

CHAPTER – 6

SIVA-LINGA : AN ICONOLOGICAL STUDY

Siva-linga and its symbolism:

Dealing with a topic which aims at understanding the dynamics between ritual and philosophy in the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order the interdisciplinary study of history, philosophical meanings and the ritual practices related to this potent symbol have proved to be very useful. The idea that this practice was simply a fertility rite followed by “less civilized and barbaric people” has long been rejected. The more scholars have worked on the levels of meanings it conveys, more they have been convinced of dangers of too simplistic or literal a reading. Now this does not go to say that all phallic symbolism associated with it is just a farce. On the contrary the visual representation is definitely phallic but its meaning is not limited to fertility and reproduction. Man creates symbols according to his ideas. The idea of creativity and procreation is associated with sexual organs. Here one is reminded again of *Upamanyu's* discourse with *Krsna* where he categorically specifies that it is *Siva* and *Devi* that are the true gods because we all humans are marked by their symbols, rather born with them while you don't see a child born with a conch or a chakra. That is to say the most fundamental characteristic that we as humans share with the supreme reality is the process of creation and hence anything which is responsible for such a similitude becomes worth worshipping sheer by the law of synecdoche and assumes automatically assumes a mystical and awe-inspiring aspect.

Unfortunately the sexual symbolism here has selectively been associated with eroticism and its other more important function as the creative principle has not been given any thought by early scholars of Indian art and culture. The apologetic Indian scholars too joined the gang and openly disowned this disturbing symbol and blamed it on so called ‘Non Aryan’ people who were untouched by highly philosophical expositions of Veda's. They elaborately quote from *RgVedic* mention of *Sisna deva*, (people whose lord was the sexual organ) (*Rg Veda* 7.21.5; 10.99.3)

the only example but repeated again and again to emphasize the otherness of *Linga* worship. *Sayana*¹ in his commentary has clearly explained *Sisna devas* ,as licentious people and not as people who worship *linga*.

Language is never wholly transparent, rather the beauty of language lies in its opacity. To derive such final statements on the basis of one or two verses from whole gamut of Vedas points at if not a strategic plan but definitely to a lack of understanding. Here I would like to say that those scholars who have shown any depth in their studies and have not treated the subject like some laboratory experiment have left their studies open ended realizing very well the limitations of a scholarly approach to a subject which needs an initiation to begin with.

Susan Langer² in her important study, *Philosophy in a New Key* states that:

"Symbols are not proxy for their objects, but are vehicles for the conception of objects. In talking about things we have conceptions of them, not the things themselves and it is the conceptions, not the things, that symbols directly mean".

She further goes on to enumerate three types of symbols viz: Discursive symbol, Presentational symbol and Artistic symbol and being a Formalist considers the Artistic symbol to be the most significant one:

*An artistic symbol- which may be product of human craftsmanship or (on a purely personal level)something in nature seen as significant form has more than discursive and presentational meaning: its form as such, as a sensory phenomenon has what I have called implicit meaning, like rite and myth, but of a more catholic sort. It has what L.A Reid called 'tertiary subject matter', beyond the reach of 'primary imagination' and even the 'secondary imagination' that sees metaphorically.*³

I have tried in this section to compile all that I have seen, read and analyzed about *Linga* worship as it has strong links with the developmental stage of Saivism i.e *Lakulisa-Pasuapta* order. Siva *linga* being the main object of veneration for the aspirants of this order its esoteric meaning has been delved deeply in their literature. Moreover in this tradition Siva as well as *Lakulisa* himself are shown as *Ithyphallic*.

¹ *Rgveda-Samhita Srimat Sayanacharya virchita bhasya-sameksa* Ed. by N.S Sontakke, Published by Vaidika Samsodhana Mandala, Pune, 1972

² *Langer Susan, Philosophy in a new key, A Study in Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art, Harvard University Press, 1996*

³ *Ibid.*

Human narcissist tendency is such that it is always believed we are moving to a more progressive level as the time passes. The technology that we today boast of would have been a marvel for our ancestors and hence the aspect of philosophizing is considered to have been beyond their reach. Rather my enquiry started very much at this point where I wondered how can an order which follows radical and extremely objectionable practices have a highly evolved philosophy. At the beginning I also thought that philosophizing must have taken place at a later stage but in due course I was surprised to find both the streams progressing together. We were seriously missing out something in between, something not as easily legible as a direct word and here is where mythology and art comes to the rescue. It wonderfully bridges the gap between the esoteric ritual practices and complicated philosophical speculations former due to its narrative and human approach and the latter because of its wide appeal and tangible form. The orientation of early Saivite art is decidedly theological. The emphasis is on knowledge of God's nature and the translation of this knowledge into forms fit for worship. Hence here while on one side I will be studying the historical development and philosophical speculations on the subject, on the other hand myths related to *Linga* worship and their depictions from various places will be subjected to an iconological study.

Historicity:

The term *linga* rarely occurs prior to the *Upanisads* and in the latter texts the term and its opposite *alinga* by no stretch of imagination are used for a male sexual organ. Srinivasan⁴ clearly points out that the word that defines the latter is *sisna* or *vetasa* in Vedic literature and they are nowhere linked with any form of worship. *RgVeda* describes the *Sisna devas* as the inhabitants of cities and they were supposed to be the 'Pre Aryan' people and builders of planned cities like Harrapa and Mohenjodaro. Such discourse largely propounded mainly by Western Indologists essentially saw the practice as a non Vedic one. On the contrary the important commentators of Vedas 'Yaska and 'Sayana'⁵ provide us with more inclusive meanings which points at the

⁴ Srinivasan Doris Meth, *Significance and Scope of Pre-Kusana Saivite Iconography*, in Meister M Ed DOS p.33

⁵ *Rgveda-Samhita Srimat Sayanacharya virchita bhasya-sameksa* Ed. by N.S Sontakke, Published by Vaidika Samsodhana Mandala, Pune, 1972

selective suggestion of the above hypothesis. *Yaska* explains 'Sisna-devas as a non-bhrhmacharin group (4.19 on Rgveda, 7.21.5). *Sayana* too furnishes a meaning similar to this to mean a group of immoral people and nowhere has it been suggested that they are non Vedic. These interpretations one needs to know are just based on few verses and only because they have been repeated again and again they sound as only possible explanations..An excellent work by Srinivasan on *Rudra-Siva* and his vedic antecents throws a considerable light on the subject and demands the Rudra's 'outsider to vedic culture' label to be considerably revised. She writes: ⁶.

"For Rudra's most fundamental characteristics-his ambivalent capacity for benign and fearful action, his asura-hood, his close association with the most ancient stratum of the Vedic gods, his relation to the Vedic ritual, especially the remnant-brings him into the very centre of Vedic norms and ideals."

A tribe (*jana*) called *Siva* is mentioned in *Rgveda* (7.18.7). Some scholars believed the Siboi of Greek writers were actually the *Siva jana* mentioned above. It may not be unlikely that *Siva*, probably a tribal god was gradually identified with *Rudra* in the process of later amalgamation which is not unheard of in religious studies. Banerjee⁷ opines that the *Siva linga* engraved on three oldest coins (of Taxila and Ujjain mentioned in earlier chapter) 2nd-3rd BCE is the mark of a local or tribal god .

