

# מוקהלינגה

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# מוחאלינגה

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## Mukhalinga

Shiva depicted with his face emerging. From his lingam.

<http://www.mythologydictionary.com/hindu-mythology.html>

मुखलिङ्गं Mukhalingam

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अष्टाश्रिमध्यभागस्थः --- शेषं भ्रमणं भवेत्। प्रासादश्च चतुर्द्वारश्च चतुर्भिर्मण्डपैर्युतः ॥१९०॥ प्रासादसाकसूत्र

**मुखलिङ्गं** निवेशयेत्।

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गोपुराद्यैरलङ्कताः। करव्यासामेरुपेता ववा ...

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# Mukhalinga

In Hindu iconography, **Mukhalinga** or **Mukhalingam** (literally "*linga with a face*", mukhalinga) is a *linga* with one or more human faces. The *linga* is an aniconic representation of the Hindu god Shiva and is sometimes interpreted as a phallic symbol.<sup>[1]</sup> Mukhalingas may be of stone or can be made of a metal sheath, which covers the normal *linga*.

The mukhalinga generally has one, four or five faces. Mukhalingas having four faces are also regarded to have an invisible fifth face at the top of the *linga*. The four- and five-faced mukhalingas represent the five aspects of Shiva, which also relate to the classical elements and the cardinal directions.

## 1 Iconography of stone Mukhalingas in texts

The iconography and making of the mukhalinga is prescribed in the *Agamas* and the *Tantras*.<sup>[1]</sup> These sculptured *lingas* fall under the classification of *manushalinga* ("man-made *lingas*"), the other category being *Swayambhu* or naturally occurring *lingas*.<sup>[1]</sup> A *manushalinga* has three parts: the *Brahma-bhaga*, the lowest part of the *linga* which is a square platform; *Vishnu-bhaga* - the middle section of the *linga* with a pedestal or *pitha* and *Rudra-bhaga*, the topmost part of the central shaft with a rounded tip.<sup>[2]</sup> Mukhalinga should be *sarvasama* ("all-equal"), where the three parts are equal. On the topmost *rudra-bhaga* or *puja-bhaga*, one face and a maximum of five faces may be carved. If the sanctum (*garbhagriha*) has only one door, then the *linga* should have only one face on the front (the east), facing the door. In case of two doors, it should have two faces - front and back - facing the doors in the east and the west. In case of three doors, the *linga* should have three faces, except in the west. When the shrine has four doors, the *linga* may have four or five faces. The four faces should face the doors in the four cardinal directions; in addition if a fifth face exists, it should be carved on the top and face the front, the east. When mukhalinga is four-faced, instead of only faces, the busts of the deities are carved on the four side; each having two arms.<sup>[1]</sup>

The stone mukhalingas may be depicted comprising just of the central shaft, but may be part of the full assembly, where the shaft is embedded in the *pitha* pedestal, denoting the *yonis*, the female sexual organ.<sup>[3][4][5]</sup>

## 2 Mukhalingas as metal sheaths

A normal *linga* may be converted into a mukhalinga by covering with a *kavacha* ("armour"), a metal (generally gold) covering carved in the shape of the head of Shiva. It has displays the **third eye** of Shiva on the forehead, the crescent moon over his head and a crown.<sup>[6]</sup> The covering or sheath is also known as a *kosha* or *linga-kosha*, and can be called of metal alloys, gold or silver or<sup>[7]</sup> cooper.<sup>[3]</sup> Another form of cover is carved in shape of a *linga*, with a rounded top, with four faces carved on four sides.<sup>[8]</sup>

## 3 One-faced Mukhalinga

The one-faced mukhalinga is called *eka-mukhalinga*, "linga with a single face". The face is created in high relief. He wears his hair piled on his head like a bun, while longer hair flow over his shoulders.<sup>[9]</sup> He may also wear earrings and a necklace and have the crescent moon on his head and the third eye on the forehead.<sup>[5]</sup> The faces of Shiva are carved generally from the ear onwards, emerging from the *linga*.<sup>[10]</sup>

