



## **Sun Worship in Himalaya Region: with Special Reference to Katarmal and Martand**

**Dr. Virendra Bangroo**  
Assistant Professor  
IGNCA, New Delhi.

**Dr. Richan Kamboj**  
Assistant Professor & HOD,  
Department of Drawing & Painting  
M.K.P.(P.G.) College  
Dehra Dun.

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The Sun, the source of light and solar energy, is the sources of all life and finds mention in all the sacred texts like the Rig Veda, the Vishnu Purana, the Mahabharata, the Bhavisya Purana, the Chandogya Upanishad, the Markandaya Purana, the Taittiriya Upanishad, the Nilarudra Upanishad and the Varaha purana.

The Sun or Surya is also known by other names, each name highlights the grandeur, brilliance, quality and power of the Sun, viz:-

1. *Aditya*- Son of the primordial vastness ss
2. *Aja-ekapad* – one legged goat
3. *Pavaka* – Purifier
4. *Jivana*- the source of life
5. *Jayanta*-Victorious
6. *Ravi* - Divider
7. *Martanda*- born from life less egg
8. *Savitr* -Nourisher
9. *Aharpati*-Lord of the day
10. *Jagat chaksu*-Eye of the world
- 11 - *Karma Sanskasin* -Witness of deeds
12. *Graha Rajan*-King of Planets
13. *Sahasra-Kirana*-Having Thousand beams
14. *Saptashwa*-Having seven horses
15. *Dyumani*-Gem of the sky

16. *Graha pati*-Lord of the Planets
17. *Heli*-Pervader
18. *Khaga*-Wanderer of space
19. *Padma-bandhu*-Friend of the lotus
20. *Padma Pani*-Lotus in hand
21. *Himarati*- Enemy of snow
22. *Tamapaha*-Effacer of Darkness
23. *Arka*- To radiate
24. *Tamsra-han*-killer of darkness
25. *Tamonada*-dispeller of darkness
26. *Diva-Kara*-maker of the day
27. *Prabha-kara*-Source of extreme light
28. *Citra bhanu*-with coloured rays
29. *Bhanu*-shining
30. *Bhaskara*-maker of light
31. *Vibha vasa*-abode of light
32. *Vivasva t*- resplendent
33. *Sahasramshu*-thousand rayed
34. *Rohita*-the red one
35. *Gopati*-Lord of beings
36. *Bradhna*-tied by his rays
37. *Udgitha*-High chant

In the *Adityahridayastitram* which finds mention in the Balmiki Ramayana, the Sun has been addressed as the ruler of the world, one who is crowned with the rays and appears at the horizon daily. He is worshipped both by gods and demons. He is referred as Brahma, Vishnu, Skanda, Prajapati, Indra, Kubera, Kaala, Yama, Soma, Varuna, the Pitrs, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the two Asvis (physicians of gods), the Maruts (fortynine), Manu, Vayu and the god of fire. He is also known as Aditya, Savita, Surya, Khagh, Pusha, Gabhstiman, Suvarnasadrish, Bhanu, Hiranyareta, Dewakar, Haridsh, Sahastrachari, Saptasapti, Marichiman, Timiromanthan, Shambhu, Tvashta, Martandak, Anshuman, Hiranyagarbha, Shishir, Tapan, Ahaskar, Ravi, Aganigarbha, Aditiputra, Shishirnashan, Vayomnath, Tamobhedi, Righa, Ghanavrishti, Apam-mitra, Aatpi, Mandali, Mrityu, Pingal, Sarvatapan, Kavi, Vishva, Mahatejasvi, Rakta and god of all the planets and *nakshatra*,

#### **Iconography of the Sun God:**

The image of the Sun is shown in sculptures and paintings, either having two or four arms. He has golden beard and golden hair. He is shown wearing a long upper garment and boots. The Sun is shown seated on a chariot pulled by seven horses. The charioteer of the Sun is Aruna, the elder brother of Garuda.