Coming to the word '*linga*', we need to historically contextualize it before pondering about its ritual and philosophical meanings. Przyluski ⁸who on basis on a linguistic study suggests that the terms like *Linga*, *Langula* etc. were originally Austric words and the 'Aryans' borrowed them from pre-Aryan population of India has also lost its currency as the term has been used extensively and meaningfully in early Vedic literature and does not come across some haphazard word borrowed from another civilization.

⁶ Srinivasan p.36

⁷ P. Banerjee, "Some aspects of the early history of Saivism", IAC 14, 1965, p. 215-231

⁸ Bagchi P.C tr. *Pe Aryan and Pre Dravidian in India* by Sylvain Levi, J Przyluski and J. Bloch, Calcutta, 1937 p.66

The *Katha Upanisad* (6.8) speaks of *Purusa* who is higher than the unmanifest(*avyakta*), “as all pervading and without any mark” (*alinga*). In a somewhat similar manner *Svetasvatara Upanisad* (6.9) declares that *Mahesvara* (Siva in 5.14) has no *linga* in the world and he is the first cause. Book 6.11 explains this further, saying “ He is the One God hidden in all things..alone and devoid of attributes (*nirguna*). The same text gives an elaborate connotation of *linga*⁹:

“Just as the material form (*murti*) of fire when latent in its source (*yoni*) is not seen even though its *linga* is not destroyed, for it is perceptible again by kindling in its source (*yoni*). Similarly both indeed are found in the body by *Om*.”

The above passage in distinguishing between ‘*murti*’ and ‘*linga*’ elaborates on the importance and subtlety of the latter concept. Whereas *murti* is a concrete apprehensible form, the gross body ‘*linga*’ is the sign, non material and therefore unchangeable, more like a subtle body.

This concept of having both source and its material form together in one body seems to have provided the seeds for the concept of *Ardhanarisvara*. On the other hand it also lays foundation for various practices followed by *Natha Siddhas* who visualize both genders within one body. Both the examples are discussed in detail in appropriate sections.

References to *linga* or *alinga* in several later heterogeneous works have also not used it as an erotic symbol. *Caraka*¹⁰ states that *alinga* describes a state attainable by the doctrine of ultimate renunciation while in *Buddhacarita* of *Asvaghosa*¹¹ *linga* denotes marks of an ascetic or mendicant.

Maha-Narayana Upanisad dated by Gonda¹² to C.3rd BCE, contains a series of prayers which correlate *lingas* with Rudra-Siva. To be precise prayer number 271-316 are dedicated mainly to Rudra-Siva and contain the formulaic repetition of the term *linga*. In each instance homage is first paid to a particular attribute of the supreme and then to the *linga* of that power or attribute:

⁹ *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, Gita Press, p.123

¹⁰ *Caraka* as quoted by Srinivasan p.41

¹¹ *Buddhacarita* of *Asvaghosa* Ibid 42

¹² Gonda, J. *Visnuism and Sivaism: A Comparison*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1976 p,42

“Urdhvaya namah, Urdhva-lingaya namah, Hiranyaya namah, Hiranyalingaya namah, Suvarnaya namah, Suvarnalingaya namah, Divyaya namah, Divyalingaya namah,

Bhavaya namah, Bhavalingaya namah, Sarvaya namah, Sarvalingaya namah,

Sivaya namah, Sivalingaya namah, Jvalaya namah, Jvalalingaya namah

Atmaya namah, Atmalingaya namah, Paramaya namah, Paramalingaya namah”

This set of *linga* verses follow an important set of prayers which invoke a pentad of names, the five *Brahma Mantras* which the later tradition records as the five faces of a *pancamukha linga* viz.

Sadyojata, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa and Isana

On the basis of *Sayanacarya's* commentary we learn that the five mantras were addressed to five faces of Siva. Earlier the *VDP Purana* (5th- 6th CE) and *Aparajita Prchcha* mentions the five aspects of Siva in the list of eleven Rudras. The major point of interest here is that *Lakulisa-Pasupata's* have elevated these *Brahm Mantras* to the level of *Bijamantras*, popularly known as *Pancartha* and PS is divided into 5 sections according to these names. It is clear that this esoteric and abstract form of worship was considered as the highest form fit for an ascetic aspirant. *Chitrasutra of VDP* states that when king Vajra asked Markandeya about the meaning of having an image when God is actually formless, the latter answered that these images were meant for laity and for real or true ascetics meditation on formless God is the highest form of worship.

Interestingly it is in Epic Mythology, to be precise in castration myth narrated in *Saṃpṛāptika Parvan* of *Mahabharata*¹³ (10.17) that the word *linga* is associated with Siva's organ for the first time. When *Brahma* asked *Mahadeva* to create, the latter did not feel inclined to obey. Failing to convince *Mahadeva*, *Brahma* created *Prajapati* and asked him to create, whence he created creatures of various species. When *Siva* arose from his meditation and saw the beings were already created he tore his '*linga*' in anger and placed it on the ground and again went to perform austerities.

¹³ *Mahabharata, Saṃpṛāptika Parvan 10.17*

It is interesting to see how a myth functions to create links between an object and a symbol which probably earlier had nothing to do with the object. By an imaginative approach the character of 'golden phallus' from *Samhita* literature is attributed to *Siva* and thus he automatically gets transformed into the omnipresent and omnipotent creator.

This is further substantiated by a rather long but thought provoking passage by Srinivasan¹⁴ in which she asks the fundamental question and answers it by quoting various texts:,

"If linga expresses the theological belief in the immanence of the transcendental in nature, in a subtle form, why does that form take the shape of a realistic phallus?"

And she answers :

An instructive Vedic passage indicates that already in the Samhitas, the phallus is the sign symbolizing the Creator's capacity for unlimited production. The passage occurs in the Atharva Veda, hymn 10.7, a hymn to Skambha. (lit. prop, support, pillar) Skambha is the cosmic generative force whence the entire material world originates. However Skambha is not postulated as the active demiurge who gives rise to phenomenality. Rather Skambha is the cause which gives rise to the agent who in turn takes over the creative process. As such, Skambha generates Prajapati. It is thus of more than passing interest that a vetasa-hiranyaya (a golden phallus) standing in the water represents the hidden (guhya) Prajapati. Indeed what is being said is that the first evolute of cosmic creative energy is a hidden, or unperceivable progenitor symbolized by a golden phallus in water."

Hence it provides the distinct use of phallic symbolism in Vedic literature thus at once providing a paradigm shift in the study of Saivism. Moreover sexual symbolism was not a taboo in Vedic literature as we were given to believe and Dange¹⁵ has profusely quoted from various Vedic texts like *Satapatha Brahmana*, *Aitareya Brahmana* etc. to substantiate his point. Here I would cite a few examples occurring in the ritual context:

¹⁴ Srinivasan p.41

¹⁵ Dange S.A, 'Sexual Symbolism from the Vedic ritual, Delhi, 1979 p 88

"In the new moon and full moon sacrifice the after offerings are three sisna , in the Caturmasya , the kraidina oblation is the male organ, in Pravargya, the cauldron is the penis and the two handles are the testicles, in the preparation of the Ahavaniya in the Agnicayana, the pestle is the sisna , the mortar the yoni... Upon close analysis, the union between male and female, mithuna, is allegorically described throughout the Vedas."