## 4 Four/Five-faced Mukhalinga

The five-faced mukhalinga is called *pancha-mukhalinga*. The five faces relate Shiva to the classical elements, the directions, the five senses and five parts of the body. These represent Shiva's five aspects: *Sadyojata*, *Vamadeva*, *Aghora*, *Tatpurusha* and *Ishana*.<sup>[6]</sup> A four-faced *linga* is said also to represent the five aspects of Shiva, the fifth aspect is center, the shaft itself or is assumed to be emerging from the top of the shaft and denotes the **formless Absolute**.<sup>[8][3]</sup> Thus, a four-faced mukhalinga can be also called a *pancha-mukhalinga* ("linga with five faces" of Shiva).<sup>[3]</sup> These four-faced *lingas* are the most commonly found mukhalingas.<sup>[11]</sup>

The top face is known as *Ishana* or *Sadashiva*, who is rarely depicted and governs zenith and the sky (*Akasha*). The east face is *Sadyojata* or *Mahadeva*, the regent of the earth (*Prithvi*). The west face is *Tatpurusha* or *Nandi* (Shiva's bull mount) or *Nandivakra* (the face of *Nandi*), denoting the wind, *Vayu*. While *Vamadeva* or *Uma* (*Parvati*, Shiva's consort) or *Umavakra* (the face of *Parvati*) or *Tamreshvara* (water, *Ap*) faces north, *Aghora* or *Bhairava* looks south (fire, *Agni*). In some texts,

the east face is called Tatpuruṣa and the western one Sadyojata.<sup>[1][8][3]</sup> The icon of the five aspects represents the entire universe.<sup>[8]</sup>

In Nepal, the four aspects have similar faces. They wear similar crowns and hairstyles and have Shiva's third eye. Mahadeva may have a moustache and has matted hair piled up on his head. Nandi bears on the forehead the sectarian mark (tilaka) of the Shaivas (worshippers of Shiva) and floral earrings. The face of Uma also bears the Shaiva mark and depicts Shiva as *Ardhanarishvara*, the composite androgynous form of Shiva and Parvati. The right half is the male Shiva with a moustache, while the left half is the female Parvati; the eyes, the lips, the earrings (a serpent and floral earring) as well as the sides of the crown may differ in the halves. Bhairava, the terrible form of Shiva, is generally depicted angry; however may have a gentler expression. He wears serpent-earrings or asymmetrical earrings and has curled hair. All of them are depicted with two hands, carrying a *akshamala* (rosary) in the right and a water pot in the left. The rosary-bearing hand is held in *abhayamudra*, gesture of assurance. The rosary signifies Death or Time, while the water-pot stands for its antithesis, *amrita*, the elixir of life. The hands indicate that Shiva will lead his devotees to *moksha*, emancipation.<sup>[8][3]</sup>

## 5 Evolution

Mukhalingas are found throughout India<sup>[6]</sup> and Nepal.<sup>[3]</sup> They also appear in the former Champa kingdom, presently in Vietnam as well as Cambodia and Borneo in the south east Asia<sup>[7][12]</sup> and Afghanistan to the west of India.<sup>[5]</sup> One of earliest specimen of a mukhalinga is a five-faced one in Bhita, which is dated to second century BCE.<sup>[11]</sup>

Alain Daniélou says that mukhalingas of Shiva resemble similar depictions of phalluses with carved faces from Greece and those from Celtic Europe. He also notes the phalluses with full human figures are also found in France and India, citing the second-century icon of *Gudimallam* as an early example.<sup>[6]</sup> Besides the *Gudimallam* icon, *Stella Kramrisch* also relates mukhalingas to the wooden posts with a head on top, that signify a deity or a hero and are found commonly in Bihar.<sup>[11]</sup>