1. Samghayana (knowledge)
2. Rajni (Queen)
3. Prabha (light)
4. Chaya (Shade)

#### **Sun worship in Uttarakhand:**

Right from ancient times Sun worship was prevalent in India. We find references of Sun worship in Rig Veda, wherein it is held in high esteem as life giving source. Iconic representation of Sun god owes its origin to the advent of the Shakas from Central Asia in north western India (Sindh and Punjab) in 1st Century BCE. There are about 80 icons of Sun god throughout Uttarakhand, the best preserved images of the deity are to be found in

the temples of Jageshwar, Dwarahat, Baijnath, Katarmal, and Danya (Almora) (Sharma, 2009,p.311). A statue of Surya was found at the site of Jamdagani Rishi in Than village in Uttarkashi district. It dated to C.12th Century A.D (Kamboj, 2010, p.51)

Sun image can also be seen in a new temple constructed on the ruins at Bhilla Kedar and in Matleshwar temple at Matela in Pauri Garhwal district. Besides, four statues of Surya are found in the ruins of Bhavdaya Mahadeva temple at Kota in the same district (Singh,1980,pp.2,29,31). An old statue of the Sun god was found near a deteriorated Shiv temple at Baeras Kunda in district Chamoli (Singh, 1980, p.56), in the Nageshwar Mahadev temple in Nagagaon and at Pato in Tehri Garhwal (Singh, 1980, p.66-67). There is a famous Sun temple at the village Palethi near Devaprayag in Uttarakhand. Besides there are temples dedicated to the Sun god at Madh, Belour, Sui and Dugai-Aagar in the district Pithoragarh of Uttarakhand state.

Various form of Sun worship was in vogue in Uttarakhand,e.g., *navagrahapuja* and *panchdevopasana* or *panchayatana-puja*. In *panchayatana* temples located at Baging, Paithani, Duradidevi, Pakh in the central Himalaya, Sun worship was offered.

### **KATYURI DYNASTY:**

The Sun temple at Katarmal near Almora is believed to have been built by the Katyuri King Katarmaldevta. Scholars attribute origin of Katyuri dynasty to either Khasha or Shaka clan both believed to be offshoots of the same race. The sun worship in India finds mention in Rig Veda, but visual representation of the Sun god in human form wearing long boots owes its origin to the Shakas who, being driven away by Hunas, entered India from north-east. Khasha origin of Katyuri dynasty carries greater weight since according to O.C.Handa the common men in Afganistan were addressed as Khosha(Khasha) and the rulers were known as Katyura. The inhabitants of Jyotiryana were Khasha and the ruling dynasty was Katyuri(Handa,2002.p.24). The copper plate grants and edicts yield that Katyuri dynasty was the ruling dynasty in the later half of the 7th Century CE with their capital at Brahmapura initially which they later shifted to Kartrpura also known as Karttikeyapura(modern Baijnath), situated in Katyur valley(ealier known as Gomati valley) in Almora district. The Katyuri dynasty extended in the north from the Huna desa upto the foothills of Uttarakhand and from Satluj upto Gandaki in the west and the east respectively (Sharma,2009,p.60)

Mentions of the names of rulers do appear in Copper plate grants and inscriptions. There is a mention of Vasantanadeva as the founder of Katyuri dynasty in an inscription found from Bageshwar. He was followed by four families namely-Vasantandeva,Nimbara,Salonaditya, Jatvaldeva. But the exact chronology of the rulers and exact date of the shift of the capital to Katyuri valley has not been mentioned in any inscription except tentative list of eight rulers. According to Handa, Rahul In his book 'Kumaon', reproduced genealogical tables from Katyuri princely houses of Doti(mentioning 36 rulers from Shalivahan to Trilokpal ), Ashok list (mentioning 48 rulers from Shalivahan to Trilokpal), Pali list(mentioning 6 names). Ironically enough the names mentioned in the aforementioned pedigree does not match with the epigraphic evidences. This gives support to the hypothesis that there existed more than one ruling families of Katyuri clan at Baijnath (Handa, 2002, p.28).

Vasantanadeva ruled from C.850 A.D. to 870 A.D. His successors ruled approx. upto 1065 A.D.The approximate period of the reign of the rulers of the Katyuri dynasty is as follows-

Basantana Dev from C.850 A.D. to 870 A.D.,  
Kharpar Dev from C. 870 A.D. to 880 A.D.,  
Adhiraj Dev from C.880 to 890 A.D.,  
Tribhuvanraj Dev from C.890 to 900 A.D.,  
Nimbarta Dev from C.900 A.D. to 915 A.D.,  
Ishttanga from C. 915 A.D TO 930 A.D.,

Lalitasura Dev ruled from C.930 A.D. to 955 A.D.,  
Bhu Dev ruled from C. 955 A.D to 970 A.D.

