



The Pāla-Era Sūrya Sculptures at Cooch Behar Palace Museum: An Iconographic Analysis

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Abstract

The worship of the sun in India can be traced back to the Neolithic period. The sun, as the source of light and heat on the earth, was revered as the creator of life, a powerful entity that must be appeased to gain bountiful production. In the Vedic pantheon, the sun occupied an important position and he was worshipped under various names like Sūrya, Savitr, Vivasvat, Pūṣan, and others. Bijoy Kumar Sarkar in his doctoral thesis, *Sun Worship and Sun-Images in Early Bengal* (2004), has opined that the sun-worship became popular in Eastern India due to the efforts of the *ācāryas*, the priests devoted to this deity. From the Gupta period, we come across the images of the sun. The prominence of Sūrya in the region continued unabated during the Pāla Kings too. The Pālas, despite being heralded as the patrons of Buddhism, harbored no animosity to the Brahmanical religion. A large number of sculptures of Sūrya, dating back to the Pāla period, bear testament to this fact. This paper would focus on the sculptures of Sūrya that have been preserved at the Cooch Behar Palace Museum and are dated as belonging to the Pāla period. These have mostly been retrieved from various police stations and customs offices of North Bengal. The paper will look at the epigraphs of the time to make an estimation of the prevalence of the solar cult. The Pāla art also marked the zenith of medieval Bengal artistry. The paper, therefore, would endeavor to explain the iconographic details of the sculptures and how they reflect the Pāla art form.

Keywords: Sūrya sculptures, the Pālas, medieval Bengal, socio-historical context, iconography.



Introduction

The sun has been an object of veneration from ancient times. Solar worship has been hailed as the real religion of India (Geden, 1921, p. 83). In the Vedic Age, the sun was subjected to adulation under various names: Sūrya, Savitr, Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, Mitra, Bhaga, Vivasvat, the Aśvins and the Ādityas,

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all representing different aspects of the sun. Among these deities, Sūrya came to be the most prominent, being associated with the simplest, visual form of the sun, i.e., its red round orb. The Vedic literature is replete with references to this deity. In the Ṛg Veda, he is praised as the essence of every movable and immovable object (1.115.1). He has been hailed as the source of light whose rays dispel the darkness (Ṛg Veda 4.13.4). The luminous qualities of Sūrya have been related to ethical and moral concerns, as in the *Taittīyā Saṁhitā*, he has been prayed to for protection from evil (1.1.11). The epic and purāṇic literature also uphold the high estimation of Sūrya.

The Vedic literature alludes to the antiquity of sun worship in Bengal. According to the *Ārṣeya Upaniṣad*, the Puṇḍras and the Sumhas were worshippers of the sun (as cited in Belvalkar & Ranade, 1927, p. 298). The spread of Brahmanism in Bengal, under the rule of the Guptas (c. 319-550 A.D.), also led to the popularity of the solar cult. Bijoy Kumar Sarkar (2004) has referred to a tradition that states that twelve brahmins, residents of the area adjacent to the river Sarayū, cured Śaśāṅka, the first historical ruler of Gauḍa, of a deadly disease by offering oblations to the planets. These brahmins, known as *grahaviṅpras*, were rewarded and settled in Rāḍhā and Vaṅga (p. 110). The concept of Sūrya as the healer was prevalent from the Vedic Age.

The Pāla Kings' policy of religious tolerance was evident in the artistic specimens of the period, with an abundance of both Buddhist and Brahmanical sculptures. The popularity of the solar cult can be gauged from the fact that among the Brahmanical sculptures, the images of the Sun-God come only second to those of Viṣṇu. This article will try to look at the prevalence of belief in Sūrya during the Pāla Age (c. 750-1200 A.D.) The iconographic description of Sūrya in different texts will also be taken into account. In view of these, the article will try to look at the Sūrya sculptures that have been kept at the Cooch Behar Palace Museum. It will also attempt to delineate the 'peculiar' features in the iconography of the Sun-God.

