Shiva or Mahadeva



Stone head of Shiva

"*Shiva resides at the top of Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas. Shiva is worshiped and venerated for the ability to destroy obstacles*"

One of the most important deities in Hinduism is Lord Shiva, whose name means, “Auspicious one.” Shiva is one of the deities that make up the Hindu triad, which consists of Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver and protector; and Shiva, the destroyer, who absorbs the manifest universe back into its original form of pure potential, then recreates it. All three deities have highly beneficial aspects. For example, if a person is ill and Shiva destroys the illness, it is an essentially beneficial act. In fact, Shiva can destroy anything that is not beneficial, and in doing so can bring good fortune to the devout.



Shiva and Parvati mounted on Nandi

Scholars propose the origins of Shiva can be traced back to the Vedic god Rudra, who is first spoken of in an ancient text called the Rig Veda, which is dated to between 1700 and 1100 BCE. Both Shiva and Rudra are viewed as the same personality in a number of Hindu traditions, and share many similar qualities. Rudra was called the god of the roaring storm, and is often depicted as a fierce destructive deity, as is Shiva. Shiva's rise to power in the Hindu tradition was also facilitated by his identification with other Hindu deities including Agni, Indra, Vaju, and Prajapati. It appears, as Hindus found similarities between Shiva and preexisting deities the older traditions became absorbed by those of the newer.



Above: An example of Shiva depicted with multiple serpents and a crescent above his head



Figure of Tandava or Dancing Shiva · India · 20th C. · Makrana marble · 14.5 W x 9.5 D x 30 H inches
Item #A0607-1627

Hindu mythology states Shiva resides at the top of Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas, where he resides in a perpetual state of mediation with his wife Parvati. His mountain is a sacred site of pilgrimage important to Jains, Buddhists, Hindus and others. There has been no attempt to summit Mount Kailasa because of its religious significance.



Tanjore Painting · Depicting Ganesh and Shiva · India · 20th C. · Pigment on wood panel, framed · 22.2 W x 1 D x 18.3 H inches
Item #A021001-495

Shiva is worshiped and venerated for the ability to destroy obstacles blocking success, for guarding against negativity and competition, and for the manifestation of his effortless power. He represents the ability to attain ones greatest potential. Because of this, Shiva is

revered by people all around the world.

Shiva has been depicted in all mediums by artists throughout history. Shiva is often shown with a trident and a crescent moon, draped in serpents, and sometimes mounted on a bull, or Nandi – all of which are meant to highlight his supreme sovereignty and rule.



Shiva has been depicted in all mediums by artists throughout history – here Shiva is shown with multiple arms and holding trident