Hence it is seen that erotic symbolism was not unknown to Vedic literature. An interesting passage narrated in *Mahabharata*¹⁶ throws light on the worship of *Siva* in both anthropomorphic form and linga form. Here *Vyasadeva* explains to *Asvatthama* that he faced defeat by *Krsna-Arjuna* because they worshipped *Siva* in the potent form of linga while he paid his homage to *Siva's* image. (*Tabhyam Linge'archito Deva-s-tvaya'rchayam yuge yuge ..*) This clearly points at some kind of superiority attached to linga worship. The next two verses further elaborate that one who is spiritually advanced and can realize *Siva* in all forms and see linga as the source of all creation is only entitled to worship the *linga*.

Sarva-bhuta-bhavam jnatva Lingam-archati yah prabhoh

This passage hints at the highly esoteric and subtle meanings associated with linga worship which probably was not meant for lay folks who needed an image to concentrate. (*Lainge sukshma-sarire archayam pratimayam*) (Mbh 7.200.92). suggesting that linga is the subtle body or form while the image (*pratima*) is the 'archa'.

Worship of *linga* requires the complete concentration of the devotee, with his soul and mind fixed on the linga and all senses have to be completely in control. Now such rigorous meditation can be expected out of a yogi only. Moreover the text suggests that the devotee already should have a high spiritual level.

¹⁶ *Mahabharata, Vanaparava, Kirata Parvan*

This term '*linga*' has been used in the *Pasupata Sutra* (1.6). An elaborate translation and analysis of this cryptic sounding sutra with a wealth of associated meaning which was passed from one generation of adepts to another is found in Kaundinya's commentary on the otherwise cryptic sutras. As mentioned earlier these sutras were formulae in which the basic tenets of the system were codified. On their own they make no sense to the reader because they were essentially a part of a discourse. Hence PABh of *Kaundinya (Rasikara)* comes across as a very important source as it contextualizes the aphorisms in their holistic discourse.

'*Lingadhari*' (1.6)

*Kaundinya*¹⁷ in his commentary explains the sutra as:

Here as persons of other castes and stages of life have marks , distinctive of their own. There the householder has as his mark three clothes, bamboo staff, water-jar-filled with water, shaving of moustaches, sacred thread etc. So the marks of a brahmacarin are staff, water-jar, girdle by munja grass, sacred thread , skin of black deer etc. Likewise the Vanaprastha has also the marks of a water-jar, bark garment, bristle, matted locks of hair etc. And the bhiksu has the marks of three staves, shaven head, water jar, ochre coloured cloth, water strainer and Kusa grass etc. Thus here also the mark of a Pasupata-Yoga means the distinctive mark of the stage as for example, ashes-bath, lying down in ashes, re-bath, garland, single cloth, etc. and this mark becomes a part of his body creating the idea of Pasupatas among the people. The lingam is due to the act of merging and that of marking. Bearing that he becomes the holder of the mark. Like the wielder of staff.

It is certain that *linga* here is used as in other vedic texts to mean a sign. So *Kaundinya* goes on to enumerate the external signs exhibited by various sections who followed the order. A *Pasupata* aspirant is to worship *Linga* in the abstract sense of the term is confirmed by the highest mode of *sadhana* , noted in the commentary text. A true aspirant had to sever all ties with sense and sense objects (*chhitva dosanam hetujalasyamulam*) and concentrate on *Siva* with undiverted attention so as to attain the blissful state. In the end he notes down the external marks exhibited by an ascetic who has taken *Pasupata* vow. The marks like ashes bath, lying down in ashes, rebath , garland etc refer to the earlier aphorisms from the same text viz.

¹⁷ Chakraborti Haripada, '*Pasupata Sutram with Panchartha Bhasya of Kaundinya*, 1969, Calcutta p.59

Bhasmana trisavanam snayita (PS 1.2)

Bhasmani Sayita (PS.1.3)

Amusnanam (PS. 1.4)

Nirmalyam (PS 1.5)

But the passage that really caught my attention was the last line where *Kaundinya* uses the phrases ‘merging in the linga’ . Here one is reminded of a passage from *Karvan Mahatmya* which talks about the merging of *Lakulisa* in the body of *Brahmesvara linga*. The entire text has been narrated in a form of a dialogue primarily between ‘*Isvara* ‘ and ‘*Devi*’, about *Siva*’s 28th incarnation ie *Lakulisa-avatar*.

Srimahadeva uvac –

Vrddasya vacanam srutva lakuliso varanane!

Brahmesvaram samasadhya tasminevalayam gatah

Stithsabhagvan tatrkayarupimahesvarah

*Yenkayavtarosautenedam kayarohanam*¹⁸

Sri Mahadeva says:

After listening to *Vrddhesvara*’s words *Lakulisa* meditated on *Brahmesvara* and finally merged with him. There *Lakulisa* bhagvan along with his physical body merged with *Mahesvara* as his avatara, that is why the place became famous as *Kayavrohana* (identified with present day Karvan). Interestingly we find two Siva lingas, (one in *Bhramesvara* temple and other in the *Raja Rajesvara* temple situated in the Karvan village) superimposed with a figure of *Lakulisa* which visually depicts what has been narrated in the passage above. Regarding the development of this icon *Shah*¹⁹ writes:

¹⁸ Patel H.S. Ed. *Shri Kayavarohan Tirth no Itihas*, Ahmedabad, 1964

¹⁹ Shah U.P, ‘*Lakulisa: Saivite Saint*, in *Meister M DOS* p.98

"From at least the seventh century Lakulisa was shown in western India seated in front of a Siva linga. Ithyphallic, with long matted locks, jewelry, some times with the yogapatta, this type shows Lakulisa holding a citron in his right hand , the danda in his left."

During my visit to Karvan I noticed there are two such images which are under worship, one in the main temple 'Brahmesvara' and other in a smaller temple in the village and that is known as 'Rajarajesvara' by local people.



Illus 45 Rajarajesvara linga in Karvan village, Baroda dist. Gujarat
(looks like a late copy of the original)

This *linga* at Kayavarohan is included in the list of 68 *Svayambhuva* lingas in the commentary on his *Jirnoddhara-dasakam* by Nigamajnanadeva of Vyaghrapura, son of Vamadevasivacharya²⁰. *Kamikagama*²¹ describes *svayambhu lingas* as ones which rise up and come into existence by themselves and have existed from time immemorial. The importance of this type of *linga* is gleaned from the fact that it was believed if by any chance this *linga* is removed completely from its place it would cause downfall of the kingdom and complete destruction of the ruler. This might be pointing at covert power that the ascetics managing the shrines housing such lingas had and might even throw light on the huge popularity of Saivite Rajagurus in medieval times.