Probably it was in the reign of Bhu Dev that Katyuri dynasty started declining. The Katyuri dynasty owes its decline to the asserting power of the local feudal chiefs of Boani-garh and the Chand dynasty which arose in Kumaon in C.958 A.D.

Salonaditya, who ruled from C.970 to 985 A.D.,  
Ichchhata Dev ruled from C.985 A.D. to 1000 A.D.,  
Deshat Dev from C.1000 A.D.to 1015 A.D.,  
Padmata Dev from C. 1015 A.D. to 1045 A.D.

He was followed by Subhiksharaja Dev who ruled from C. 1045 A.D. to 1060 A.D. The latter was followed by two rulers who do not find any mention in the inscription. These two rulers were Dham Dev (also known as Brahm Dev), and Bira Dev (also known as Vir Dev). The later Katyuri rulers were cruel and tyrannical as borne out by the reference of their cruelties in the folk lores of the indigenous people of Kumaon. Thus in absence of a strong ruler, the Katyuri dynasty resulted in many smaller principalities.

#### **The temple architecture at Katarmal :**

The famous Katarmal Sun temple is also known as Baraditya temple. The Katarmal village is located at a distance of 14 kms west of Almora at *patti* Tala Tikhon, in Uttarakhand state of India. No historic evidence have been found to suggest exactly who had built the Sun temple at Katarmal. The temple was probably commissioned and build by the Katyuri king Katarmaldeva who was the 33th king as per the family tree of the royal family of Askot . Whereas, the family tree of the Doti mentions him to be the 22<sup>nd</sup> king. The temple dates to C. 13<sup>th</sup> Cent. A.D. Both the royal family trees refer him to be the son of the King Basantideva. The Katyuri kings were the ardent followers of the Sun god. The natives of this region were the worshippers of 'Bela', i.e., the Sun god or Surya *devta*, hence they came to be known as Belawala. Reference to Baraditya occurs in Manaskhand and Vedic Sanhitas. Sayan Bhashya refers to *Bat* as *satyam*. Thus the name Baraditya is indicative of the very nature and character of the Sun, i.e., the eternal truth.

There are around 45 miniature shrines clustering around the main temple structure. According to Katoch the temple precinct comprised of 54 miniature shrines . The former has yielded inscriptions in Nagri script dating to 14<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> Cent. *Vikrami* (Katoch, 1996,p.93-94).The miniature shrines were constructed later over a period of at least two centuries, rather upto 16<sup>th</sup> Cent. A.D. Most probably the later kings might have got these constructed as a mark reverence to the Sun god or on wish fulfillment due to the blessings of the deity.

The east facing main temple structure at Katarmal is North Indian in style. It has a *rekha deul* which is *trirath* in plan. The shrine consists of a square *garbhagriha* or cella, followed by *antarala* (the narrow vestibule in the Hindu temple which connects cella with the *mandapa*) and two *mandapas* ( an open or closed pillared assembly hall in a Hindu temple). The exterior of the cella measures 7.30 mts. The *triratha* plan comprises of a temple architecture with one projection on each side of the *baada* ( the cubical structure enclosing the cella). The temple rests on *pistha* (platform), followed by *baada* comprising of horizontal divisions. The *baranda* (a moulding) divides the *baada* from the *gandi* (the *shikhara* or the high tower). The *gandi* rises high and then gradually bends in to form a convex curve. The front side of the *shikhara* has three miniature shrines carved above the *baranda*, the central one having exactly the same *shikhara* and *mastaka* (haed) as must have been of the main temple or of the *rekha deul* . The *mastaka* of the main shrine hs now got displaced. We can assume the shape of the architectural components forming the *mastaka* of the *rekha deul* of the main shrine which must have served as a model for the *mastakas* of the miniature shrines. The *mastakas* of the latter are partially intact which suggest that the *mastaka* of the *rekha deul* must have comprised of the *beki* (the recessed circular portion on top

of the tower on which the *amla* rests.), the *khapuri* (a flat bell shaped member above the *amla* of the North Indian *shikhara*), the *kalasa* (vase shaped member on top of the *khapuri*) and the *ayudha* (weapon, emblem of the deity above the *kalasha*). The *beki*, the *amla* and the *khapuri* of the *mastaka* of the miniature shrines are intact but the *kalasha* and *ayudha* have got displaced in all. The entire temple structure including the main shrine as well as the miniature shrines are erected on a high platform approached by a flight of steps. It stands magnificently and possesses a grandeur par-excellence.