Epigraphic Evidence of Sūrya in the Pāla Age

To understand the position of Sūrya in medieval Bengal under the rule of the Pālas, we have to definitely consider the epigraphs of the contemporary period. In the Kamauli Copper Plate Grant of Vaidyadeva, Vighrahapala III (c. 1043-1070 A.D.) has been stated to belong to the solar dynasty. We find its echo in the Soddhala's *Udayasundaṅkathā*, a Gujarati text of the eleventh century A.D. There, Dharmapālā has been stated to be a descendant of Māndhātā (as cited in Sarkar, 2004, p. 164), the legendary Sūryavaṁśī king of Ayodhya. It is to be kept in mind that many of the ancient and medieval rulers claimed descent from the Solar or the Lunar dynasty in a bid to firmly establish their royal prestige and authority. The Pālas, whose ancestry has not been identified with unanimity, must have followed a similar pattern for the legitimization of their rule. It is therefore not surprising when we see that the Pāla kings, in the epigraphs, have often been described as analogous to the Sun God. In the Bangarh Grant of Mahipāla I (c. 977-1027 A.D.), Gopala III (c. 964-976 A.D.) has been equated with Sūrya. The rhetoric was also adopted by the feudatories under the Pālas. The Gayā Stone Inscription during the time of Nayapāla (c. 1027-1043 A.D.), has described Visvāditya, son of Śūdraka, possessing luminous qualities like the sun. D. C. Sircar (1966) has further opined that the name Visvāditya is an indication of the individual being a devotee of Sūrya (p. 88).

The Pāla-era epigraphs often contained adulations to the Sun God. The inscription of Viśvarūpa, dated in the fifteenth regnal year of Nayapāla, begins with the homage to the Sun-God: "Om

namo Mārttaṇḍya" (Sircar, 1966, p. 88). The Gayā Śītalā Temple Inscription of Yakṣapāla during the reign of Govindapāla (c. 1161-1165 A.D.) also starts with "*Om namo Sūryāya*" (Sircar, 1966, p. 93). It records Yakṣapāla building a temple dedicated to several deities, one of whom was Mounāditya. Sircar (1966) has identified Mounāditya as another name for the Sun God (p. 92). The Siyān Stone Slab Inscription of Nayapāla also throws a wealth of information regarding the temples of Sūrya in contemporary Bengal. After hailing Nayapāla for defeating the Chedi king Karṇa, the inscription mentions the construction of a "moving pillar of victory" (Sircar, 1971, p. 39), which was intended for Sūrya to take rest for a while in his daily course. According to Sircar (1971), "The reference may be to the dedication of a *ratha* in favor of a temple of the Sun God" (p. 45). Verse 46 also mentions a Sūrya temple whose brilliance would tempt the god to stay there instead of completing his daily course. The reference to the sun as *Chaṇḍāmśu* (hot-rayed) in verse 53 has prompted Sarkar (2004) to speculate that it relates to the oppressive heat of the sun in the Birbhum region (p. 115). The record of constructing a silver image of Sūrya is a testament to the popularity of the Sun-God among the wealthy patrons who could bear such lavish expenditure. It also follows the purāṇic doctrine as in the *Sāmba Purāṇa* (Chapter 30), silver has been recommended to be used for developing the image of the Sun-God.

One interesting development of the late medieval period was the increasing religious syncretism. It is more evident under the rulers like the Pālas whose patronage extended to different religious faiths. The compromise among different sectarian groups has been captured in the purāṇic literature. In the *Sāmba Purāṇa* (Chapter 26), it has been stated that Sūrya receives his adulation as Viṣṇu in Śvetadvīpa, as Maheśvara in Kuśadvīpa and as Brahmā in Puṣkaradvīpa. It is to be kept in mind that identification of Viṣṇu with Sūrya was prevalent in the Vedic tradition as many of his attributes were believed to be derived from his position as a solar deity. Verse 1 of the Siyān Stone Slab Inscription refers to Sūrya as the right eye of Vāsudeva (Viṣṇu). It sheds light on the relative importance of Sūrya and Viṣṇu in contemporary society, perhaps indicating the gradual decline of the solar cult.

Textual Description of the Iconography of Sūrya

An important way to undertake the study of the Indian tradition of iconography is to approach the Indian iconographic and iconometric texts. J. N. Banerjee (1941) has pointed to the Vedic, epic, and purāṇic literature whose wealth of sūtras, and mythological lores enable us to grasp many iconographic significances. Sūrya, being an important deity since the Vedic period, has been referred to in these texts time and again. It has therefore been necessary to see his iconographic details in those texts which can be related to the art of North India.

