



Caturamukha Śivaliṅga, 8th/9th century CE, Pashupatinath.
Source: Ulrich von Schroeder, *Nepalese Stone Sculptures*, Vol. 1.

Primordial *Liṅgas* of Nepal: A Qualitative Analysis of Their Artistic Forms and Symbolism

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Abstract

This study primarily aims to examine the form and symbolic meaning of Nepal's primordial liṅgas. A liṅga is a finest visual symbol that represents the Trimurti (trinity). The symbolic associations with the Trimurti, including the deities' vehicles and consorts, play a significant role in the conceptualization of the liṅga. As one of the most prominent forms of Hindu art, the liṅga embodies both spiritual and artistic value. The primordial liṅgas of Nepal are predominantly rendered in three-dimensional forms, exhibiting various features such as the simple (aniconic), one-faced, four-faced, and five-faced types. Each of these forms expresses cosmic energy in distinct ways. The study finds that the diverse forms of primordial Śiva liṅgas in Nepal are deeply rooted in the cultural and artistic traditions of the Indus Valley Civilization and influenced by the Gupta style, highlighting their historical, cultural, artistic, and religious significance. This qualitative research employs observation and interpretation to examine the meaning and evolution of these sacred forms.

Keywords: artistic origins, earliest forms, liṅga types and locations, symbolic significance.

Introduction

Liṅga is an abstract representation of Lord Śiva—a divine symbol. The word liṅga comes from the Sanskrit term meaning “mark” or “symbol.” *Liṅgas* are highly symbolic and possess unique visual representations, spanning from the ancient Hindu-Buddhist civilizations to the present day. According to Jagadish

Vasudev (known as Sadhguru), “*Liṅga* literally means a form—the existence of something. There is an emptiness before and after existence. *Liṅga* refers to the existence and manifestation of something; when the first form of manifestation begins, it begins with the form of a perfect ellipsoid, which refers to a *liṅga*” (Vasudev 2011).

The primary purpose of this study is to fill the gap in the understanding of primordial *liṅgas* of Nepal. “Primordial *liṅga*” refers to the early forms of the *liṅga*. This study centers on how Nepal’s primordial *liṅgas* were created and what symbolic meanings they convey.

The most notable *liṅgas* of Nepal selected for this study include the simple *liṅga* from Bhiringareśvara Mahādeva Temple in Sunākothi and Budhānilkantha; the *Pancamukhi liṅga* from Budhānilkantha; and the *Yekamukhi* and *Caturamukhi liṅgas* from Pashupatinath. Each *liṅga* exhibits distinct characteristics in both visual form and symbolic significance.

Although the complete solid structure of the *liṅga* represents the trinity of Hindu gods—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra—the five aspects of Maheśvara (Umā, Mahādeva, Bhairava, Nandi, and Sadāśiva) are also highlighted in detail by artists. Symbols associated with the Śiva aspect of the *liṅga* and Maheśvara include the lotus, *kamanadolu*, *danḍa*, and *trishula*. Thus, Śiva is presented as the central figure within the *liṅga*, which is why it is regarded as *śivaliṅga* in Nepal.

Historical background

The earliest known examples of the *liṅga* date back to around 2300 –1750 BCE, originating from Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus Valley Civilization (Figure 1). A dome-shaped stone object found at the site has been associated with the *liṅga* form due to its distinct

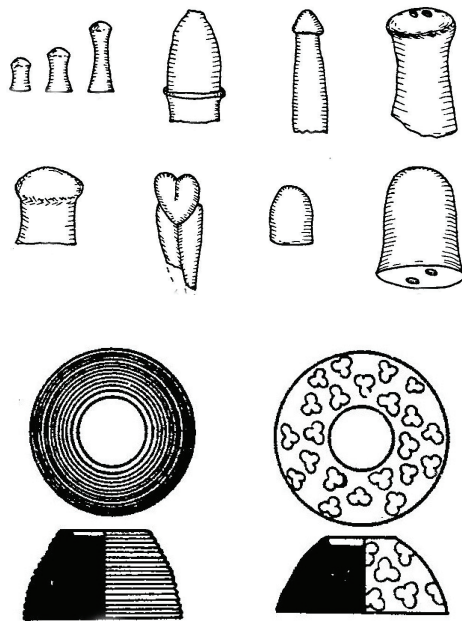


Figure 1: ***Liṅga***, Mohenjo-Daro, Pakistan, 2300-1750 BCE, stone.

physical characteristics. According to Sir John Marshall and Susan L. Huntington, this object represents the phallus and serves as a symbol of cosmic energy (Huntington 2001:17).

