Surya or Aditya is a deity of *Rigvedic* antiquity known by variety of names in the vast body of Indian literature. He got identified with Vishnu and his forms. But from the time of Kushanas onwards his worship in temples persisted. This is indicated by good number of images belonging to various periods. In Karnataka during the Chalukya period a number of temples were erected for Surya. The Malagitti Sivalaya at Badami, the Durga temple and some other temples like Ambigergudi, Badigergudi and Suryanarayangudi at Aihole were independent temples dedicated to God Aditya.\(^1\) But the deity’s connection with Vishnu seems well demonstrated by the image of Garudavahana Vishnu in the *Vitana* of the Malagitti Sivalaya (625 A.D.) It is not surprising that at the time when *Puranic* literature focused on trinity very few myths related to the Sun god could develop and get incorporated in the *Puranas*. The reflection of this situation is seen in the minimal representation of the mythology connected with the Sun god. In the present chapter two such myths are discussed in context of the Chalukyan art.

The Story of Surya Punishing Chhaya

The story of Surya purnishing *Chhaya* is found in the *Matsyapurana, Vayupurana, Vishnupurana, Markandeyapurana, Brahmapurana, Bhavishyapurana.*
Surya had three wives, Sanjna, Rajni and Prabha. Surya and Sanjna had two sons and a daughter. The eldest son was Vaivasvata Manu. Remaining story runs similar to the one given in Markhandeyapurana.

Vayupurana

The story of Surya and Sanjna and the creation of Chhaya is similar those of other Puranas. The difference is in the names of the children. Here Yama is the son of Sanjna and Surya and Chhaya had two sons and a daughter. Chhaya was more attractive towards her own children than towards Sanjna’s. One day Yama kicked Chhaya and Chhaya cursed him. He went and complained his father. Surya demanded to know the truth from Chhaya. She revealed nothing. When Surya threatened to curse her and grasped her by the hair, Chhaya revealed the truth. Then Surya assumed the form of a horse, went to Uttarakuru region, and joined Sanjna (Fig. 8.2). As horses Surya and Sanjna had two sons named Asvins. After the Asvins were born Surya and Sanjna returned to their original form.

Vishnupurana

Visvakarma had a daughter named Sanjna who was married to Surya. Manu, Yama and Yami were their children. After some time Sanjna found that she could no longer bear the radiant energy of her husband. So she created Chhaya who looked exactly like her. She left Chhaya to look after her husband and went off to meditate in a forest. Surya did not know that this was Chhaya and not Sanjna. Surya and Chhaya had two sons called Sanaischara and Savarni Manu and a daughter called Tapati.

One day for some reason Chhaya became very angry and cursed Yama. Both Yama and Surya then understood that this woman could not be Yama’s mother Sanjna and must be someone else. Chhaya told them what had happened. And Surya learnt that Sanjna was performing penance in a forest in the form of a mare. Surya himself assumed the form of a horse and joined his wife. (Fig. 8.2) Thus were born three sons, viz., the two Aswins and Revanta.
Markandeyapurana

Visvakarma had a daughter named Sanjna. She married Surya and they had a son named Manu. The energy of the Sun was actually too strong for Sanjna’s eyes and she could not bear to look at her husband. She lowered her eyes or sometimes she glanced at her husband only from the sides of her eyes. This angered the Sun and he cursed her that she would have the god Yama and the river Yamuna as children. Then Sanjna created Chhaya from her own body a woman who looked exactly like her. Afterwards Sanjna adopted the form of a mare and began to perform panace in the Kuru kingdom. Surya and Chhaya had two sons and a daughter. One day Yama raised his foot to kick Chhaya and Chhaya cursed him that he would be born on the earth. Hearing this, the Sun was greatly surprised. Then Surya started to curse her. At this, Chhaya revealed the whole story and explained that she was Chhaya and not Sanjna. Then Surya adopted the form of a horse and joined Sanjna in the Kuru Kingdom. (Fig.8.2) As horses they had three children. The first two were the two Asivins, Nasatya and Darra, and the third was Revanta.

Brahmapurana

Surya was married to Sanjna and had two sons, Vaivasvata Manu and Yama or Sraddhadeva. Yama had a twin sister named Yamuna. Though the remaining story runs similar to the above mentioned puranas, the story of Chhaya’s creation becomes the issue. When Chhaya ill-treated the children of Sun god, the Suns pulls her by hair and threatens a curse on her, which makes Chhaya to reveal the truth of her creation.

