



Unknown (Indian)
Shiva Andhakasuramurti, 11th century
pink sandstone
38 9/16 x 23 9/16 x 11 in.
Museum purchase, Karl E. Weston Memorial Fund
81.25

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Unknown (Indian)
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This sculpture represents Shiva, the Hindu god called the destroyer. He is crowned with a diadem of skulls, his face is bearded, and his open lips display a mouthful of teeth. As he lunges, his two complete hands hold the hilt of a sword and a *trisula* (trident) upon which the writhing demon Andhaka is impaled. Andhaka was Shiva's evil son, said to be created from a drop of his sweat. Given away at birth due to his deformities, Andhaka was raised by the demon king Gold Eye. Upon Gold Eye's death Andhaka ascended the throne. A battle ensued between Shiva and Andhaka over Parvati (Shiva's consort and Andhaka's mother) during which Andhaka's blood threatened to spawn secondary demons from each drop that hit the ground. In the end, Shiva prevailed, and his victory is depicted in this sculpture.

Although some of Shiva's hands have broken off, it is likely they once held bowls to collect the drops of blood shed by Andhaka during the combat.



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DISCUSS

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This sculpture of Shiva, the four-armed Hindu destroyer god, is a fragment that was originally part of a larger sculpture. Archaeologists pay careful attention to fragmentary details to figure out what the entire sculpture might have looked like when it was made in the eleventh century. By looking closely at the details, we can begin to see the story of Shiva's battle with the demon Andhaka.

Can you find these details? Roll your cursor over the image of the sculpture to zoom in!

- The figure of Shiva (the large figure wearing many body ornaments)
- Shiva's face
- Shiva's teeth
- Shiva's arm-band
- A crown made of skulls on Shiva's head
- Two of Shiva's hands
- The handle of a sword (Clue: see Shiva's upper hand)
- The handle of a trident (three-pronged pitchfork) (Clue: see Shiva's lower hand)
- The three prongs of the trident, which hold the demon Andhaka

Two of Shiva's arms are missing. Where do you think they were? How can you tell? According to legend, they would have held bowls to catch drops of blood from the demon, which would have spawned more demons if they had hit the ground.

What other parts of the sculpture seem to have been lost over time? What could have caused these losses?



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CREATE

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This sculpture of Shiva, the four-armed Hindu destroyer god, fighting against the demon Andaka. Shiva was said to periodically destroy or disintegrate the universe so that it could be recreated. The Vedas, Hindu holy texts, describe Shiva as a wild and unruly hunter and the ultimate source of all energy in the universe. He was also known as the originator and master of yoga and all of the arts.

By making a sculpture of Shiva, artists give human form to a spiritual entity, offering worshippers a concrete image as a focus for religious contemplation.

Try creating a drawing that shows an idea, like love, anger, or peace in human form. This is called personification. You can think of this person as a character or superhero. What physical features, costume, and pose will embody your idea? Would your idea be best conveyed through bright bold colors? Or a softer palette? Bold, clear outlines? Or sketchy scribbles? Smooth curves or prickly angles and sharp edges? Try drawing or writing about some of your character's adventures.