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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Preamble.

This report was commissioned by the Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir Society Inc. on 20 August 2001. Members of this society are the owners of an ancient Hindu icon known as the 13th enlightened icon or Jyotirlinga. In initiating this study, it was the intention of the Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir Society to raise awareness of the significance of the icon. The icon is a gift of great value from the late King of Nepal to the Australian people.

1.2. Study Brief and Objectives.

The following archaeological and anthropological investigation examines the heritage and cultural significance of the 13th Jyotirlinga within the Hindu community, both in Australia and abroad. This report examines the history of the icon and assesses its cultural and heritage significance. An interpretation of sacredness and an evaluation of the probable date of origin and use of the icon are considered as part of these investigations.

1.3. Site Location.

The 13th Jyotirlinga is housed in a prayer room at 203 Eagleview Road, Minto (Lot 23, DP408343) (Figure 1.1). Minto is located 47 kilometres south west of Sydney in the City of Campbelltown.

1.4. Background Review.

The icon is not listed on the State Heritage Register of NSW, the Register of the National Estate, the National Trust register or the Campbelltown Local Environmental Plan. It has not been the subject of a previous heritage assessment.

Many books and formal studies have been written on the preceding twelve Jyotirlingas which have been consecrated in various parts of India over

thousands of years ago. To date, no formal studies of the 13th Jyotirlinga have been undertaken. The icon is referred to in a recent seminar translated from Hindu Scriptures and presented to the Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir Society.¹

1.5. Study Methodology.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the NSW Heritage Management System described in the *NSW Heritage Manual* and follows procedures and approaches outlined in *Archaeological Assessments* and *Heritage Assessments*.² This report includes:

1. Historical research.
2. Physical evaluation.
3. An assessment of cultural and heritage significance.
4. Conclusions and recommendations.

1.6. Author identification.

Site inspection and interviews were carried out by Dr Louise Steding on 10 and 16 September 2001. This report was written by Dr Steding of Stedinger Heritage & Archaeology for the Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir Society Inc.

¹ Misra, P. 2001. Australia as a Spiritual Place. Seminar paper delivered to the Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir Society.

² NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1996. *NSW Heritage Manual*. HO/DUAP, Sydney.

NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1996. *Archaeological Assessments. Archaeological Assessment Guidelines*. HO/DUAP, Sydney.

NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1996. *Heritage Assessments*. HO/DUAP, Sydney.



Figure 1.1. Locality plan of the prayer room at 203 Eagleview Road, Minto.

Figure 1.1. Locality plan of the prayer room at 203 Eagleview Road, Minto.

2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT.

The following history of the 13th Jyotirlinga examines the origins of the icon, its place within the Hindu religion and how such a unique icon came to be located at its present site. This history facilitates the interpretation of the icon and provides a framework for assessing its significance and identifying a period of sacredness of the icon.

2.1. A History of the Icon.

2.1.1. Hinduism.

Hinduism is one of the oldest practicing religions in the world. It is a faith that seeks truth and enlightenment, from within and from the universe. This religion has no commandments, rather, it reveals eternal truths about life and suggests various paths of righteous living. Hinduism is a religion, a philosophy and a way of life. It advocates four goals: appropriate or righteous living (*dharma*), wealth and prosperity (*artha*), love and happiness (*kama*) and release from reincarnation (*moksha*).

While Hinduism has no historic founder, its origins may extend back to the great civilisations of the Indus Valley which emerged 4500 years ago (2500BC), if not earlier. By 1700BC, when Aryan pastoralists began migrating from Central Asia to India, the ancient Indus Valley civilisation had almost disappeared. Amongst the ruins of its ancient cities of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, archaeologists have uncovered artefacts which reveal similarities between the early Indus religion and the later Hindu religion of the Aryans. Seals were recovered, for example, which portray a seated yogi surrounded by animals reminiscent of the Hindu god Shiva.³ Other seals depict sacred bulls may relate to the Vedic god Rudra who is referred to as a bull. In later Hinduism Nandi the bull is the vehicle of Lord Shiva.⁴ Also, symbols of fertility and the 'Earth Mother' have been found. These archaeological finds suggest that deities, such as Shiva as the divine yogi and Devi the mother goddess, could pre-date Aryan migration.