### **Stone Sculptures, Katarmal Sun temple:**

To the South of the temple is a *naula*, known as Surya- Kunda. It enshrined an eloquent image of *sheshashaye* Vishnu which was later shifted to the temple cella or *garbhagriha*. The water of this Surya- kunda was used for performing rituals in the temple. ASI had mentioned 60 sculptures at Katarmal Sun temple in its reports but only few are left presently enshrined in the main temple. The main statue of the Sun god belongs to later medieval period and is made of local grayish-brown stone. It is placed on a pedestal in the *garbhagriha* and is 93 cms high. The Sun god is seated on a lotus pedestal. He is wearing a *yagyapavit* and shoes due to the Central Asian origin of the deity. There is a halo behind his head. Here depiction of *navagriha* symbol is noticeable. On one side Ragyi and Nishprbha are carved standing with food as has been mentioned in the Agnipurana. Besides two Kinnars, two attendants are carved standing on the lower part and flying Vidyadharas wearing long garlands are carved on the upper portion. Between his feet there is an image of a *Maladhar*. It is exquisitely carved image of Baraditya in high relief.

### **Wooden door frame of the Sun temple at Katarmal:**

The door is presently displayed in the ground floor gallery of the National Museum, New Delhi. The door is formed of two parts, each part measuring (---) with four square sculpted panels on a raised frame. Eight panels of two parts are covered with the images of Shiva, Vishnu, Bhairava and amorous couples. The raised frame around the panels of the door is covered with flower creepers intercepted with carved roundels depicting celestial beings and animals.

1. Uma Maheshvar panel- Parvati is seated on the left lap of Shiva and is holding Shiva by her left hand which falls across his shoulder. Shiva is seated on a lotus throne. Left knee of Shiva is folded while the right foot rests on a lotus. Bull and lion are seated near the throne. On the left corner is an image of Daksha (having a goat head) with hands folded. On the left side is shown a standing attendant and on top of both sides of seated Shiva are garland bearers. Shiva is holding trident in his right hand and is wearing a crown having snake hood on its top, oval ear rings, necklace and necklet. The left hand of Shiva is holding a coiled snake with three hoods. Hair of Parvati is knotted and in the form of bun on top of head giving appearance of a crown.

Parvati is wearing necklet and a necklace which touches her belly. Both of them are wearing full sleeves upper and lower garment.

2. Vishnu and Lakshmi panel- Vishnu and Lakshmi are depicted in standing posture, Lakshmi is standing towards the left of Vishnu and is crowned with a loose scarf on her head. Her hair is curled in a bun and fall on her left shoulder.

Four armed crowned Vishnu is holding chakra (disc) and conch in his left hand and mace in his right hand. The image of Vishnu is bedecked with a long garland extending below his knees. In the centre of both the images, below their waist line is a standing hand folded image of Bhudevi or Prithvi. On the right side of Vishnu is another standing image of hand folded Garuda. On the both sides of the crown of Vishnu are garland bearers.

3. Shiva Killing Andakasura:

This composition appears to be Shiva killing Andakasura, eight armed Shiva is holding *raktpaatr* (cup to keep blood), *damru* (two headed small *drum*) and snake in his left hand. In his right hand he holds *khatvang* (skull adorned staff) and a rosary. A female deity is lying below, could be Yogeswari or Matrika (Consort of gods).

A similar computation to a great extent could be noticed in cave no.29 at Ellora and also at Elephanta, wherein the treatment is very elaborate in comparison to the Katarmal panel.

Mustached and beaded Shiva is wearing, ear rings, neck let, necklace and also adorned with a long garland.

#### 4. Shiva with Yogeswari

Eight armed Shiva is holding *damru*, *raktpaatr* (cup) and snake in his left hands and in right hands he holds *khatvang* (skull adorned staff), a dagger and a snake. Yogeswari was created by Shiva from the flames of his mouth.

5. Mithuna (Amorous) couples

6. Mithuna (Amorous) couples.

Besides the wooden door, the site has also yielded a wooden pillar measuring 5'10" high now preserved in National Museum, New Delhi. The upper part or the capital of the pillar is carved with *mangalghat*, beautifully entwined snakes with hoods spread on the either sides. The the edges of the capital are carved with a female image having folded hands. The pillar has an image of a god carved in high relief standing in *tribhang* posture, having a round face with wide open eyes. As it is a partially damaged image, the attributes held in hands cannot be identified. Either this pillar belonged to an earlier structure which might have had existed at the site prior to the construction of the present temple or might have been a part the latter itself.