The earliest documented *Sivasthala* (Sivathale in Kharoshthi inscriptions) was unearthed within the late historic *Parasuramesvara* temple complex at Gudimallam (Chittoor Dist. of A.P.). The form of the God was carved in three-fourth relief over a standing *Linga*, of almost life-size. The aspect of merging in or emerging out of the *linga* is quite prominent here. It has been identified as a figure of *Rudra* on the frontal facet without the *Yajnopavita* and the third eye. The God has a horned animal in the right hand and a water pot (*kamandalu*) in the left hand with a *danda-parasu*. The date previously determined on stylistic grounds to be 2nd BCE was pushed back to 3rd BCE after examining the finds of the dig. Digging within the temple's *garbhagrha* revealed that the *linga*, of hard igneous stone and dark brown color, belongs to the earliest phase of the temple. The *linga*, shaft and nut is about 5 feet in height and the realistically carved nut is differentiated from the cylindrical shaft by a deep slanting groove near the top.

²⁰ *Jirnoddhara-dasakam* by Nigamajnanadeva as quoted in Gopinath Rao, T.A, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 4 Vols, Madras, 1916

²¹ *Kamikagama* as quoted in Gopinath Rao, T.A, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 4 Vols, Madras, 1916

The archaeological data unearthed here makes it a hypaethral *Sila Vedika Linga Sthana* in open, Such simple open-air *Silapata* shrines are well known from the coin depictions from north-west India and can be seen prominently in this early Kusana panel now housed in government museum of Mathura.



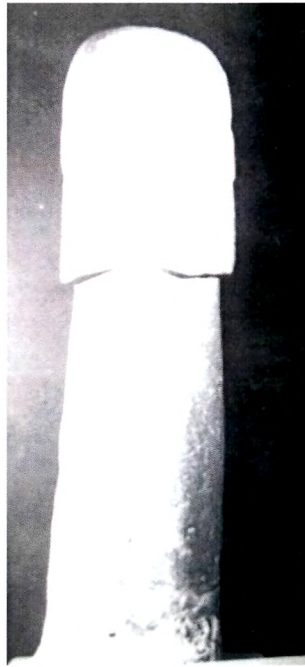
Illus 46. Worship of Linga, Early Kusana ,
1st-2nd CE, Mathura Museum

Illus 47. Guddimallam Linga, Parasuramesvara Temple, Andhra Pradesh, 3rd BCE

Srinivasan²² observes that the crouched figure probably of a yaksha on whom Rudra is standing has fish shaped feet and his ears have shape of a conch. These symbols she connects with water and deduces that the yaksha might have been associated with the aquatic realm hence suggesting the linga is emerging from deep waters. Sarma hypothesizes that the *lingapitha* within the vedika stood in the open and was worshipped much like a *vrksacaitya* (caitya with a sacred tree) in antiquity. Sivalinga surrounded by a vedika was worshipped in open usually under a tree can be seen from depictions. A relief panel from Mathura (Mathura museum no 3625) shows a plain realistic looking linga, quite similar to the gudimallam linga, being worshipped under a tree. Numismatic evidences too confirms the presence of free-standing lingas closely associated with trees. On the obverse of Allan's variety e, of class 1 Ujjaini coppers, the linga is seen between two different trees in railings.

²² Srinivasan, p.37

A free standing plain linga quite like the one in the above mentioned relief has been found at Kankali Tila (Mathura) and is now housed in the State Museum , Lucknow . It is again realistically carved in red sand stone featuring the nut with the central fold and is encircled with a wide band. This linga is 38.2''*10.2'' above ground and has a rectangular socle intended for insertion into the ground.



Illus 48. Free standing Siva Linga, Pre Kusana, Kankali tila, Mathura 1st BCE

Hence in this first phase of Saiva iconography we see huge lingas depicted like a realistic looking phallus with no reference to yoni pitha. This exclusion of feminine element so deep rooted in later Saivism I feel downplays the role of linga as a fertility symbol. On the contrary it might be signifying the abstainance and channelizing of sexual energy into spiritual energy which only an ascetic order could be propagating. *Brhat-Samhita* (59.19) mentions that the Brahmins, besmeared with ashes, evidently the Pasupatas (according to Utpala) would set up *Sivalinga*. The dangers which a woman can lead to is elaborated in a shocking manner in the PABh²³ and woman is openly declared to be the gateway to hell.

²³ Chakrabarti p.66

*"The inclination of the mind towards women is the rope for tying. The meritorious go severing it but the bad men do not forsake it. One goes out of a village for woman, commercial dealings are also due to woman, woman is the source of all evils and wise should never embrace her. She, whom people regard as woman, is poison, fire, sword, and more clearly a terror and maya (illusion) incarnate. The fools and not the learned revel in the body, full of impurities and worms, foul smelling by nature, unclean and the storehouse of urine and excretion an ephemeral. One gets maddened at the sight of a woman and not by drinking wine; so one must shun a woman whose sight creates madness from a distance. The world is bitten by the snake in the shape of the sex-organ of woman, which has its mouth cast downward, which moves in between the thighs and which cannot be controlled by all scriptures. The entire world is blinded by a woman like the foot step of the female deer, having hairs, ugly appearance, foul smell and bad skin. Woman is like burning flame and man is like a pitcher of clarified butter. Those who are attached to women are lost and those who **stand controlled**, go to heaven. As the fire fed with fuel manifests great light, so the light of one's self is manifested by the control over senses. Patience lies in celibacy, penance lies in celibacy and those brahmanas who practice celibacy go to heaven. Those brahmanas who practice celibacy drink milk, honey and soma juice with ambrosia and become **immortal** after death. Thus celibacy is established in the Tantra.*

The idea that both male and female principles are present in the body of Siva is represented emphatically by enchanting *ardhanarisvar* aspect of Siva. The early depictions of this icon are mainly found attached to the linga and the figure is shown with one breast on the left side and is also ithyphallic. The discovery of male and female in one body has been advocated by various tantric texts and was followed profusely by Natha Siddhas of medieval times. In this context the 33 cm high linga of late Kusana period with the image of *ardhnarisvar* carved out of red mottled sand stone, found from Mathura and presently in Pritzker collection Chicago provides an important example. The left hand rests on a feminine looking waist and right hand seems to be in abhaya mudra. The elegance and grace which is the watchword for later *Ardhnarisvara* images can be seen here too. The slight bent in the body lends extensive charm to the well executed image. But it is the ithyphallic nature of the sculpture that points at the tantric references about arousing one's feminine side.

The importance of women is stressed upon in some verses from KM which at first look might be contradicting the tenets of the system but on closer observation it is realized that the texts like *Mahatmyas* were generally written for laity and thus would not suggest same set of rules which apply to an ascetic aspirant.

Bharya nama nram bhadre! Sarvakamarthasadhini

Yashsriyah kamyukta putrada kulavardini

*Bharyahino vishalakshi! Kuto bhadrani pashyati?*²⁴

O blissful one, a wife fulfills all her husbands desires and is responsible for him getting fame, prosperity and sons. She is the one responsible for maintaining the family lineage

O large eyed lady! How can a man without a wife think of being happy?