Bhavishyapurana

Sanjna was married to Surya. Their children were Yama and Yamuna. Surya was so radiant that Sanjna could not stand her husband’s energy. She therefore created a woman named Chhaya or Nikshubha out of her own body. Then Sanjna adopted the form of a mare and began to live in the kingdom known as Uttarakuru. But Surya treated Chhaya as Sanjna. Chhaya bore Surya three children named Srutasrava, Srutakarma and Tapati. One day Tapati and
Yama had a quarrel. When Yama raised his foot to kick his stepmother, Chhaya cursed him. Yama complained to his father that Chhaya was always unfair towards him.7

Surya next taxed Chhaya with the truth. A mother should not discriminate amongst her children. So Surya threatened to curse her. Then Chhaya told Surya that she was not Sanjna, but Chhaya. Then Surya assumed the form of a horse and joined Sanjna in the land of Uttarakuru. As horses, Surya and Sanjna had two sons named the Asivinikumaras.

The Story of Yajnavalkya

The story of Yajnavalkya is treated in the Vishnupurana and the Brahmandapurana. Vishnupurana

Vaisampayana committed the crime of killing a Brahmana. When he advised his disciples to arrange a sacrifice, Yajnavalkya told that he would arrange for the sacrifice himself, as the other disciples did not have much power. Hearing these words Vaisampayana became angry, and told him to return whatever he had taught him. Yajnyavalkya then vomited out the Yajurveda and the other disciples ate it up in the form of birds. But Yajnavalkya still wanted to learn the Yajurveda. So he began to pray to the Sun. The Sun appeared in the form of a horse and taught him those branches of the Yajurveda.8

According to another account originally Krishna learnt the Sukla Yajurveda. Then Yajnavalka learnt Sukla Yajurveda from Savita, having been made to give back the former to his guru by disgorging the Taittiriya Samhita of the Krishna Yajurveda. Then he had to follow the Sun to repeat it all over again.9

Brahmandapurana

Yajnavalkya studied the Vedas from Vaisampayana, who once had to perform a difficult religious rite. When he called all his disciples and requested
to help him in the observance of this rite, Yajnavalkya told them that he alone would do what was necessary. Vaisampayana became angry of this pride of Yajnavalkya and told him to return all that he had learnt from him. Then Yajnavalkya vomited out the Yajurveda. Subsequently, Yajnavalkya prayed to the Sun-god. He pleased the Sun-god and obtained the knowledge of the Vedas from him.\(^{10}\) (Fig.8.4)

**Sculptural Representations**

**Surya Punishing Chhaya, Malagitti Sivalaya, Badami**

The Malagitti Sivalaya is located in the northern precincts of the north fort at Badami. This is a nirandhara temple facing the east. Originally this temple was dedicated to the Sun god. It comprises a garbhagriha, an antarala, a hall and an open mukhamandapa. Over the garbhagriha is a dravida superstructure. It may be assigned in the first half of the 7\(^{th}\) century A.D. The temple has fine sculptures on its walls, particularly of Vishnu and Siva. In the antarala, on the left flank is a narrative sculpture of Surya chiding Chhaya.

The panel is depicted in a vertical kostha near garbhagriha door way. A man is threatening a zooanthropormic woman, half women and half mare. They are apparently Surya and Chhaya. He holds a danda in his right hand while the left hand grips Chhaya’s hair. The artist has suggested by showing lower part of Chaya in the form mare, Samjana is performing penance in the form of a mare.

**Durga Temple, Aihole**

The Durga temple was originally an Aditya Temple but has no sanctum image at present. It has been already described earlier on pp.

On a pillar in the Mukhamandapa of the Durga temple is the theme of Surya chiding Chhaya. Surya is threatening Chhaya with his right hand while his left hand grasps Chaya’s hair. As in the case of Malagetti Sivalaya specimen, the lower half of the depicted as a mare.
Yajnavalkya following Surya
Virupaksha Temple, Pattadakal

On a pillar in the Virupaksha temple is the theme of Yajnavalkya following Surya (Fig. 8.4). Surya stands in a chariot. On his either side are Usha and Prathyusha. The chariot is adorned by galloping horses. Behind the chariot Yajnavalkya swiftly following keeping peace with Surya speeding in his chariot and learning the *Sukla Yajurveda*.

Observations on the Saura Themes

As pointed out in the introduction to this chapter the myths related to Surya that may have existed during the *Vedic* age seem to have been transferred to god Vishnu in course of time. Accordingly when *Puranas* were composed only few myths retained their identity in connection with god Surya. In the Chalukyan context though we have relatively good number of temples dedicated to god Aditya, the themes drawn from Surya’s myth are too few. Above, two such themes related to Surya were identified and described, namely Yajnavalkya’s learning the *Yajurveda* and Surya threatening Chhaya. These representations are unique in Indian art.
Notes and References


List of illustrations

8.1 Malagitti Sivalaya, Badami.

8.2 Surya punishing Chhaya, antarala, Malagitti Sivalaya, Badami.

8.3 Surya punishing Chhaya, on a pillar in the mukhamandapa, Durga temple, Aihole.

8.4 Surya following Yajnavalkya, on a pillar in the gudhamandapa, Virupaksha temple, Pattadakal.