## 6 Notes

[1] Rao pp. 86-88

[2] Rao pp. 86-88

[3] Kossak p.139

[4] Kossak p. 143

- [5] Philippe De Montebello (1994). *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Guide*. Metropolitan Museum of Art. p. 102. ISBN 978-0-87099-710-5.
- [6] Alain Daniélou (1995). *The Phallus: Sacred Symbol of Male Creative Power*. Inner Traditions / Bear & Co. pp. 41–43. ISBN 978-1-59477-731-8.
- [7] Andrew David Hardy; Mauro Cucarzi; Patrizia Zolese (2009). *Champa and the Archaeology of Mỹ Sơn (Vietnam)*. NUS Press. pp. 138, 159. ISBN 978-9971-69-451-7.
- [8] Pratapaditya Pal (1 January 1985). *Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*. University of California Press. p. 109. ISBN 978-0-520-05407-3.
- [9] Kossak p. 94
- [10] Kramrisch p. 178
- [11] Kramrisch p. 179
- [12] O'Connor, S.J. (1961). "AN EKAMUKHALINGA FROM PENINSULAR SIAM". *The Journal of the Siam Society*. The Siam Society. Retrieved 2 July 2014.

## 7 References

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- Kramrisch, Stella (1988). "Linga: The Linga and the Face of Siva". *The Presence of Siva*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. ISBN 9788120804913.
- Steven Kossak (1991). *The Lotus Transcendent: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from the Samuel Eilenberg Collection*. Metropolitan Museum of Art. ISBN 978-0-87099-613-9.

## 8 External links

- Online exhibition on mukhalingas

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# Lingam

“Linga” and “Shivling” redirect here. For the mountain, see Shivling (Garhwal Himalaya). For other uses, see Linga (disambiguation).

The **lingam** (also *linga*, *ling*, *Shiva linga*, *Shiv*

sign of emergence and murgence.<sup>[10][11]</sup>

## 1 Definition and meaning



*Traditional flower offering to a lingam in Varanasi*

*ling*, Sanskrit: लिङ्ग, *liṅgam*, meaning “mark”, “sign”, or “inference”<sup>[1][2]</sup>) is a representation of the Hindu deity Shiva used for worship in temples.<sup>[3]</sup> In traditional Indian society, the linga is rather seen as a symbol of the energy and potential of God, Shiva himself. <sup>[4][4][5][6][7]</sup>

The lingam is often represented alongside the yoni, a symbol of the goddess or of Shakti, female creative energy.<sup>[8]</sup> The union of lingam and yoni represents the “indivisible two-in-oneness of male and female, the passive space and active time from which all life originates”.<sup>[9]</sup>

Linga represents Cosmic Egg ('Brahmanda' in Sanskrit) who has no beginning nor end. It is believed that this changing world ('Jagat' in Sanskrit) merges or dissolves into the Formless in the end. So, the Linga is the simplest



*Linga-base at the Cát Tiên sanctuary, Lâm Đồng Province, Vietnam*



*Sivalingam at the Sri Meenakshi temple in Madurai*

The Sanskrit term लङ्गिणं *liṅgam*, transliterated as *linga*, has diverse meanings and uses, ranging from mark, sign or characteristic to gender. Vaman Shivram Apte's Sanskrit<sup>[12]</sup> dictionary provides the many definitions:

1. A mark, sign, token, an emblem, a badge, symbol, distinguishing mark, characteristic
2. A mark of realism
3. A symptom, mark of disease

4. A means of proof, a proof, evidence
5. (In logic) The hetu or middle term in a syllogism
6. Gender (in gram.)
7. The image of a god, an idol
8. One of the relations or indications...which serve to fix the meaning of a word in any particular passage
9. (In Vedānta philosophy) The subtle frame or body, the indestructible original of the gross or visible body
10. A spot, stain
11. The nominal base, the crude form of a noun
12. (In Sāñ. phil.) Pradhāna or Prakṛiti
13. The effect or product (that which is evolved out of a primary cause and itself becomes a producer).
14. Inference, conclusion

