold symmetrical Sun symbol includes Sun Cross, Equilateral cross, Eight Point Star and Doubled Sun Cross.

Sun Cross: The sun cross is a cross inside a circle. Crossed circles scratched on stones have been recovered from

Paleolithic cave sites in the Pyrenees (Europe). In old sculpture the figure of the wheel of the chariot was resemble to this idea. The Bronze Age symbol has also been connected with the spoke chariot wheel, have a "solar" connotation (3& 4). The crossed circle symbols were also observed in diverse areas as the Pyrenees in Europe, Anatolia in Mesopotamia, Iranian Plateau and the cities of Mohenjo-dara and Harappa in the Indus River valley in India (Neolithic Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, 2012). That sun symbol was a cross inside a circle. The crossed circles (scratched on stones) have been recovered from Paleolithic cave sites in the Pyrenees in Europe (Neolithic Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, 2012).

Equilateral Cross (Swastika): The swastika is an equilateral cross with its arms bent at right angles, in either right-facing (卐) form. It was long widely used in major world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism (Fig.4). Sometimes this equal lateral cross used as a political symbol. The glaring example is the iconic usage of ‘Swatika’ by Nazi in Germany. A cross with the four lines radiating from the center to the four cardinal directions, and this is commonly associated with the Sun.

Eight-pointed star: It is the symbol of eight-pointed star and commonly appear on the flags of several Russian subdivisions — such as Udmurtia, Mordovia, Mari El, and Chuvashia — and had a similar meaning on the 1959-1963 flag of Iraq.

Doubled sun cross: It is basically an eight-spoke wheel. It has widely used in the Indian Sculpture and ancient and mediaeval architecture (Fig. 5& 6).

(iii) Three fold symmetry

Some forms of the triple spiral or triskelion signs are considered to be solar symbols.

Triskelion: Triskelion is a symbol consisting of three interlocked spirals and it looks like three bent human legs. It is basically threefold rotational symmetry. A triskelion is the solar symbol of Brittany and Sicily.

Spiral triskele: The triple spiral is the Neolithic symbol in Western Europe. This sun symbol observed on rock the main entrance of the prehistoric Newgrange monument in County Meath, Ireland. This sun symbol was widely used by the people of Celtic culture. In the north of Spain, the triskelion is used as a symbol of Galizan and Asturian nationalists.

(iv) Six fold Symmetry

It’s a Salvic solar symbol. It depicts the rosette that is the blooming flower indicates the symbol of life. It’s also widely found on traditional art and ancient architecture Spain.

Rosette and Swarag Circle: The evidence of this type of sun symbols are observed in the ancient and medieval Hindu temple, cave painting in Spine and India in the inner part of dome of the temple. The blooming lotus in ancient sculpture is the perfect example of it.

Radiation Symbol: This sun symbol is the basically a circle and from the perimeter of the circle a hello is radiating. This is commonly used in the head of Hindu deities (Fig.6, 7).

(v) Astronomical Sun Symbol

(Sun symbol related to the yearly position of Earth in reference to Sun)

This type of sun symbol had been used by the aboriginal of South America. These sun symbols truly represent the relative position of earth and sun during the summer solstice, winter solstice, vernal and autumnal equinox.

(vi) Sun Stone: The sun stone in Maya civilization (Mexico) is popularly known as Ajtect Calender. This sun dial calendar contains 260 days in a year, 13 days in a week, year contains 20 weeks. This Sun calendar is quite similar to the old Chinese calendar. Each month of this calendar had identified with a graphical animal character like month of dog, cow etc. This Sun dial is round in shape and now has preserved in Chapultepec Park at Mexico (Fig. 8).

(vii) Star Symbol: In this symbol a star lies in the centre of circle and the star contains five apexes which touches the perimeter of circle. A pentagon is in the core of the circle. This is widely used in the black astrology in medieval India.

The various sun symbols show that the position sun in space and solar system and the fact behind this kind of thinking is to recognized sun as a supreme source of energy.

Now the environmentalist are prescribing to use the solar power, solar electricity, and solar cooker, use sunlight as a source vitamin D and simultaneously providing alert of Ultra Violet rays. The ancient Indian civilization was the heliocentric and the sun inscriptions, sun coinages and sun symbols were the archaeological remnants of that fact.

Types of Sun Symbol	Symbols	Figure Number
Symmetrical Circle	Circle	1
	Circle with point in centre	
Four Fold Symmetrical	Sun Cross	2
	Swastika	
	Eight Pointed Star	3
	Double Sun Cross	
Three Fold Symmetry	Spiral	4
	Trikelion	5
Six Fold Symmetry	Rosette Sun Symbol	6
	Swarag Circle	
Radian Sun Symbol	-----	-----
Astronomical Sun Symbol	Sun Symbol Related to the yearly position of Earth in reference to Sun	7
	Sun Stone in Maya civilization in Mexico	--
Super	Used in Black Astrology	8

Source: (Solar symbol - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.mht, 2008)



Fig 1: Equilateral Sun Symbol (Used by Hindu Religion and Used by Nazi in Gemrmany)



Fig 2: Four Fold Symmetry, Sun Symbols Eight-pointed star,, (Doubled sun cross)



Fig 3: Threefold symmetry or spiral Sun Symbols, Neolithic triple spiral symbol



Fig 4: Threefold symmetry or spiral, used by Celtic Deconstructionists, Sun Symbols