Varahamihira's *Brhat Saṁhitā* is one of the earliest texts to present a detailed description of the iconography of Sūrya (Chapter 57). According to the *Brhat Saṁhitā*, Sūrya is dressed like a Northerner, with his body being completely covered. The crowned god holds two lotuses in his two hands. He wears earrings, a long pearl necklace, armor protecting his body, and a sacred girdle around his waist. The luster of his smiling face matches that of the interior of the lotus. The auspiciousness of Sūrya is further symbolized in his halo shining brightly like gems. The text, which is very meticulous about the correct proportion of the image of the Sun God, prescribes that his nose, forehead, shanks, thighs, cheeks, and breasts are to be elevated.

The image of Sūrya has also been discussed in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (Chapter 261). The benevolence of the god has been expressed through his beautiful eyes. He is seated on a one-wheeled chariot, drawn by seven horses. In this text, Sūrya has been given a regal status as "a coronet beaming red should be placed on His head" (*The Matsya Puranam*, 1917, p. 310), with elaborate ornamentation adorning his body. A bodice and two pieces of cloth covered his body. Blue lotuses are held in his two hands and the lotuses are to be "placed on His shoulders as if in a sport" (*The Matsya Puranam*, 1917, p. 310). His splendor is also corroborated by his brilliant feet. V. C. Srivastava in *Sun-Worship in Ancient India* (1972) has opined that the humanization of Sūrya in the epics and the purāṇās necessitated the development of his family and attendants. This has been reflected in his iconography as well where the image of Sūrya is often accompanied by other deities. According to the *Matsya Purāṇa*, the figure of the god is to be guarded by Daṇḍi and Piṅgala, who are armed with swords. The image of Aruṇa, the charioteer of the deity, exudes resplendence like that of the lotus leaves. The text further pays attention to the horses. The long-necked horses must be well-figured and they are to be yoked to the chariot, reined in by the strings of snakes, and decked on either side of Sūrya. The *Matsya Purāṇa* also suggests an alternate image of the Sun God where he remains seated on the lotus, holding lotuses.

The gradual development of the iconography of Sūrya is evident in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (III.67). In this text, Sūrya is four-armed, mustached, vermillion complexioned. His lustrousness is further enhanced by "well-covered garment" (*The Vishnudharmottara*, 1928, p. 88), ornaments, a coat of mail, and auspicious garlands made of different flowers. His waist girdle, known as *yāvijāṃgā*, must be properly displayed. The left and right hands of the god hold sunbeams and garlands respectively. The remaining two hands are to be placed on the heads of Daṇḍa and Piṅgala. Both of them have been endowed with human forms and wear bright garments. The deep tawny colored Piṅgala, carrying a stile and a palm leaf, is on the right of Sūrya, and Daṇḍa, carrying a shield and a lance, is to his left. A lion-standard is also placed to his left. He is accompanied by his four sons: Revanta, and Yama, two Manus; and four wives: Rājñī, Riksubhā, Chāyā, and Suvarchasā. As the planetary king, he is required to be surrounded by the planets. The text also gives details of the one-wheeled chariot, bearing six marks and the seven horses drawing it. The seven horses are the seven meters of the Vedas: Gāyatrī, Ushṇik, Anuṣṭubh, Vṛhatī, Paṃkti, Triṣṭubh and Jagatī. Sūrya remains seated in the chariot, driven by Aruṇa. An important feature of this text is that it enriches these iconographic motifs with metaphysical symbolism. The sunbeams in his hands have been stated to be supporting the universe, the lion standard personifying the Dharma, and the *yāvijāṃgā* supporting the world. Rājñī represents the earth, Riksubhā represents the sky, Chāyā represents the shadow and Suvarchasā stands for the lustre. Sūrya's vermillion complexion symbolizes his inherent nature of light. At the same time, to protect all beings from his burning heat, he remains fully covered. Thus, in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, the iconography of Sūrya presents him as the master of the cosmos.

In view of the above discussion, the similarities and differences between one or other of such texts become quite apparent. The *Agni Purāṇa* recommends that Sūrya should be seated on a horse too (Chapter 51). According to the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, one Aśvinī Kumāra remains on either side of the Sun-God (Chapter 124). Mirroring such textual flexibilities, the artists have produced abundant paintings and sculptures of different forms.