The Hindu scripture *Shiva Purana* describes in its first section, the *Vidyeshwar Samhita*, the origin of the lingam, known as Shiva-linga, as the beginning-less and endless cosmic pillar (*Stambha*) of fire, the cause of all causes.<sup>[13]</sup> Lord Shiva is pictured as emerging from the Lingam – the cosmic pillar of fire – proving his superiority over gods Brahma and Vishnu.<sup>[14]</sup> This is known as *Lingodbhava*. The *Linga Purana* also supports this interpretation of lingam as a cosmic pillar, symbolizing the infinite nature of Shiva.<sup>[14][15][16][17]</sup> According to *Linga Purana*, the lingam is a complete symbolic representation of the formless Universe Bearer - the oval shaped stone is resembling mark of the Universe and bottom base as the Supreme Power holding the entire Universe in it.<sup>[18]</sup> Similar interpretation is also found in the *Skanda Purana*: “The endless sky (that great void which contains the entire universe) is the Linga, the Earth is its base. At the end of time the entire universe and all the Gods finally merge in the Linga itself.”<sup>[19]</sup> In yogic lore, the linga is considered the first form to arise when creation occurs, and also the last form before the dissolution of creation. It is therefore seen as an access to Shiva or that which lies beyond physical creation.<sup>[20]</sup>

## 2 History

### 2.1 Origin

Anthropologist Christopher John Fuller conveys that although most sculpted images (murtis) are anthropomorphic, the aniconic Shiva Linga is an important exception.<sup>[21]</sup> Some believe that linga-worship was a feature of indigenous Indian religion.<sup>[22]</sup>



*Lingobhava Shiva: God Shiva appears as in an infinite Linga fire-pillar, as Vishnu as Varaha tries to find the bottom of the Linga while Brahma tries to find its top. This infinite pillar conveys the infinite nature of Shiva.*<sup>[14]</sup>

There is a hymn in the *Atharvaveda* which praises a pillar (Sanskrit: *stambha*), and this is one possible origin of linga-worship.<sup>[22]</sup> Some associate Shiva-Linga with this *Yupa-Stambha*, the sacrificial post. In that hymn a description is found of the beginningless and endless *Stambha* or *Skambha* and it is shown that the said *Skambha* is put in place of the eternal Brahman. As afterwards the *Yajna* (sacrificial) fire, its smoke, ashes and flames, the *soma* plant and the ox that used to carry on its back the wood for the Vedic sacrifice gave place to the conceptions of the brightness of Shiva's body, his tawny matted-hair, his blue throat and the riding on the bull of the Shiva. The *Yupa-Skambha* gave place in time to the *Shiva-Linga*.<sup>[16][17]</sup> In the *Linga Purana* the same hymn is expanded in the shape of stories, meant to establish the glory of the great *Stambha* and the supreme nature of Mahadeva (the Great God, Shiva).<sup>[17]</sup>

### 2.2 Historical period

According to Shaiva Siddhanta, which was for many centuries the dominant school of Shaiva theology and liturgy across the Indian subcontinent (and beyond it in Cambodia), the linga is the ideal substrate in which the worshipper should install and worship the five-faced and ten-armed Sadāśiva, the form of Shiva who is the focal divin-





A Shiva lingam worshipped at Jambukesvara temple in Thiruvanaikaval (Thiruvanaikava)

ity of that school of Shaivism.<sup>[23]</sup>

The oldest example of a lingam which is still used for worship is in Gudimallam. According to Klaus Klostermaier, it is clearly a phallic object, and dates to the 2nd century BC.<sup>[24]</sup> A figure of Shiva is carved into the front of the lingam.<sup>[25]</sup>

The lingam also figures importantly into various forms of Buddhism. Perhaps most notable is the use of penis images in the teaching of Drukpa Kunley, a Buddhist monk.

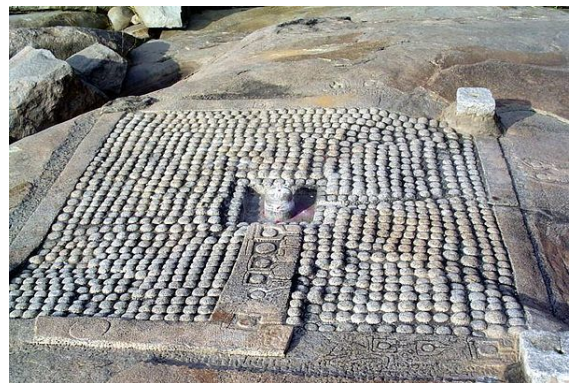
### 2.3 Modern period

In 1825 Horace Hayman Wilson's work on the lingayat sect of South India attempted to refute ridiculous British notions that the lingam graphically represented a human organ and that it aroused erotic emotions in its devotees.<sup>[26]</sup>