Another circular object — identified as a two-ring stone (Figure 1) — is interpreted as representing the *yoni*. As illustrated in the figure, the *liṅga* and *yoni* from Mohenjo-Daro are designed and displayed as separate elements. According to Susan L. Huntington, the *liṅga* from Mohenjo-Daro is described as follows:

Since few have been unearthed in specific association with a *liṅga*, some scholars have discredited the



Figure 2: *Linga*, Gudimallam, Andhra Pradesh, India, stone, 150 cm height, 1st century BCE.

interpretation of these objects as *lingas* and *yonis*. However, a convincing alternative hypothesis has not been offered, and because *lingas* and *yonis* are common in later Indic art, these objects may be accepted as early examples. A religious emphasis on procreation is a phenomenon associated with early agricultural societies dependent upon the bounty

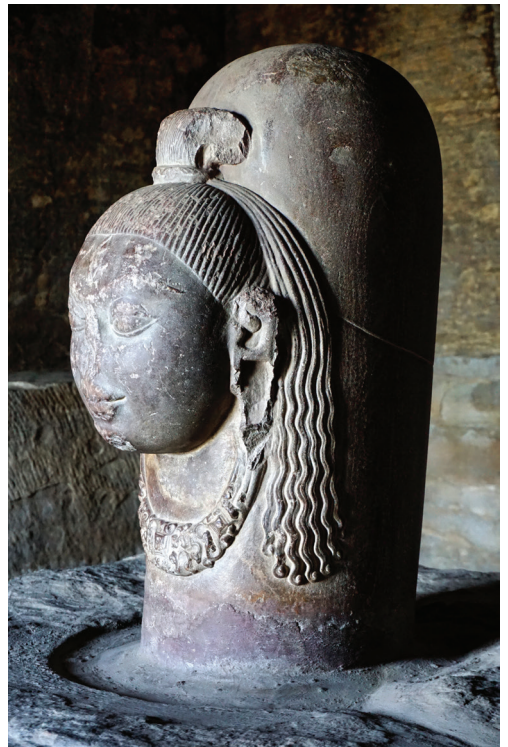


Figure 3: *One-faced Liṅga*, Udayagiri, Madhya Pradesh, India, Gupta Period, 1st Quarter, 5th century BCE.

of nature for their well-being and survival. Judging from later Indic iconography, it is also possible that “eternal” or “Universal” symbolism is intended by such objects. The *yonis* might represent the door through which one is “born again,” thereby relating to the concept of countless rounds of rebirths (*samsāra*), which figures in later Indic thought. The *linga* would represent the procreative aspect of the universe (later, of the Hindu god Śiva) and the means by which the endless cycles of birth, death, and rebirth occur. The realization of nonduality, symbolized

by the combination of male and female principles, represents one of the essential goals of later Buddhist and Hindu thought (Huntington 2001:17).

The *liṅga* from Gudimallam is a significant representation of Śiva (Figure 2). Standing nearly five feet tall, this sculpture—carved from reddish igneous rock—is one of the most remarkable *liṅgas* from the 1st century BCE. Commonly referred to as the “Gudimallam Pillar Statue,” it is considered a striking example of early *liṅga* iconography. The stylistic features of this *liṅga* closely resemble artifacts from the Sunga period. Excavated in the 1990s, the statue exhibits visual characteristics such as drapery details—particularly the cloth folds between the legs—along with distinctive facial and bodily features. The posture, where the figure stands atop another anthropomorphic or animal form, shows strong stylistic parallels to pillar figures from Bharhut (Huntington 2001: 87). Huntington further elaborates as follows:

The Gudimallam *liṅga*, which juxtaposes the anthropomorphic and phallic forms of Śiva, may provide important clues to this problem. This *liṅga* consists of a fairly naturalistically depicted phallus bearing an image of the male figure, presumably Śiva, standing atop a demonic-appearing dwarf, who may be *Apasmāra*, a dwarf later associated with Śiva. In contrast to his usual multiarmed forms of later date, Śiva here has only two arms. In his right hand, Śiva holds a ram by its hind

and, in his left, a water pot, while an axe rests upon his left shoulder (Huntington 2001: 87–88).