Gopinath Rao²⁵ has compared Gudimallam *Linga* to the manusha *Linga* of *Bhita* dated to 1st BCE, presently in Lucknow Museum. It has been described in detail for the first time by Banerji (Rao 63). Right below the heads is carved a phallus is shallow relief which may or may not have been the part of actual schema. To the left of this is an inscription which reads as follows²⁶:

Khajahutiputanam (im)go Patithapito Vasethi-Putena Nagasirina piyayta(m)d(e) vata

(The linga of the sons of Khajahuti was dedicated by Nagasiri the son of Vasethi. May the deity be pleased)

²⁴ Patel p.24

²⁵ Rao Gopinath p.63

²⁶ Rao Gopinath p.63



Illus 49. Manusi Linga from Bhita, 1st BCE, Lucknow Museum

Banerjea²⁷ identifies in this form the earliest form of *Sadasiva* with the *urdvaretas* (Ithyphallic) . the great yogi Siva. This inscribed linga of buff sandstone displays an interesting and novel iconographical pattern. The central shaft of the linga is carved into the shape of a two armed male which Srinivasan²⁸ identifies as *Isana*, (*urddhavamukha*,) and who is shown with long matted hair not very unlike later images of *Daksinamurti* Siva. He holds a kamandalu in the left hand and right hand seems to have been raised in abhaya mudra. Below the bust of this central figure, four different faces in four cardinal directions can be seen carved on the linga shaft. It seems to have been a linga of a *Panchmukhalinga* variety but its curious iconography raises interesting questions. The importance given to the figure of *Isana*, the topmost face of Siva as compared to rest of the four faces is unmistakable.

²⁷ Banerjea J.N, Banerjea J. N. *Religion in Art and Archaeology (Vaishnavism and Saivism)* .Lucknow: The Upper India Publishing House Ltd, 1968, p.459

²⁸ Srinivasan p.35

PS 1.9 says : “**Mahadevasya Daksinamurteh**” and to explain Kaundinya²⁹ writes:

*Here daksina is in the sense of a quarter or direction. The Sun divides the quarters. The quarters again divide the image. The image here means that form which the Sadhaka, seated near on the right side of the Lord with his face turned north realizes and which is characterized as Vrsa-dvaja (the bull symbolized) as Sulapani (with trident in his hand) as Mahakala and as Urdhava-linga etc. Or the people go the temple of Mahadeva and so there the Sadhaka should worship. **The Daksinamurti being taken, the images on the east, north and west are to be discarded.***

The last line clearly suggests the importance of Daksinamurti, i.e Siva in form of a teacher in the Lakulisa-Pasupata order. Vidya, knowledge being of prime importance for aspirants of this system the teaching aspect is to be focused on. PS 5.42 says : “**Isanah Sarva-vidyanam**” literally meaning that Isana is the lord of all vidyas . Kaundinya explains the sutra as :

Here he is called Isana because of his lordship. Here the cause is stated when Isana is explained by his power of lordship. Isana means the Lord, the creator. Now-whose Lord is this? The answer is –He is the Lord of all. The word ‘sarva’ means all without excluding any of the branches of learning. He is the master of all branches of learning, meant for the accomplishment of virtue, wealth, desire and emancipation.

Regarding the complex nature of Isana , Rupamandana³⁰ says :

Sadhyovamanatataghoram tatpurusamcaturmukham/

Pancmanctathsanam yoginamapyagocaram//

This verse suggests that the Isana face is even beyond the understanding of yogis.

Interestingly here both forms *Daksinamurti* and Isana are linked with disseminating knowledge to their worshippers and in former sutra it is clear that the *sadhaks* have to concentrate on this form of Siva to attain knowledge. In the process they have to “discard” the other forms. Here discard has to be understood in the sense of not being concentrated upon. It could probably mean at this stages aspirants were not supposed to worship Siva in his various lila-murtis i.e *Kalyanasundara murti*, *Gangadhar murti*, *Siva playing chauser* and so on. The focus had to be completely on learning as it required one-pointed devotion.

²⁹ Chakrabarti p.64

³⁰ Rupamandana as quoted by Pathak V.S. Pathak, V.S. History of Saiva Cults in Northern India (from inscriptions 700 AD to 1200 AD). Varanasi: Tara Printing Works, 1960

Such strict directions about what to worship in what form and also the earlier passage on women reminds one of Plato's writings in Republic where he declares artists to have corrupting influence on the people and thus bans them from his Utopia. Artists he feels represent an immoral world which can lure people away from reason and divert their attention from essential work.

Another very important evidence which connects the worship of *Sivalinga* strongly with this order is the Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandra Gupta II dated to 380 CE which provides extremely information from the date of *Lakulisa* which has been already discussed in detail. It records that *Uditacarya*, a *Pasupata* teacher of *Kusika* lineage established two images called *Kapilesvara* and *Upamitesvara* in the *Gurvayatana*. D.R Bhandarkar³¹ who edited this important inscription opines that Upamita and Kapila who seem to have been great adepts in *Pasupata* passed away like yogins and were believed to have merged with *Siva*, so they are recorded in this inscription as Bhagavat in whose commemoration *Uditacarya* established two Lingas in the "Teacher's shrine". He further states the term 'guru-pratima-yutau' in line number 10 in place of the illegible space in the inscription

Lines 9 and 10

9 *gurunamchkitrayarthupamitesvara-kapilesvarau*

10 *gurvayatane guru.....pratisthapitau*

Explaining the import of the inscription he writes, "apparently the representation shows as if Upamita and Kapila were standing each with a Linga on the head". Sircar too seconds this interpretation (I.H.Qly vol18,p27 ff). Moreover this inscription also contains an injunction to the Acaryas and worshippers of Mahesvara to take charge of the Lingas and worship without fear. Now from all the visual repertoire linked with Siva Linga we don't come across images of preceptors bearing a linga on their head but we do find a vast array of Mukhalingas from various parts of the country. **Could the inscription be referring to two Eka-Mukhalingas established in the special**

³¹ Bhandarkar D.R., ed and trans Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II, G.E 61, EI XXI, 1931-32

shrine for the demised gurus? In that case the evidences might not only point at wide acceptance and importance of the Linga symbol in this order but also suggest this order had a major role to play in formulating the new semiotics related to Lingas. **Could it be this order which popularized the philosophical aspect of Sivalinga among people? Could it be the Acaryas of this order who sheathed this symbolic form in Vedic philosophical garb?**

K.C. Panigrahi³² notes that (p 639) similar tradition is still being followed in Bharati Matha in Bhubaneswar, as a result of which a guruvayatana has sprung up within its compound. There are now as many as 15 miniature temples of sandstone and laterite each of which contains a linga. Besides a number of lingas are found in open spaces and niches made in the temple and the Mahant of the matha with whom Panigrahi interacted believes that there are many more lingas lying buried in the kitchen garden.

Several *linga* types are known from Bhita and Mathura regions. An *Eka Mukhalinga* of the Sunga period is found from Mathura. A figure of Siva against a pillar of the pre-Kushana phase is now in the Philadelphia Museum. R. C. Agrawal reported a similar *linga* from Gamri (Bharatpur, Rajasthan). These attest to the popularity of the *Linga* worship in Mathura, Ujjaini and Madhyadesa. *Lingas* on raised brick platforms (*arghapithas*) with no *pranala* arrangement indicate that *abhishekha* ritual has not yet come to vogue. The *Linga pithas* under (*Sthalavriksha* or *Yaksha Sadam*) and in open were found vividly among the sculptural depictions dated to Kushana and post Kushana periods in Mathura, Taxila, and Ujjain.