#### **Festivals celebrated at Sun Temple, Katarmal**

The Sun temple at Katarmal was visited by the authors on Sunday, the 8th of January 2012. According to Hindu calendar or *panchang* the day was *Chaturdashi* of *Paush Shukla*, *Vikram Samvant* 2068 ( *Shak Samvant* 1933 ). *Satyavrat Purnima* also happened to be on *Chaturdashi* of *Paush Shukla*. Every year on the first Sunday, a fair is organized at Katarmal thronged by a large number of devotees including men, women of all age groups and children from adjacent villages, towns and also devotees from far off regions. The magnificent and majestic temple site is enlivened by the *sankirtan*, i.e., songs sung to eulogize the deity and the devotees clad in colorful clothes add rich colors to the landscape comprising of lush green adjoining surroundings and grayish stone temple architecture. On this day *bhandara* or mass feeding is also organized during day time. The food prepared on the occasion was as per the rules and rituals observed for Sunday *vrata* or fasts kept by the followers of the Sun god. It included *puri* and *Kheer*, the latter is an Indian desert prepared with milk and rice. The former is a unleavened bread made from wheat flour, the dough is made by adding water to flour and rolling it out in a disc form and deep frying it in *ghee*. Usually it is fried in oil but as oil is a taboo for the fasts kept on Sundays, hence the *puris* were prepared in *shudh ghee*, i.e. clarified butter, made from cow's milk. It is believed that earlier on the Saturday night in the month of *Paush*, a fair was organized followed by special worship and rituals offered to the Sun god on Sunday.

#### **The Sun Temple, Martand, Kashmir**

Some five kilometers from Anantnag, is a sacred Hindu site called Mattan (also called Bhawan). This sacred site is located at the foot of table land plateau, locally called Vudar and Kereva. This plateau runs with the slope of a mountain. This sacred place Bhawan (meaning sacred habitation) is marked by two springs, Vimala and Kamala. This spring contains limpid water and is filled with abundance of fish. Stream which comes out of the springs is called Chaka-Nadi.

The Martand *Tirtha* is managed by a *Samiti* named Martand Tirtha Purohit Sabha, Martand Bhawan, J & K. The area of the *Tirtha* is 97 Kanal (38 kanal-Martand Tirth, surrounding and Jal kund) 49 Kanal comprises

of extension of Chaka nadi, Ghats, and temples). The *tirtha* of Martand is mentioned in *Martand Mahatmya*, *Nilmat Purana* and in *Bringish Samhita*. The legend related in the *Martanda-Mahatmya* connects the springs with the story of the production of the sun from the life less egg, which Aditi, first wife of Kasyapa, had brought forth as her thirteenth child.

Vishnu Surya, under the form of Martand is worshipped here. This Tirtha is one of the most sacred Pilgrimage places in KMR. This *Tirtha* attracts visitors from broad and abroad. This Tirtha is visited at frequent intervals by crowds of Pilgrims and is well known outside Kashmir.

On account of its sacred origin, Hindus from all parts of India, visit this place to gain ease and happiness in next world. Hindus also perform religious rites (shrada) to their dead kiths and kins, so that their soul gains ease and comfort in the next world. In the Hindu lunar calendar, there is a additions of one month after two and a half years. This month is called Bana-mass or purshotam-mass or Aditi-mass. This month holds a special importance, from the point of view Hindus. In this month, Mattan has a festive look. Pilgrims from far off places come here in this month and perform religious rites.

The ancient remains are not seen in or around the springs. In one of Temples built during the Dogra regime is a stone idol of Vishnu Surya, seated on a Chariot and drawn by seven horses. A kilometer and a half from the sacred springs on the table land is the elegant and imposing ruins of the temple. The temple at Martand is the most impressive of all the ancient structures of Kashmir. Dedicated to the Sun god, Surya this magnificent edifice is located on a Kerewa or table land. Its picturesque situation at the foot of a mountain on a Kerewa bed enhances it grandeur. Martand reveals a great depth of thought, the delicacy of execution and the balanced proportion of figures.