The one-faced *liṅga* from Udayagiri, Madhya Pradesh, India, is considered one of the finest examples of early *liṅgas* in the region (Figure 3). This *liṅga* exhibits stylistic features characteristic of the Gupta period, including the continuous hairline, balanced facial proportions, the form of the phallus, and the presence of a female figure — elements that closely resemble the *Yekmukhi Śivaliṅga* from Pashupatinath in Kathmandu (Figure 14). However, Susan L. Huntington contends that the sculpture bears stronger stylistic affinities to the Kusana period. Huntington describes the *liṅga* as follows:

A one-faced *liṅga* is the main object of worship in Cave 4 at Udayagiri, obviously a Saivite cave, but the date of this work is not easily fixed as there is no inscription associated with it. However, the simplicity of the treatment of the face, the careful depiction of the separate locks of hair, and the relatively modest amount of jewelry suggest that it was made in the first quarter of the fifth century. The round face with rather heavy features is reminiscent of Kusana types rather than suggestive of the more fluid, subtly modeled forms of the fifth century. There is perhaps no more dramatic symbol of the power of Śiva than the image of the *liṅga*, a phallus, juxtaposed with a representation of one or more human heads, for it implies the unification of



Figure 4: Nepal's oldest Śivaliṅga inscription, Dhobichaur, Lajimpat, Kathmandu, 388 CE.

1. śauryyeṇa¹ nītisahitena vijitya samyak ca = ◡ = ◡ ◡ ◡ = ◡ ◡
= ◡ = = (|)
2. tasyājñayā śubhamateś śubhavṛddhi liṅgam = .y. nabhaktima-
hatā n a r a v a r m m a nāmnā (||) prasādasya - nurūpa - ha
pra - - - - -
- 1 a samvat 300 80 8
- 2 a jyeṣṭhamāse śukladiva 10 4

¹ *Meire*: vasantatilakā.

Figure 5: Details of the Śivaliṅga inscription documented by Raniero Gnoli.

the sexual energy, representative of the entire creative energy of the universe, with the intellect. (Huntington 2001: 87–88).

Nepal's oldest Śivaliṅga has been dated to 388 CE. Raniero Gnoli explains that both the inscription and the sculpture are associated with the Gupta style (Gnoli 1956, p. 7). According to Madanjeet Singh, features of the Gupta style include geometric perfection of form and the uninterrupted smoothness of facial planes (Singh 1968, p. 184). The following text presents the oldest known Śivaliṅga inscription from Dhobichaur, Lainchaur, as documented by Raniero Gnoli. The inscribed section measures approximately 103 cm in width.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, primarily based on visual observation of *liṅgas* and an analysis of secondary sources to uncover their historical context and symbolic significance. The secondary materials consist largely of scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles. The study focuses on several notable examples of Nepal's primordial *liṅgas*—including the simple *yekamukhi*, *caturamukhi* and *pancamukhi* types—selected for their distinct formal characteristics and symbolic meanings.

The Symbolism of the *liṅga*

The symbolism of the *liṅga* is primarily associated with the Trideva. Its structure

is divided into three distinct sections, each representing one of the deities—Śiva, Viṣṇu, and Brahmā. The uppermost section, representing Śiva, is known as the Rudra part. It is typically formed in a circular shape—oval, dome-like, or egg-shaped. The middle section symbolizes Viṣṇu and is often depicted in an octagonal form, resembling a bird's nest. The lowest section, representing Brahmā, is shown in a square shape and symbolizes creation (Figure 7).