Brick temples with *Linga-pithas* are found in the various *Satavahana* sites of Deccan (2nd-4th centuries A.D.) Ter in Maharastra, Aihole in Karnataka and more extensively at Nagarjunakonda.

Sarma³³ observes , “The *Kshatrapas* were devout worshippers of Siva and *Lakulisa*. Several *Linga* shrines at the famous Kayavarohana (Karvan in Gujarat) and Saurashtra mark the growing of *Lakulisa-Pasupata*”.

³² Panigrahi K.C., Panigrahi K.C, *Sculptural Representation of Lakulisa and other Pasupata Teachers*, *Journal of Indian History*, Vol-38, April 1960

³³ Sarma.I.K, *The Development of early Saiva Art and Architecture*, Sandeep Prakashan, 2004

Mukhalingas and esoteric meanings:

Mukhalingas are a variety of *Manusha-lingas* bearing one or more sculptured faces of Siva on it. Most of the Agamas and Tantras provide detailed descriptions about making of a mukhalinga and hence their importance is stressed upon. Summarizing the essential points from these texts Rao³⁴ writes:

“The substance of these is that a Mukhalinga should be made on the pujabhaga of the Savrsama-linga and that it might have one, two, three, four or five faces corresponding to the five aspects, Vamadeva, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Sadyojata and Isana of Siva.”

He further suggests that the number of faces on the linga were equal to the number of doorways of the garbagrha. Hence if there was only one doorway, *ekamukhalinga* was established and if there were four then *Caturmukhalinga* was established.

An important *ekamukhalinga* is housed in The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Interestingly it shares the realistic depiction of gudimallam linga and other free standing lingas belonging to pre Christian era. Here an incised rim circles the nut just above the central fold and above this point emerges the human head. On basis of the style Srinivasan³⁵ dates it to 1st BCE which seems quite plausible.



Illus 50. Ekamukhalinga, Pre Kusana, 1st BCE , Mathura (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

³⁴Rao Gopinath p.64

³⁵Srinivasan p.34

Another interesting Pre-Kusana *ekamukhalinga* comes from Aghapur (Bharatpur District, Rajasthan). Carved out of mottled red sandstone it echoes the similar realism seen in the early lingas from Mathura. Siva's face carved on the shaft is seen wearing an elaborate turban and which as one can see in the table is showing the east face displaying the kingly characteristics of the lokapala Indra.



Illus 51. Ekamukhalinga, Pre-Kusana, Aghapur, U.P (Govt. Museum Bharatpur)

An *ekamukhalinga*, showing Siva as *jatamukuta* is carved on an architectural fragment presently housed in State Museum, Lucknow. On the basis of style it can be dated a little later than the earlier ones discussed above, i.e c. 1st CE, possibly the early Kusana period. Still the nut and the shaft are seen visibly differentiated with a help of a deep line which goes round the *linga*. The top portion is decorated with a patterned band, tied as if to secure Siva's face to the *linga*. Like all the early *linga* forms this too is free standing and is installed upon a brick platform, situated before a spreading papal tree. Two worshippers are seen on the right standing in front of a broken figure.

The fact that a number of '*mukha-lingas*' are found from Thailand as enumerated by Indrawooth³⁶ shows that this cult was popular in the area around 5th-6th C.. A number of Siva lingas have been reported from Southern Thailand especially from 'Chaiya', 'Nakhon Si Thammarat' 'Songkla' and 'Pattani'. Besides these sivalingas the existence of Saivism on Peninsular Thailand during this period is well supported by the 6th C. Sanskrit inscriptions from 'Khao Chong Khoi' in 'Nakhon Si Thammarat' province. The commercial trade contact hugely responsible for exchange of ideas between South India and Thailand were well established from Pallava period (6th C.) onwards though there are earlier scattered proofs of contact with east and central India.

In her extensive article on 'Saivism in early southern Thailand she has meticulously recorded the Saivite archeological remains in the area and also has referred to some important inscriptions. She has also thrown some light on Sivalinga cult and the number of *Sivalingas* found in the said region. She concludes her article with,

"The predominance of *Sivalinga* and Siva images as well as Saiva sacred places indicates that Saivism was flourishing in the peninsular Thailand during Srivijaya period³⁷."

Another enlightening article on the subject is by Prapandvidya³⁸ on 'Saivism in Thailand as recorded in Inscriptions and old documents from 6th c ad to early Ayudhya period'. The detailed study of these inscriptions and their bent towards Saivism is clearly pointed by the scholar. He further observes that from the reign of King Bhavavarman I till king Jayavaraman VII's accession to the throne, the major religion in the north eastern region of ancient Thailand was Saivism

³⁶ Indrawooth Phasook, 'Saivism in early Thailand based on archeological evidence' in 'Sahrdaya, Studies in Indian and South East Asian Art in honour of Dr. R. Nagaswamy' Ed by Baumer Bettina, Misra R.N., Prapandvidya Chirapat and Handa Devendra, Tamil Arts Academy, 2006 p 69-73

³⁷ Ibid p.73

³⁸ Prapandvidya, 'Saivism in Thailand as recorded in Inscriptions and old documents from 6th c ad to early Ayudhya period' evidence' in 'Sahrdaya, Studies in Indian and South East Asian Art in honour of Dr. R. Nagaswamy' Ed by Baumer Bettina, Misra R.N., Prapandvidya Chirapat and Handa Devendra, Tamil Arts Academy, 2006 p 62



Illus 52. Ekamukhalinga, Mon-Dvaravati Period, 8th CE, Thailand

In case of *Caturmukhalinga* in addition to the four visible faces there is one supposed to be on the top which is usually not carved and which represents *Isana* aspect of Siva. *Tatpurusa* is represented by the east facing face and *Aghora* by the southern one. *Sadyojata* is represented by western face and *Vamadeva* by the northern one. In the case of four faces, these should be attached to a body which ought to be represented to the level of the chest. Such a representation can be seen clearly in *Pancamukhalinga* from Bhita. Joshi³⁹ opines that:

³⁹³⁹ Joshi N.P, 'Early Forms of Siva' p.52 dos

“Three of the four faces on the caturmukhalingas –the terrifying (aghora), the shaven (mundin or yogin) and the turbaned (usnisin) are male, while the fourth one is female (vama). In Post Kusana sculptures turbaned and shaven faces disappear and are substituted for by normal faces”

Epic and Puranic mythology provide a mytho-poetic explanation of emergence of this interesting form of Siva. Mahabharata, a storehouse of interesting and valuable myths narrates the story of celestial nymph Tillotama who was going around in the assembly of gods. Bewitched by her beauty Siva didn't want to take his eyes off her even for a moment so he developed four faces, one at each cardinal point to enjoy an unimpeded view of Tillotama.(Adi-parvan,210.23-26,605-6). Another reason is provided in Anusasan-Parvan of Mbh where Siva appears to explain this form saying that with his eastern face he rules as Indra, the western one is his normal face, his southern face is meant for destruction and that with his northern face he converses with Uma. Joshi⁴⁰ suggest that here Siva has taken over the function of four lokapalas.