This Temple was built by Laltaditya-Muktapida in honour of the Sun god Martanda. This Temple is built on the ruins of earlier Temple, builded by King Ranaditya. The Temple is superb and fascinating. The Temple is in complete harmony with the natural surroundings. King Laltaditya reigned from 724-761 A.D. The temple stands in the middle of a large courtyard (220 X 142 ft.) enclosed by a cellular peristyle, once having 86 fluted columns. The temple proper contains *garbhagrha*, *antarala* and closed *mandapa*, approached by grand flight of steps. The plinth supporting the central shrine has two tiers, both with niches. The upper row has large niche, with figures of 37 divinities including Surya, Siva, Vishnu, Parvati, Ganga, Yamuna and the Dikpalas. Exterior of the sanctum is *tri-ratha* in plan. The quadrangular peristyle of Martand is among the largest in Kashmir with 25 cells on north and south, 19 on the east and 12 on the west. It is entered on the west through a double chambered gateway that shares the width of the main temple. An imposing structure the gateway is, accessible by steps from both sides and double chambered. This temple built of huge limestone ashlar is one of the largest monuments of Kashmir.

The Temple built by Laltditya came under the hammer of Sultan Sikander, the iconoclast, and this beautiful Temple was changed to a heap of boulders and stone. Weathering and earth quakes contributed in the process of destruction. The ruins are still imposing and show the architect, artistic touch and the dedicated work of the past.

Close to Bhawan, at Bamzu, are two Temples and a rock cut Temple. Both the temples are now converted into Muslim *Ziarat*. Bigger Temple is now the *Ziarat* of Baba Bamdin Sahib and the smaller one is of Baba Rukun-u-din. The cave Temple is untouched by the destructive hands. Inside the cave is a temple with square base and the pyramidal roof. On both side of the entrance to the cave are beautifully carved niches. Inside the main Sanctum is a Shiv-Linga. Jonaraja, in Rajatarangani mentions this place during the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin. Zain-ul-Abidin turned the dry Mattan Plateau into a fertile land by irrigations works. Abul-Fazal in his *Ain-i-Akbari*, has left a short note of Mattan.

Emperor Akbar also went to Martand and made gift of cows and gold to the Brahmins. Historian Sukha also mentions it in Rajatarangani. Another reason for the popularity of this spring is that it comes on the way to the holy cave of Amarnath. In the holy cave of Amarnath, an ice lingam is formed which waxes and wanes with the appearance of moon. On the full moon month of Shravan, Lingam attains its full length. Thousands of visitors came here from India and Abroad in the month of Shravan, to see the nature's miracle and beauty.

A sect of Brahmans called Pandas or Purohits maintain the record of Pilgrims, visiting this place and showing religious rites. Pilgrims on the first day of their visit stay at the houses of Pandas. They provide them the food and accommodation. After performing the religious rites, Pilgrims start form the return journey. During the chill winter season, a lean season for the inflow of visitors to Mattan, the Pandas move towards the plains and visit their clients (*Jazmans*).

Record Books called *Bahis*, gave us the important information about the visitors visiting this place from time to time. The old record books are of handmade Kashmiri paper and the cover is made of cloth. Length of a *Bahi* or record book is about quarter a meter long and it is kept folded, so as to minimize the size. Some panda's claim to have the thousand year's old records on the birch barks. But nobody was able to show them to me. Record does not go back more than 400 years. In the words of Pt. D.N. Kachroo, "in the past Martand was used as a battle ground. Muslim rulers were always cruel to us. Many a times owing to the fear of Muslim invasions, we had to vacate this holy place, and to take refuge, in the hills. Our houses were burnt. Many *Bahis* were lost in this way".

These *Bahis* are a reliable source from the point of view of knowing history. Details regarding the visitors and pilgrims visiting the shrine are written in the *Bahi's* in different languages and scripts. e.g. Sanskrit, Sharda, Takri, Hindi, Urdu, Dogri, Farsi, Punjabi, Pahari, Gujrati, Marathi, Nepali and Chinese. Many royal stamps are found on these *Bahis*. The *Bahis* contain names of well known Panda Brahman names and the description of the area allotted to them from generations. Some very relevant are:-

1. Pt. Dinanath Kachroo has the ***Bahi* of Dogra rulers.**
2. Pt. Balkeshvar Sher has the ***Bahi* of Nehru family**
3. Pt. Sham Lal, Badrinath has the record book of **Royal family of Jaipur.**
4. Pt. Balkeshvar has the record book of Jodhpur.
5. Pt. Sham Lal Lamba has the record of **Chinese Pilgrims.**
6. Pt. Basker Nath Ji has the record books of **Maharaja Darbanga and Maharaja Nepal.**
7. Pt Jai Lal Khah has the *Bahi*, on which is the signature of **Rabindr Nath Tagore**, and details about his visit. Mr. Tagore visited Mattan during the reign of M. Pratap Singh. He stayed in tent at Martand. This visit was unknown to officials, at that time. G.R. Dass brother of eminent free down fighter C.R. Dass also visited this place.