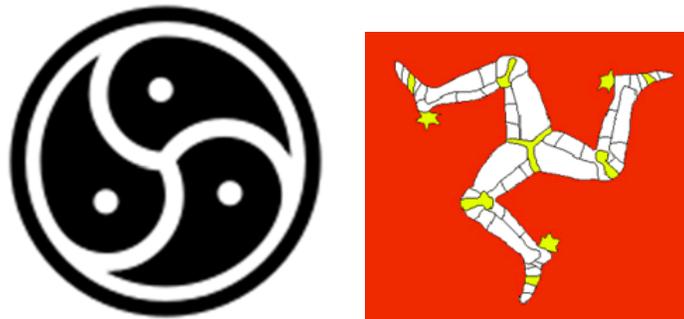


Fig 5: Threefold symmetry, Sun Symbols, used by Mongolian People, (Trikelion sun symbol)



Fig 6: Six fold symmetry (Swarag Circle, Rosette sun symbol)

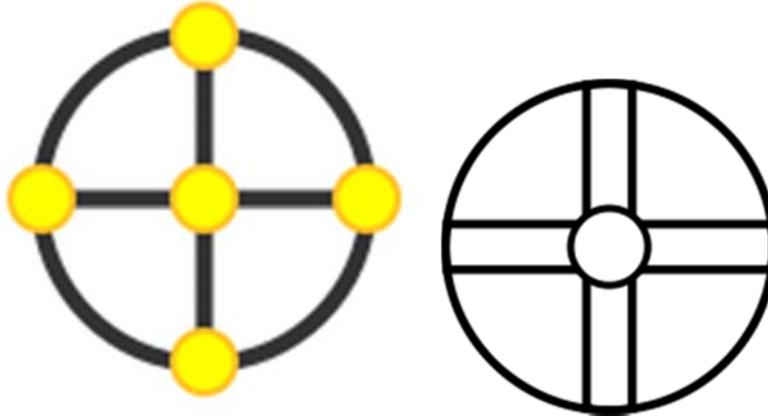


Fig 7: Astronomical sun symbol, (depicts the situation Sun in Solstices and equinoxes)

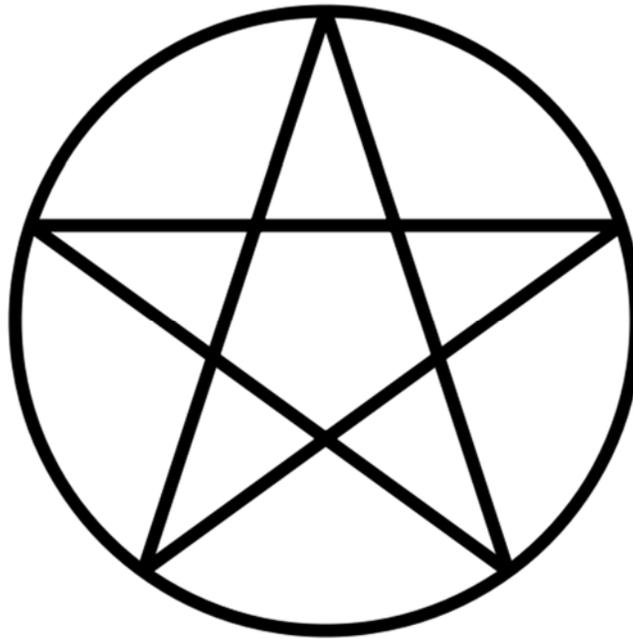


Fig 8: (The pentagram within a circle, a symbol of faith used by many Wiccans) Sun Symbols

Reference

1. (Helvetica), Dane Kurth. Ancient Coins: Roman, Greek, Byzantine & Celtic Numismatic Reference for Attribution & Valu. 2009. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolithic> (accessed May 24, 2012).
2. Aurelian, Roman Imperial Coins. July 2009. <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/aurelian/i.html> (accessed June 24, 2012).
3. Burgess, Jas, ed. Epigraphica Indica. vols. Archaeological Survey of India, 1894, XIX(XXXIV).
4. Epigraphica Indica.
5. Greene, Kevin. Archeology of Roman Economy, Kevin Greene. California: University of California Press, 13, Dec, 1990.
6. Hammond, Brett. Antique and Coins. 2008. <http://www.time-lines.co.uk> (accessed June 24, 2012).
7. Nehru J. The Discovery Of India. Edited by I. New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 2008.
8. Husain M. Human Geography. 3rd. New Delhi: Rawat Publication, New Delhi, 2006.
9. Mifflin, Houghton. Animism. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006.
10. Neolithic Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia. 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolithic> (accessed June 24, 2012).
11. Rao, Bahadur H, Krishna Sastri, . Epigraphia Indica (1925-26). Vol. XVIII. XXIV vols. New Delhi, New Delhi, 1983.
12. Solar symbol - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.mht. Sept 2008. <http://www.sun/symbol.in.ac-Google> Search, (accessed June 24, 2012).
13. Thaper R. A History of India. London: Penguin Books, 1969, 1.
14. Time Line, Brett Hammond and. Aurelian Coins. 2008. <http://www.time-lines.co.uk/aurelian-coins-23314-0.html> (accessed June 24, 2012).