Simple *Śivaliṅgas* from Bhringareśvara Mahādeva Temple in Kathmandu and Budhānilkantha exhibit similar structural characteristics (Figures 12 and 13). However, in most *Śivaliṅgas*, the Brahmā portion is embedded underground and thus not visible. Adrian Snodgrass describes the structure of the liṅga as follows:

Deity as pillar is a recurrent theme in Hinduism (Figure 6, 7). One of the names of Śiva-Rudra is *Sthanu*, “Pillar”, and he is described as *sthanu-bhuta*, whose essence is a pillar (Bosch, p.1870 1960). The identification of Śiva and the pillar as axis mundi is the main significance of the liṅga, pre-eminent symbol of the god. Taken literally it is the phallus, representing the essence of cosmic pro-creative forces, but its form reveals that it is nothing other than the axial pillar of the universe: Square at base, octagonal at its middle portion and circular at the summit, its parts conform with the shapes associated with Earth (the square), Midspace (the octagon), and heaven (the circle). Its

form subsumes the three worlds, at once separated and joined together within its vertical mass. Identified with the vajra, the lightning, it is the shaft of light, the fiery axis of manifestation that penetrates and fertilizes the yoni, the vulva, the alter, hearth, mother of the fire, the Earth (Zimmer 1946; Sondgrassp 2007: 168).

The symbolic associations of the Liṅga and Yoni, along with the Trideva, their Vahanas, and the Tridevi, play a significant role in shaping and deepening the conceptual understanding of the Śivaliṅga in a more abstract and philosophical manner, as elaborated below:

a. Liṅga and Yoni

The term liṅga is derived from the

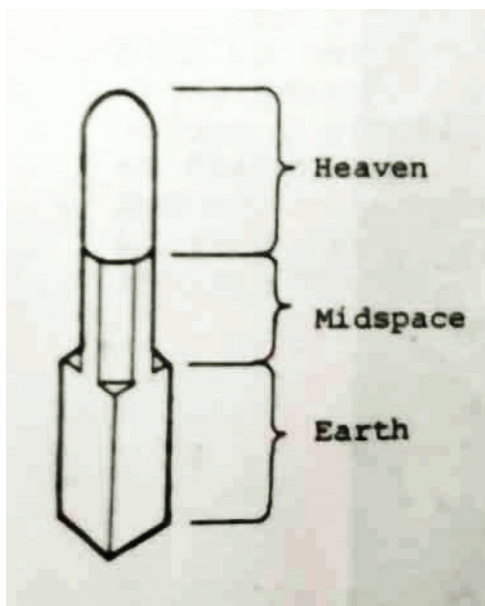


Figure 6: The *liṅga* as a cosmic symbol, composed of three distinct sections.

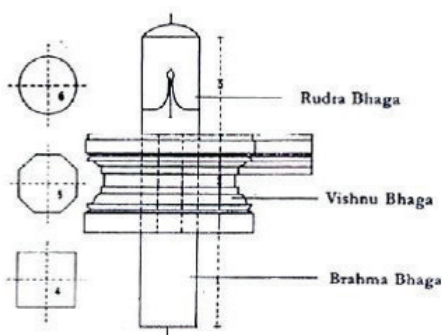


Figure 7: The three structural divisions of the *linga* represent the Hindu Trideva, each associated with a specific geometric form.

Sanskrit word “*lingam*” meaning “symbol.” It signifies a mark, form, or dome that symbolizes Lord Śiva. In contrast, the literal meaning of *yonī* refers to a home, source of creation, or foundational base. It symbolizes Lord Viṣṇu and is typically represented in the form of a womb or nest. In this context, the *linga* is often likened to an egg placed upon the *Viṣṇu Bhaga*, with the *Viṣṇu Bhaga* serving as a protective base—much like a bird’s nest safeguarding an egg.

b. Trideva

Śiva, Viṣṇu, and Brahmā are collectively known as the Trideva, or the Hindu Trinity (see Figures 8, 9, and 10). The *Trimurtis* are revered as the supreme deities in Hinduism. Each of these three gods possesses distinct iconographic features reflecting their divine roles. Brahmā, the creator, is traditionally depicted with four heads and four hands (Figure 10). Viṣṇu, the preserver, is commonly shown with four hands, though sometimes depicted with ten

hands and nine faces, as illustrated in Figure 9. Śiva, the destroyer, is typically represented with four hands