Monier-Williams wrote in *Brahmanism and Hinduism* that the symbol of *linga* is “never in the mind of a Saiva (or Siva-worshipper) connected with indecent ideas, nor with sexual love.”<sup>[27]</sup> According to Jeaneane Fowler, the *linga* is “a phallic symbol which represents the potent energy which is manifest in the cosmos.”<sup>[3]</sup> Some scholars, such as David James Smith, believe that throughout its history the lingam has represented the phallus; others, such as N. Ramachandra Bhatt, believe the phallic interpretation to be a later addition.<sup>[28]</sup> M. K. V. Narayan distinguishes the Siva-linga from anthropomorphic rep-



A 10th-century four-headed stone lingam (Mukhalinga) from Nepal



1008 Lingas carved on a rock surface at the shore of the Tungabhadra River, Hampi, India

resentations of Siva, and notes its absence from Vedic literature, and its interpretation as a phallus in Tantric sources.<sup>[29]</sup>

Ramakrishna practiced *Jivanta-linga-puja*, or “worship of the living lingam”.<sup>[30][31]</sup> At the Paris Congress of the History of Religions in 1900, Ramakrishna’s follower Swami Vivekananda argued that the *Shiva-Linga* had its origin in the idea of the *Yupa-Stambha* or *Skambha*—the

sacrificial post, idealized in Vedic ritual as the symbol of the Eternal Brahman.<sup>[16][17][32]</sup> This was in response to a paper read by Gustav Oppert, a German Orientalist, who traced the origin of the *Shalagrama-Shila* and the *Shiva-Linga* to phallicism.<sup>[33]</sup> According to Vivekananda, the explanation of the *Shalagrama-Shila* as a phallic emblem was an imaginary invention. Vivekananda argued that the explanation of the *Shiva-Linga* as a phallic emblem was brought forward by the most thoughtless, and was forthcoming in India in her most degraded times, those of the downfall of Buddhism.<sup>[17]</sup>

According to Swami Sivananda, the view that the Shiva lingam represents the phallus is a mistake;<sup>[18]</sup> The same sentiments have also been expressed by H. H. Wilson in 1840.<sup>[34]</sup> The novelist Christopher Isherwood also addresses the interpretation of the *linga* as a sex symbol.<sup>[35]</sup> The Britannica encyclopedia entry on *lingam* also notes that the lingam is not considered to be a phallic symbol.<sup>[5]</sup>

According to H el ene Brunner,<sup>[36]</sup> the lines traced on the front side of the *linga*, which are prescribed in medieval manuals about temple foundation and are a feature even of modern sculptures, appear to be intended to suggest a stylised *glans*, and some features of the installation process seem intended to echo sexual congress. Scholars like S. N. Balagangadhara have disputed the sexual meaning of *lingam*.<sup>[37]</sup>

### 3 Naturally occurring lingams



*Lingam in the cave at Amarnath*

An ice lingam at Amarnath in the western Himalayas forms every winter from ice dripping on the floor of a cave and freezing like a stalagmite. It is very popular with pilgrims.

Shivling (6543m) is also a mountain in Uttarakhand (the Garhwal region of Himalayas). It arises as a sheer pyramid above the snout of the Gangotri Glacier. The mountain resembles a Shiva *linga* when viewed from certain angles, especially when travelling or trekking from Gangotri to Gomukh as a part of a traditional Hindu pilgrimage.

A lingam is also the base for the legend of formation (and name) of the Borra Caves in Andhra Pradesh.

### 4 See also

- Axis mundi
- Banalinga
- Danda
- Dhyanalinga
- Hindu iconography
- Lingayatism
- Mukhalinga
- Pancharamas
- Pindi (Hindu iconography)
- Shaligram
- Phallus

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