Sūrya Sculptures at Cooch Behar Palace Museum

The Cooch Behar Palace Museum houses several Sūrya sculptures of Eastern India. This article will take into account four sculptures that fall within the Pāla period. The sculptures in question are two-armed, belonging to different stages of the Pāla art.

a) Sūrya, with a circular halo, is depicted as standing erect on a lotus pedestal. Two full-blown eight-petalled lotuses, rising above his shoulders, are seen in his two hands. Except for the necklace and the *upavīta* (the sacred thread), the impression of the armor is very faint. Susan L. Huntington (1984) has identified such a garment as “a vest of leather or metal or some other stiff material...as indicated by the rigid waist-band and crossing” (p. 184). The deity is also adorned with a simple *kiriṭamukūṭa*, a diadem, and two earrings. The girdle worn by him is in the form of an ornamental belt. As stated in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, a pair of clothes is visible on the lower half of the deity. One of the clothes has been depicted as rolled like a scarf. Regarding the other cloth, N. K. Bhattasali (1929) has theorized that it could be a *dhoti*, held around the waist by the girdle (p. 159). Enamul Haque (1992) has, however, disagreed as he pointed out that the common occurrence of *dhotis* across the deities would not warrant it being specially mentioned (p. 179). The feet of Sūrya are inside long boots, which is an interesting phenomenon. The *Matsya Purāṇa* warns against anybody fashioning the feet of the deity, otherwise he would fall prey to the curse of leprosy. According to the *Sāmba Purāṇa*, Saṃjñā, the daughter of Viśvakarmā, was married to the Sun God (Chapter 10-11). Being touched by his unbearable heat, she created her double named Chāyā and fled. However, the ruse was revealed when Chāyā showed step motherly attitude to Saṃjñā’s children. When Sūrya went to Viśvakarmā in search of Saṃjñā, Viśvakarmā implored upon him the necessity of his remodeling. Accordingly, Viśvakarmā produced a beautiful form of Sūrya by working upon him through his lathe, yet his feet remained untouched. The dictum towards the artists regarding the feet of the Sun-God must have proceeded from this precedent set by the divine artificer.

In front of Sūrya, there is a miniature female figure who, according to the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, is Mahāśvetā, another wife of the Sun God. She carries a *kamaṇḍalu*. One can see another two female figures, in *tribhāṅga* posture, on both sides of the deity. Presumably, they are his wives. They seem to carry lotuses in their hands. To the right of Sūrya, is Piṅgala, and to the left of the god, stands Daṇḍi who holds a lance upward in his left hand. Piṅgala and Daṇḍi are crowned with *kāraṇḍamukūṭas*. The feet of these figures are booted too.

There is also Aruṇa, the charioteer of the god, remaining seated. He seems to hold aloft a whip in his right hand and his left hand rests on the *makara*, which according to Haque (1992), signifies the *makara*-head of the chariot (p. 184). The chariot is depicted with one wheel. The seven horses drawing the chariot are also visible. Further, on both sides of the Sun-God, near his arms, one can notice another two horse-like figures. They may relate to the twin gods of Aśvin Kumaras, the sons of Sūrya and Saṃjñā. Two *vidyādharas* are seen hovering above the deity. The top of the stele is decorated with some ornamental motifs. The sculpture can be dated back to the late ninth to early tenth century A.D.



Figure 1: Sūrya, two-armed (Taken by self)

b) Sūrya is richly decorated. The lotuses, in his two hands, are prominently displayed. The outer circle of lotuses consists of eight petals, but seven petals can be seen in the inner circle. The deity is crowned with bejeweled *kiriṭamukūṭa*. The outlines of the upper garment give the impression of a diaphanous cloth. The deity is also adorned with a richly carved necklace, bangles, earrings, *upavīta*, and an ornamental girdle. He wears a pleated *dhoti*. The other piece of cloth hangs from the girdle, though it is short in length. The richness of Sūrya is further enhanced by an ornamental garment passing in front of his knees.

Mahāśvetā stands in front of Sūrya. Aruṇa, in front of her, remains seated, holding the *Makara* in his left hand. Sūrya's feet cannot be seen as they are covered by the separate *prabhāvali* of Mahāśvetā. The two wives of the Sun God, standing on either side, seem to carry fly-flappers, as stated in the *Agni Purāṇa* (Chapter 51). The bearded, pot-bellied Piṅgala and Daṇḍi are on his right and left sides respectively. One can also see two miniature female figures shooting arrows on both sides of the Sun-God. Banerjee (1954) has identified them as Uṣā and Pratyusā (p. 81). Here, both of them are presented in the *āṭṭha* posture.