The symbols associated with Śiva include the tiger skin, bull (*nandī*), matted hair, the Gaṅgā, crescent moon, *trishula* (trident), drum (*damaru*), third eye, and *tripundra* (three horizontal lines on the forehead). Viṣṇu is symbolized by the *cakra* (discus), lotus, conch (*shankha*), *kaumodaki* (mace), and Garuḍa (vehicle). Brahmā is associated with the lotus, swan (*hamsa*), the *veda*, and *akshamala* (a garland of beads). Each of the Tridevas has a distinct set of iconographic elements that contribute to a unified expression of divine identity. For example, their respective *vāhanas* (vehicles) serve as powerful representations of their cosmic functions and are further explored in the following chapter.

c. Bāhanas (Vehicles)

The *bāhana* refers to the vehicles of the Trideva. In Hinduism, as the Śivaliṅga represents the Trideva, it becomes essential to explore the symbolic significance of their respective vehicles. Each deity is associated with a distinct vehicle: the bull (*Nandī*) for Śiva, the Garuḍa for Viṣṇu, and the swan (*hamsa*) for Brahmā. These vehicles are rich in visual and symbolic meaning. The bull, depicted in a robust and masculine form, symbolizes physical strength and steadfastness. Garuḍa, portrayed as an anthropomorphic bird-like deity, embodies martial prowess and agility. The swan, rendered with elegant grace, symbolizes purity and the soul.



Figure 8: *Maheśvara with Umā*, 12th century CE, Patan Museum, Lalitpur.

Each of these vehicles is also symbolically connected to one of the elemental realms—land, air, and water—emphasizing the diversity and inclusivity within the Hindu cosmological framework. The bull's firm connection to the earth and its ability to traverse land represent grounded strength. Garuda's dominion over the sky reflects transcendence and speed. The swan's affinity with water signifies fluidity, spiritual discernment, and adaptability. Collectively, these symbols highlight the harmony of diverse elemental aptitudes and the interdependence of cosmic forces (Figure 11).

d. Tridevi

In Hinduism, the *Tridevi*—Pārvatī,



Figure 9: *Viṣṇu Viśvarupa*, 5th–6th century CE, Chagunaryan, Kathmandu.

Lakṣmī, and Saraśvatī—are the consorts of the Trideva and hold profound symbolic significance. Each goddess complements and reinforces the attributes of her divine counterpart. Pārvatī, the consort of Śiva, embodies devotion and willpower; her vehicle is a lion, symbolizing courage and strength. Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu, represents wealth, fortune, and dynamic action; her vehicle is an owl, which signifies wisdom and the ability to see through darkness. Saraśvatī, the consort of Brahmā, symbolizes knowledge, creativity, and learning; her vehicle is a swan, reflecting discernment and spiritual insight.



Figure 10: *Brahmā*, 13th century CE, Simraungadh, Bara.

The symbolic pairing of the Tridevi with the Trideva highlights the interdependence of will (Pārvatī), action (Lakṣmī), and knowledge (Saraśvatī) as foundational principles of cosmic function. Moreover, the vehicles of the Tridevi, like those of the Trideva, possess elemental associations and symbolic aptitudes: the lion (land), owl (air/night vision), and swan (water) all reflect a harmonious connection to the natural world and reinforce the cosmological unity within Hindu thought.



Figure 11: Bull (Vehicle of Śiva), Garuḍa (Vehicle of Viṣṇu), Swan (Vehicle of Brahmā).

Key examples of primordial *līṅga* in Nepal

a. Simple *Līṅga*

The faceless, simple *līṅga* is the most prevalent form found in Śiva temples across Nepal. Typically, the *līṅga* is positioned upon a *yoni* base, which is conceptually divided into three parts: the Rudra (Śiva) section, the Viṣṇu section, and the Brahmā section (Figure 7). In earlier Nepali representations, artists primarily emphasized the Rudra portion, often sculpted as a dome or ellipsoid shape. The Viṣṇu section was commonly designed as the *yoni*, symbolizing the womb, origin, seed, or water—central elements of generative power.