It is remarkable to note the **references of Nehru family** in these *Bahis*. Pt. Moti Lal Nehru visited Mattan on 19 Septembers. He signed the *Bahi* in Urdu. Ranjit, son-in-law of Pt. Motilal Nehru, visited Mattan in zeth 1991 Bik. Krishna Devi Nehru, D/o Pt. Motilal Nehru, visited Mattan in the year 2002 bik. Smt. Sarojvati Nehru visited Mattan on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1941; Radha Mohan Nehru visited Mattan in the month of Shravan 1988 Bik. Pt. Jwahr Lal Nehru visited Mattan on 23 Feb, 1940. Smt. Komal Nehru visited Mattan on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1940. She was on a tour to Pahalgam. Pt. J.L. Nehru Feroz Gandhi visited Mattan in the year 1996 Bik. Pt. J.L Nehru, Feroz Gandhi and Indira Gandhi visited Mattan on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1942. Smt. Indira Gandhi again visited Mattan in the year 2002 Bik. Smt. Indira Gandhi, Shri Feroz Gandhi and Jawahar Lal visited Mattan in the year 2008 Haar. Pt. Jawahar Lal, Smt. Indira Gandhi and Sanjay



Gandhi visited Mattan on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1962. On the same day they went to see the ancient ruins of Temple, built by king Laltaditya. Pt. Jawhar Lal Nehru visited Mattan many times. But he never performed any religions rite or Puja. Dr. Rajinder Prasad and his wife Raj Bans Devi visited Mattan on 10<sup>th</sup> 1955. They performed Puja only.

Thus, Mattan is a very famous site of Pilgrimage and a famous historical site of Sun worship in J&K, where the magnificent and majestic temple of Martand is located. The Bahis with references to the royal families and important politicians and families of the country visiting to Mattan bear testimony to the fact that this place was esteemed high and visited by these dignitaries to offer Sun worship here.

### **The Sun Temple, Konark, Orissa:**

The Sun Temple at Konark is situated in the state of Orissa in India. It is 64 kms from Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa and is towards North East direction on the coasted Belt.

The temple was built by King Narasimha Deva (1237-1263), more than 1200 skilled sculptor took nearly 12 years to chisel out this beautiful masterpiece. The temple was planned, conceived and immortalized in stone in a form of huge chariot with twelve huge sculpted stone wheels and being pulled by seven horses.

The chariot temple facing East consists of the *deul* (Sanctum Sanatorium), the *jagmohana* (*mandpa*) and *natya mandapa*. Konark is mentioned in the Skanda Purana as Surya Khetri, in the Brahm Purana, it is Konaditya, in the Shambh Purana it is Maitrivan and in the Kapila Sanhita it is known as Ravi Khetr. In sacred texts this place is also mentioned as Araka Tirtha. About two kms from Konark temple is a sacred *tirta* of Chandrabhaga.

Konark is associated with Krishna and according to the Purana, son of Krishna, Sambha born from Jambvati look bath at Chandrbhoga and had the *darshan* of Surya. On being told by Nardha that his son was indulging in pleasure with the ladies of his palace, Krishna became angry and cursed his son. Later his son proved his innocence and Krishan advised him to worship the Sun in this region, to overcome his curse. Surya was happy with the *aaradhana* of Sambha and he gave *darshan* to him in his dream. Next day when Sambha went to Chandrbhaga to take bath he found an idol of Surya on the leaf of lotus. This idol known as Konark or Konadivya was worshipped and he built a temple here.

Thus, worship of Sun had been very popular in India. Especially in Himalayan regions it gained wide following and popularity. People from far and wide visited this region to perform prayers at most venerated sites like Katarmal near Almora and Martand in J&K. The two magnificent temples enrich the glory of the most glorious deity, Surya, in this region. Besides, there are many other temples and sites where Sun temples are located and the statues of Sun god have been discovered, which reveal the popularity enjoyed by the Sun worship Himalayan region.

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