The sculpture follows the traditional pattern of depicting seven horses and one wheel of the chariot as well as two *vidyādharas* above the head of the god. A distinct feature of this sculpture is that behind the god, there is a flaming halo that extends to the tip of the *kiriṭamukūṭa*. The halo

is shaped like a leaf. The decorated stele indicates that it falls within the developed phase of the Pāla art. The sculpture can be dated to the middle of the tenth century A.D.



Figure 2: Sūrya, two-armed (Taken by self)

c) Sūrya, standing on a lotus pedestal, holds two full-blown lotuses, their inner and outer circle containing eight petals. A simplification in the carving of lotuses is noticeable. Their petals have not been carved with precision, giving them roundish looks, with only incised lines giving a faint impression of distinct petals. The lotuses rise much above the shoulders. The armor is not clearly visible. His *upavīta*, bangles, necklaces, and earrings have been carefully carved, though marked without any additional inner decoration. The *kiritamukuta* is also simple, with only a jewel in its center. Apart from the usual attire, another cloth passes around the arms of Sūrya and falls slightly down on either side of his body. The feet of the Sun-God are booted. Two daggers on the right of the waist belt and a sword on the left can be seen.

Mahāśvetā, unlike the previous two sculptures, is depicted only on her knees. Aruṇa is sculpted as half-embedded and leaning forward as if he is trying to rein in the chariot. Sūrya is also attended upon by his two wives, their right hands displaying *abhaya mudrā*. A lance hangs to the left of Daṇḍī. Piṅgala and Daṇḍī, along with the Sun God's two wives, are presented within separate *prabhāvalis*. The arrow-shooting female figures are in *ālīḍha* and *pratyālīḍha* poses.

The rounded stele is devoid of any further decoration. Near its top, two *vidyādharas* can be seen. One can also notice the motif of a horse, standing atop an elephant, on both sides of Sūrya. There is a simple circular halo behind the deity. The sculpture can be dated to the latter half of the tenth century A.D.



Figure 3: Sūrya, two-armed (Taken by self)

d) Among the sculptures of Sūrya at the Cooch Behar Palace Museum, this sculpture comes foremost in terms of artistic brilliance. Unfortunately, much of it is broken, including the stele, left hand, and the figure of Mahāśvetā. The god is adorned with a finely carved crown, earrings, and necklace. The *upavīta* is also very prominent. The decorated outlines of the upper garment give the deity an elegant look. The several strands of the girdle make it more prominent than the previous three. The contours of the pleated *dhoti* have also been impressed upon through fine incision lines. Two daggers are tucked on either side of the waist belt. The feet of the god are booted.

The minute attention to detail is also seen in the case of the attendants of the god. The palm leaf and inkpot carried by Piṅgala and the sword of Daṇḍi can be noticed. Compared to the previous three sculptures, here, the female deities are more turned on an axis. According to Huntington (1984), such sculptural animation is a characteristic of North Bengal images. She has commented that “in a work where the central figure is strictly controlled by iconography and may not stand even in a relaxed posture, the sculptor has still been able to add much to the work by the placement of minor figures in space” (p. 184).

Aruṇa is found to be defaced. The figures of female archers can be seen, with their bows being pointed slightly upward. The seven galloping horses have also been carefully carved, with attention to their reins too. A kneeling figure, most probably the donor of the sculpture, is depicted near the left foot of Sūrya. On the undamaged portion of the stele, one finds the motif

of a horse upon an elephant, here depicted on a lotus. The sculpture can be said to belong to the eleventh century A.D.



Figure 4: Sūrya, two-armed (Taken by self)

'Alien' Constitution in the Iconography of Sūrya

A survey of the Pāla sculptures has made it clear that the iconography of Sūrya has often been distinguished by certain 'peculiar' features. The texts' emphasis on Sūrya being garbed in the northern fashion (*udīcyaveśā*) is certainly of particular interest. In this connection, there is a necessity to take into account the possible Hellenistic and Iranian influences.