The Śivalīṅga from the Bhringareśvara Mahādeva temple exemplifies a symmetrical and balanced composition, closely resembling the Gupta style in its formal qualities and visual harmony (Figure 12). According to Beena Poudyal (2017), the middle portion, associated with Viṣṇu, is referred to as *jalāvārī*, which symbolizes *strī-śakti* (female energy). She (2023) further notes that



Figure 13: *Śivaliṅga*, 38 inches in height, Budhanilkantha, Kathmandu.

this component should traditionally face north, in alignment with Mount Kailash—the mythological abode of Śiva. In essence, all three divisions are given equal spatial and symbolic emphasis in the architectural composition of a Śivaliṅga (Figure 6).

The *liṅga* is conceived as a vertical mass that symbolically connects the three cosmic realms: heaven, earth, and mid-space. In this cosmic framework, Śiva is associated with heaven, Viṣṇu with mid-space, and Brahmā with earth. This vertical alignment signifies the interconnectedness of the divine, terrestrial, and intermediate planes. As Adrian Snodgrass elaborates, the structural conception of the *liṅga* reflects this symbolic stratification in the following way:

Deity as pillar is a recurrent theme in Hinduism. One of the names of Śiva-Rudra is *Sthanu*, “Pillar”, and he is described as *sthanu-bhuta*, whose essence is a pillar (Bosch, p.1870 1960). The identification of Śiva and the pillar as axis mundi is the main significance of the *liṅga*,

pre-eminent symbol of the god. Taken literally it is the phallus, representing the essence of cosmic pro-creative forces, but its form reveals that it is nothing other than the axial pillar of the universe: Square at base, octagonal at its middle portion and circular at the summit, its parts conform with the shapes associated with Earth (the square), Midspace (The octagon), and heaven (the circle). Its form subsumes the three worlds, at once separated and joined together within its vertical mass. Identified with the *vajra*, the lightning, it is the shaft of light, the fiery axis of manifestation that penetrates and fertilizes the *yoni*, the vulva, the alter, hearth, mother of the fire, the Earth (Zimmer1946; Sondgrass 2007:168).

b. Yekamukhi liṅga

Created during the Lichhavi period, the *yekamukhi* (one-faced) *liṅga* stands as one of the finest achievements in the history of Nepali art (Figure 14).

Half-buried on the banks of the Bagmati River in the Pashupati area of Kathmandu, this *liṅga* presents a striking contrast to the Gudimallam Śivaliṅga (Figure 2), which is explicitly juxtaposed with a phallic form. In contrast, the *Yekmukhi Śivaliṅga* at Pashupati features the serene face of Parvati carved on its surface. Her visage is depicted in a meditative and yogic posture, with closed eyes conveying tranquility and divine presence. The balanced proportions of the head, dome-shaped tuft, elongated earlobes, rounded facial features, and the smoothness of the sculptural surface are



Figure 14: *Yekmukhi Śivaliṅga*, Pashupati, Kathmandu, 6th century CE.

strongly reminiscent of the Gupta style, noted for its geometric harmony and aesthetic refinement (Singh 1968:184).

According to Satya Mohan Joshi (2017:95), one of the primary artistic intentions of the Licchavi period was to celebrate feminine beauty, which led to a significant presence of female representations in the art of the era. This cultural and aesthetic emphasis may have inspired the artist to sculpt the face of Pārvaṭī onto the *liṅga*, symbolically merging divine feminine energy with the form of Śiva.

c. Caturamukhi liṅga

Among the *caturamukhi* (four-faced) *liṅgas* found in Nepal, this example

stands out as one of the most remarkable monolithic *liṅga* sculptures from the Licchavi period (Figure 15). Created between the 8th and 9th centuries CE, it features four faces oriented toward the cardinal directions—east, west, north, and south—each head emerging from the central shaft of the *liṅga*. In this composition, the Rudra portion is fully visible, the Viṣṇu portion is partially shown, while the Brahmā section remains hidden.

The entire sculpture is composed with symmetrical balance, and when viewed from above, it exhibits a radial layout. The facial features—eyes, nose, lips, chin, cheeks, forehead, mouth, ears, and eyebrows—are crafted with geometric precision, reflecting the stylistic influence of the Gupta tradition. The decorative style of the *liṅga*, especially the intricate circular patterns of the *mukuta* (crown) and the *akṣhamāla* (rosary garland), evokes the aesthetic of *śṛṅgāra rasa* (the mood of beauty and romantic elegance), making the sculpture visually captivating.



