

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION ON SHIVA NATARAJA'S SCULPTURE

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Shiva, a gifted dancer in Hindu mythology, bestows desires on those worshipping him. Metal Nataraja sculptures, found in India, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia, depict Lord Shiva's Tandava dancing style. Found at Shiva Temple No. 1 in the 12th century during the Polonnaruwa era, the sculpture's artistic value demonstrates Hindu culture's conception of God and emphasizes physical attributes, dance stance, balance, and space use. The study highlights the significance of these sculptures in Hindu mythology. The main objective of this study is to analyze the aesthetic qualities of Shiva as a Hindu god, which entails analyzing the significance of this statue from an anthropological perspective. The research problem here is how Shiva worship differs from Sri Lankan sculpture in its socialization as a form of worship. Considering the research approach, this study was conducted with the support of literary sources that discussed the Shiva Nataraja sculpture. This sculpture shares similarities with religious iconography from Buddhism and Christianity in that it uses symbolism to reveal the traits and personalities of saints and deities. Additionally, the Nataraja figure is encircled by a ring of fire, which symbolizes the universe's ongoing creation and destruction. No significant anthropological observations have been previously interpreted in association with this sculpture. Within this cosmic ring of fire are contained mass, space, and time. Shiva Nataraja is a symbol of the Indian understanding of the cycle of time and Shiva's three functions as creator, preserver, and destroyer. In summary, the sculpture represents vitality, youth, and strength, with flames representing the Prabha Mandala and the Makara Mukha on the pedestal. These features showcase Shiva's strength and Hindu religious ideas artistically.

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