Direction	Lokapala	Function	Aspect	
East	Indra	King and Administrator	Turbaned	Usnisin
West	Varuna	God of water and fertility	Normal	Saumya
South	Yama	God of death and destruction	Terrifying	Aghora
North	Soma/Kubera	God of beauty/God of wealth	Feminine	Vama

The Suta Samhita also conveys the notion about the nature of the five aspects of Siva represented by the five faces. Thus *Isana* is ether (akasa), *Tatpuruṣa* air (vayu), *Aghora* fire (agni), *Vamadeva* water (jala) and *Sadyojata* earth (bhoomi). The text states that the universe is pervaded by the 'Panca Brahma' and the person who is able to realize this attains liberation from bondage (is free of pasas which bind him to Sansara) (choubey p 36). In his *Brahma Mimamsa-Bhasya* Srikanthasivacarya interprets these five faces as representing five senses viz. *Sadasiva* is sound (sabda), *Isvara* touch (sparsa), *Rudra* form (rupa), *Visnu* taste (rasa), and *Brahma* smell (gandha).

⁴⁰ Ibid p.52-53

Now the esoterism of the *Mukhlingas* may be traced in the *Narayanopnisd* which was largely used by the *Pasupatas* for their sacred hymns. PS preached these mantras to be used as *Bija-Mantras* for sadhana.

Sadyojatam prapadyami Sadyojataya vai namah / bhava bhava natibhave bhajasva mam bhavodbhvaya namah/

Vamadevaya namo jyesthayah namah sresthaya namo, Rudraya namah, kalaya namah kala-vikaranaya namo balavikaranaya namo bala-pramathanaya namah sarvabhutadamanaya namo manonmanaya namah//

Aghorebhyotha ghorebhayo gora-ghora-tarebhyah/ sarvatah sarvasarvebhyo namasti-astu Rudra-rupebhyah//

Tatpurusaya vidmahe Mahadevaya dhimahe tan-no Rudra prachodayat//

Isanah sarva-vidyanam-isvarah sarva bhutanam brahmadhipatir brahmanodhipatir - Brahma Sivo'astu Sadasivom

These are hymns to Siva in five different aspects, each with a certain specific attributes. Thus *Sadyojata* is conceived of as *Bhavo'dbhava*, similarly *Vamadeva* is given nine attributes as suggested by the terms *Jyestha*, *Srestha* etc. *Aghora* is invoked as having two attributes, *Ghora* and *Ghoratara*. *Mahadeva* and *Rudra* are the attributes of *Tatpuruṣa*. *Isana* is addressed as being the supreme lord of learning, of animate objects, of the Vedic knowledge and also of Brahman, as *Sadasiva*. It is from Sayana's commentary⁴¹ on these verses that we know these five mantras were addressed individually to five faces of *Mahadeva* by those who aspired for enlightenment and that four faces of the lord were turned to four cardinal directions and the fifth one towards the sky. Such esoteric form of worship was mainly followed by ascetic aspirants with all its philosophical significance. *Sayana* does not suggest any reason for emergence of these five faces, he simply says that the Lord assumes such physical forms only to show mercy to his devotees.

⁴¹ *Rgveda-Samhita Srimat Sayanacharya virchita bhasya-samekṣa* Ed. by N.S Sontakke, Published by Vaidika Samsodhana Mandala, Pune, 1972

Classifies PS into five sections each ending with an exhortation to meditation eg. Bhasya on sutra 1.8 says , “*atra idam Brahma jayet-japyam nama....*”. But Kaundinya’s bhasya does not give any idea of the iconographic form associated to these invocations. The attributes of *Siva* in these mantras are explained in this commentary and are invoked in their formless abstractions with stress laid on the concept of *Brahmans (panchbrahma)*. Though Kaundinya does not clearly talk about panchmukhas (five faces) but from his bhasya on sutra 1.9 it is clear that though Mahadeva has faces turned to other directions PS is only majorly concerned with the *Daksinamurti*. In the earlier sutra 1.8 he states distinctly that the *Pasupata* disciple should invoke the image of Mahadeva on the southern side i.e. the southern face of the image of the Lord. The icon *Daksinamurti* is known from its various depictions as representing a teacher and its no wonder *Siva* was worshipped in this form by the aspirants of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system , who combine the aspect of *bhakti* with *jnana (jnanottar bhakti)*.

The importance of certain Saiva images as abstract meditational devices has been hinted upon by Maxwell⁴² and he compares them to a mandala. He classifies some conjoined anthropomorphic figures in this group and he believes they are intentionally depicted in an unnatural manner. The first image to be discussed is the so called ‘Nand Linga’ and regarding this Maxwell⁴³ observes:

“Here we have a sculpture that is visually analogous to my definition of meditation with its interconnected disciplined stages (the emanatory gods) linked by a continuum (the column) leading to transcendence (the freedom of the top four figures around a domed apex-the dome being the symbol of universality, facing, as it does the entire horizon and all angles of space leading to the zenith”

⁴² Maxwell, T.S. *Saiva Images as Meditational Constructs* p. 64-65, in *Meister M ed.DOS* p.

⁴³ *Ibid* p.66



Illus 53. Nand Linga, Kusana, 2nd -3rd CE ,Rajasthan

Interestingly Maxwell's observations sound as abstract as most of the Sanskrit texts on the subject. He reads similar functions in the Siva image from Parel.



Illus 54. Saiva heptad, Candikadevi Temple, Barh Mata, Parel,(Bombay), Maharashtra, 6th CE

Kramrisch⁴⁴ too considered this panel as an important discovery and observed:

“The image from Parel is based on meaning of lingam, of Yaksha and yoga power. It visualises Siva not with the cosmical suggestiveness of the Nataraja image. This shows Siva in this everlasting activity beheld from without. The image from Parel shows Siva realised from within his state of power”

The importance of *Linga* in this system is stressed upon in *Pauranic Eklingimahatmya* datable to Kumbha's rule C 15th CE translated by Premalata Sharma in hindi. First four chapters of the text narrate the reasons behind the manifestation of *Eklingji*. Interestingly the myths of Daruvan and birth of Skanda are narrated in third and fourth chapters of the text. Sharma⁴⁵ writes (I have transliterated it from hindi pg 8,9)

*“On being asked by Saunak about the significance of Medhpat, (Mewar) Suta answered: In the central region of the Jambudweep there was a forest named Daruvan inhabited by various rishis. Once Siva and Parvati were passing through the forest and playfully Parvati asked Siva to seduce the pious wives of the rishis. Siva refused to comply with her whim and warned her of the Bhramtej with which Rishis could curse them but Parvati remained adamant. So Siva took a form of an extremely handsome man and started roaming in the forest. When the rishi patnis saw the handsome youth they were taken over by passion and were completely enchanted. Siva soon became invisible causing the hapless women to faint. Once these women regained consciousness they began to look for Siva like allover, driven mad by their passion. Rishis were shocked to see their pious wives in a complete state of abandon and through their mental powers realized Siva's game. **Getting angry they unanimously cursed Siva's linga to fall on the earth”***

Hence here we see the connection between linga and phallus is established completely. Now it's the fifth chapter of the same text which talks about the manifestation of *Eklingji*⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Kramrisch Stella 'Indian Sculpture', Philadelphia, 1960, p 176

⁴⁵ *Eklingamahatmaya* (Ekling Mandir Ka Sthal Purana evam Mewar Ke Rajvansh ka Itihas) Trans.