Figure 15: *Caturamukhi Liṅga*, Deupatan, Pashupati, Kathmandu, 8th - 9th Century CE.



Figure 16: Eastern face of the *Pancamukhi Liṅga*, Budhanilkantha.



Figure 17: Western face of the *Pancamukhi Liṅga*, Budhanilkantha.

The artistic style of this *liṅga* closely resembles the *Umā-Maheśvara* sculpture of Patan, Lalitpur, dated to the 10th century CE. Symbolically, the four faces represent four aspects of Śiva: the eastern face represents Mahādeva, the southern face represents Bhairava, the western face represents Nandī, and the northern face represents Umā. Although the faces are not distinctly characterized by specific iconographic attributes, the symbols carved on each side of the Rudra section vary. The eastern face bears an



Figure 18: Northern face of the *Pancamukhi Liṅga*, Budhanilkantha.

akṣhamāla and *kamaṇḍalu*, the southern face holds a *daṇḍa* (staff), the western face features a *trishula* (trident), and the northern face is adorned with a *nīlotpala* (blue lotus).

d. Pancamukhi liṅga

Several scholars have argued that the *Caturamukhi* (four-faced) *Śivaliṅga* can also be interpreted as a representation of the *Pancamukhi* (five-faced) form. According to Hindu mythology, the fifth aspect of Śiva—Ishāna—is not typically depicted with a physical face, as it represents the supreme, formless essence of divinity. However, the *Pancamukhi Śivaliṅga* from Budhanilkantha is an exception, as it explicitly includes five faces, each symbolizing a distinct aspect of Śiva (Figures 16 –19).



Figure 19: Southern face of the *Pancamukhi Linga*, Budhanilkantha.

In this configuration, the eastern face represents *Tatpurusha*, associated with creation; the southern face embodies *Aghora*, signifying destruction; the western face corresponds to *Sadyojāta*, representing majesty; the northern face depicts *Vāmadeva*, linked to preservation; and the fifth face, *Ishāna*, symbolizing transcendence and divinity, is also oriented towards the north. The *Viṣṇu bhāga* (middle portion) and *Brahmā bhāga* (base) follow a similar structural pattern as seen in simple *līngas* (Figure 10).

Unlike other *līnga* types, the *Pancamukhi Linga* displays minimal iconographic symbols related to the Trideva (Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahma). Nevertheless, the formal balance, precise line patterns, and geometric proportions are clearly observable. Notably, the stylistic

execution—particularly in the facial features and surface finish—differs from those found in the *caturamukhi*, *yekmukhi*, and simple *līngas*, suggesting a distinct artistic approach or period of production.

Conclusion

The *līngas* found in Nepal have deep roots in the Indus Valley civilization and are represented in various forms, including simple, *yekamukhi* (one-faced), *caturamukhi* (four-faced), and *pancamukhi* (five-faced). Unlike the naturalistic phallic representations of *līngas* found at Mohenjo-Daro and Gudimallam, Nepalese *līngas* tend to be more stylized and simplified in form.

A central and recurring theme across these different *līnga* forms is the representation of the Trimurti—Rudra (Śiva), Viṣṇu, and Brahmā—symbolized by the solid pillar that extends from top to bottom, embodying the cosmos. This cosmic symbolism is further emphasized through the vehicles (bāhana) of the Trimurti: the bull, symbolizing Śiva's connection to the earth and strength; Garuḍa, Viṣṇu's vehicle, representing martial prowess and the power of flight; and the swan, Brahmā's vehicle, symbolizing grace and the soul's purity. These vehicles collectively signify the importance of diverse aptitudes and the complementary forces of nature and willpower.

Artistically, Nepal's primordial *līngas* show strong influence from the Gupta style, evident in their geometric



Caturamukha Śivaliṅga, 8th/9th century CE, Pashupatinath.
Source: Ulrich von Schroeder, *Nepalese Stone Sculptures*, Vol. 1.

precision, symbolic motifs, and symmetrical balance. In conclusion, this study illustrates that although artistic creativity knows no bounds, the faithful adherence to religious themes that are rooted in sacred scriptures is fundamental to the expression of sacred forms.

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