The role of the Magas in the popular representation of Sūrya in India has been acknowledged in the purāṇic literature. According to the *Sāmba Purāṇa*, after Sāmba had been cursed by Kṛṣṇa to suffer from leprosy, he was advised to worship Sūrya. Accordingly, he brought the Magas from Śakadvīpa and they installed the image of the god and instructed Sāmba to pay homage to the god according to their ways (Chapter 26). In reality, these Magas were ancient Medean priestly tribes who used to worship their Sun God, Mihira or Mithra, and later made inroads into Zoroastrianism. The contacts between the Magas and India can be dated back to the 6th-5th century B.C. and by the fifth century A.D., they were assimilated within mainstream Brahmanism. Therefore, it was not surprising to notice certain Iranian features in the iconography of the Sun God, though it must be kept in mind that Hellenic influences also had a major role in the anthropomorphic representation of Mithra. One such iconographic trait was the '*avyaṅga*', the girdle commonly worn by Sūrya. It can be related to the '*aiwiyaonghana*', the woolen thread girdle worn by a Zoroastrian. In Pāla sculptures, the waist belt of Sūrya has been prominently displayed, often with elaborate ornamentation. The foot gear that distinguishes Sūrya from other Hindu gods must also be analyzed. Mithraism gained a following during the Kuṣāṇa period and the Kuṣāṇa

artists naturally fashioned the deity in their own image. The images of the Kuṣāṇa Kings who established control over Northwest India, depict them in foot gear, tight-fitting bodices, with swords hanging by their sides. These traits, which for the Kuṣāṇas were necessitated because of the cold climate, were accommodated in the iconography of the Sun-God, as evident in the Pāla-era sculptures. To make sense of such peculiarities, one comes across the account of Viśvakarmā modeling Sūrya and warnings against artists depicting his feet. It has led Stephen Markel (1995) to opine that “The primacy of the artistic form over the literary explanation is apparently indisputable” (p. 29).

However, it must be kept in mind that these did not come in the way of the Indian artists who, through their ingenuity, brought in their elements. Regarding outside influence, Banerjea (1948), has observed that “the gradual idealization of these traits and preponderance of Indian elements had already begun from the late Gupta period” (p. 61). The heavy drapery of the Kuṣāṇas gave way to the diaphanous garments of Sūrya. The Indian sculptors also brought in Indian ornaments like *kiriṭamukuṭa*, which is most commonly worn by Sūrya in the Pāla sculptures. Another instance of Indianization can be seen in the lotuses held by the Sun-God. Whereas Mithra was represented as resting on a sunflower, the association of lotus with Sūrya was in accordance with the significance of lotus in Brahmanism. The blossoming and closing of the flower being timed with the rising and setting of the sun also made the equation easier. His chariot can also be described as a borrowing from the Hellenistic imagery of the Greek Sun-God Helios, who was shown riding a quadriga. However, instead of the two-wheeled quadriga, one notices the single-wheeled chariot of Sūrya in Pāla sculptures. In the Ṛg Veda, it has been stated that Indra took away one of the wheels of Sūrya’s chariot to decrease his speed (4.28.2). Such textual modifications are helpful in understanding Indian Sūrya images.

Conclusion

In view of the abundant artistic specimens that have been unearthed and are still being found, the Pāla Age can be viewed as charting the zenith of Bengal art. The distinct Eastern Indian style that emerged as a result of centuries’ long political stability, made its mark on the contemporary Sūrya iconography. Epigraphic evidence brings out the rulers’ devotion to the deity, aided by the settlement of the descendants of the Maga Brahmins in Eastern India. The textual descriptions of the image of the Sun God also point to a close connection between literature and art. The gradual iconic development of the Pāla art is evident through a careful examination of the two-armed standing Sūrya sculptures at Cooch Behar Palace Museum. It shows several common features, like, the *kiriṭamukuṭa*, the lotus, Sūrya’s entourage, the horses on the pedestal et cetera. At the same time, the ornamentation of the reliefs, and flexibility in the overall composition, are helpful in deducing that certain sculptures belong to the late Pāla period. The differences are also brought out in the posture of attendant deities. The sculptural specimens also highlight how the sculptors were able to Indianize the foreign elements, making the images more attuned to the familiar mythological exploits, easily understood by people.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

I declare that I have no potential conflicts of interest.

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