Premalata Sharma, MLBD, Delhi, 1976p. 8,9

⁴⁶ Ibid. p.10

Here for the welfare of the gods cursed by herself, Devi asked the Siva linga to fall in the beautiful kingdom of Mandhata. The linga would then enter the pataloka (netherland) and will only emerge on being meditated upon by Kamadhenu. All the gods cursed to turn into stone will settle around this linga in their personified forms and the 'thief of my womb' Ganga will flow there as 'Kutila'. All important pilgrim places will gather around this linga and I too will be manifested there in the form of Vindhyavasini on the banks of Kutila.

Eight Chapter narrates the manner in which Kamdhenu made linga emerge out of the bowels of the earth⁴⁷

On reaching the spot Kamdhenu filled the void in which the linga had fallen with her milk. Due to her maternal care and love linga emerged out of the hole, floating on the milk and became famous as Eklingji. (p 10)

In chapter nine its clearly stated though Siva was *ekalinga* but due to devotion of various beings he became *Bahu-linga* in various aeons. In *Satyuga* due to *Indra*, in *Treta yuga* due to *Nandini-dhenu*, in *Dwapar* due to *Takshak* and in *Kaliyuga* due to *Bashap-Harita*.

Troubled by Vrtrasura gods invoked Narayana. Visnu advised them to cheat the demon in believing that the gods were on his side and after gaining his complete faith to kill him. The gods did the same and finding the right occasion killed the demon on sly. But after killing the demon Indra incurred the sin of Brahmathya and asked Brhspati to suggest ways of getting rid of the terrible sin. The latter asked Indra to worship Eklingji. Indra came to Nagahrda and first worshipped goddess Vindhayavasini. When the goddess asked him for a boon, Indra asked to be free of sin. Devi directed him to invoke Eklingji which required austere tapa (ugra tapa). Indra dug a lake with his vajra and Eklingji was pleased and absolved him of his sin and declared the 'Indra saras' to be a pious pilgrimage site.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.10

This incident reminds one of 'Pasupata vrata' mentioned in *Mrgendra Agama*. The text was written in the form of a dialogue between Harita and his disciples. *Indra* after killing *Vrtrasura* incurs brahmhatya and praised Visnu with 1000 names (visnu sahastra nama) along with various rites, recitations and rituals. Visnu gave him a 'Narsimha cavaca' and asked him to adore Siva in that attire. Here *Indra* takes up *Pasupata* vows and adores Siva for thousands of years. (translated from the French introduction to the version found in Puddukotai). Such myths connect the concept very strongly with Vedas. PS also substantiates this in sutra 4.10,

P.S. 4.10 Indrova agre Asuresu Pasupatamacharat

Coming back to Pu.EKM the last part of the 10th chapter gives an interesting story of Harita-rashi and Bashapa.

In Kaliyuga both Nandi and Chand were born as Harita and Bashap, the preceptor and the aspirant. Both got together near Ekalingji and worshipped the lord. Harita performed austere and harsh tapa while Bashap served his guru and Ekalingji both. On being propitiated Devi Vindhyavasini advised Harita to write a prose in praise of Siva. Harita wrote a beautiful piece and Siva was pleased and Harita for a boon. Harita asked Siva to bless him with the ability to enter the Siva's abode with his physical body intact and Bashap asked to become the king of Medhpat (Mewar). Siva complied with their wishes.

This incident extremely important for explaining the history of Mewar finds parallel in various local legends which I have tried to summarize:

The king of Nagahrda was killed by his enemies and his pregnant wife did not commit Sati for the sake of the unborn child. To escape the enemies the queen disguised herself and her son and took refuge in a Brahmin household. The child was called Bappa and on growing up took to serving the Brahmin who had given refuge to him and his mother. Meanwhile his Kshtriya nature made him excel at the art of archery and weaponry. Meanwhile the Brahmins wife noticed that one of her cows was not yielding enough milk and suspected Bappa of drinking her milk. Bappa who was dejected on being blamed decided to find out the reason. He started keeping an eye on the cow and saw that while grazing she stops at a spot and milk automatically oozes out of her. Bappa was quite surprised. Nearby he saw Acarya Harita, an ascetic deep



in meditation and out of reverence cleaned his surroundings. He began to serve Harita everyday and inretun the ascetic instructed them in sacred lore of Siva and one day harita asked him to dig the spot where the milk oozed out of the cow. Bappa and his friends were surprised to find a siva linga under the earth. That Sivalinga was adored as Ekalingji and bestowed the boon of moksa on Harita and Kingship on Bappa.

What is quite significant and connects this motif quite strongly to Pasupata order is its similarity with myth preserved in Gopala Vamshabali of Nepal. It mentions that a cow used to spill her milk at a particular mound in *Mrgasthali* forest and was once notices by a cowherd of Kirtipur named Nema Gopala. Nema was surprised to witness the act and decided to unfold the mystery by digging the mound. He found a 'jyotirling' hidden under the mound but was soon burnt to ashes by the heat of the linga. After his death Ne-Muni, the well known ascetic of that area installed the son of Nema Gopala as the king of Nepal⁴⁸. The parallels between both legends are unmistakable and the connection with kingship raises interesting questions about the role of *Pasupata-Acaryas* in the royal set-up and might throw light on the later *Rajaguru* tradition. As we know Nepal in connected with the worship of Pasupati since a long time and till this day the temple of Pasupati exists on the banks of Bagmati river and commands great devotion. Nepal Mahatmaya of *Skanda Purana* preserves the myth of formation of this site. It says that Siva was highly taken in by beauty of the forest and started roaming around in form of a deer with golden horns and that is why the place began to be called as *Mrgasthali*. As other gods got to know about this he left his deer form and returned back to Kailasa but not before **installing himself** in this area as Pasupati. The passage here could very well be talking about the linga which was installed here and according to Gopala Vamshabali can be dated to 1st CE.

⁴⁸ *Encyclopaedia of Saivism*, By Swami Parameshwaranand, 2004 (*Pasupatinatha*)



Illus 55. Ekamukhalinga, Mrgasthali, Nepal, 6th CE.

The worship of *Siva linga* was popularized around Gupta period when the Puranas began to establish that the linga represents the *Nirguna* state of *Siva* like *Para Brahman* of Vedas . A repertoire of mythological literature emerged around the symbol to confer multiple meanings on it, meanings which lay people could understand ,which required no ascetic initiation to understand. Mythology provided the pivot around which the symbol attained apparently simplified meanings quite different from it's earlier esoteric and abstract meaning.