³ Wilson, C. 1997. *The Atlas of Holy Places and Sacred Sites*. Reader's Digest Press. p.125.

⁴ Bowker, J. 1997. *World Religions. The Great Faiths Explored and Explained*. Dorling Kindersley. p.20.

Hew, S. (edt.). 1990. *Cultures of the World. India*. Marshall Cavendish Corporation. p.68.

The early form of Hindu religion which accompanied the Aryans was embodied in the Vedic hymns of creation, prayer and philosophical discussion. The Vedas are the oldest of the Hindu sacred texts. They were used by the Aryans as long ago as 1500BC and were first passed orally through recitation and chanting.⁵ The Vedas are made up of four collections of texts. The oldest is the Rig Veda, a collection of 1028 hymns.⁶ Later the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda were composed, then finally the fourth text, the Atharva Veda in circa 900BC.

Hundreds of years passed before the Vedic Hymns were written down. They were first written in Sanskrit around 700BC. Sanskrit became the language of India after the arrival of the Aryans. It was considered to be the sacred language of the gods and later became the literary language of learning and scholarship.⁷

The Rig Veda consists mainly of hymns and prayers addressed to the elemental gods. Vedic religion is characterised by a world of elemental gods and goddesses. They include, for example, Rudra, god of storms, Indra, chief deity, Prajapati, lord of creatures and Viswakarma, chief architect of the universe.⁸ While the goddess Devi and Brahma have no role in the earliest texts, Shiva, in the form of Rudra, was addressed only three times in the Rig Veda. The importance of Vishnu, Shiva, Devi and Brahma gradually increased and amidst the host of lesser deities the concept of the Hindu Trinity emerged: Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva the Destroyer. Together they symbolise the ultimate god known as Brahman.⁹

Hindus have many sacred texts, including the *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads* (from c.700BC), which were written as the Vedic Age drew to a close. This period was one of great literary importance. From 500BC the great epic poems of the *Mahabharata* were written followed by the epic *Ramayana* between 200BC and

⁵ Ganeri, Anita. 1993. *Varanasi*. Evans Brothers Ltd. p.39.

Hew, S. (edt.). 1990. *Cultures of the World. India*. Marshall Cavendish Corporation. p.66, 80.

⁶ Ganeri, Anita. 1993. *Varanasi*. Evans Brothers Ltd. p.39.

⁷ Ganeri, Anita. 1993. *Varanasi*. Evans Brothers Ltd. p.39.

Hew, S. (edt.). 1990. *Cultures of the World. India*. Marshall Cavendish Corporation. p.79.

⁸ Central Chinmaya Mission Trust. 1978. *Sankara the missionary*. Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, Bombay. p.12.

⁹ Hew, S. (edt.). 1990. *Cultures of the World. India*. Marshall Cavendish Corporation. p.67.

200AD.¹⁰ The *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* and the *Puranas*, are stories about the creation and the lives of the gods. They are the historical tradition as recorded by the brahmins from the creation of the universe.

Through the stories of the sacred texts about the eternal trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, Hinduism spread through the sixth and the eleventh centuries. Each of these gods incorporates lesser deities and heroes from the Scriptures. This expansion led to the personal worship of each god, and the construction of many temples, particularly between 950AD and 1050AD.¹¹ Earlier, at the close of the Vedic Age, temples emerged as the old Vedic rituals and sacrifices became more elaborate and complicated.¹² However, most of the elaborate temples now existing in India were built in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries following the destruction of earlier temples by the Mongol conquerors who ruled from 1526 to 1857.¹³

TIME LINE of important events.

Date	Event
10 000BC	The indigenous Dravidian people originated in the south and had lived in India since 10000BC.
2500BC	The emergence of civilisation in the Indus valley.
1700-1500BC	Destruction of the great cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. Migration of Aryan pastoralists to India from Central Asia.
1500-1000BC	The Rig Veda is compiled, the oldest religious document. The caste system develops. Ancient Sanskrit.
700-500BC	End of the Vedic Age.
500-486BC	Teachings by Buddah. Classical Sanskrit. Cotterell suggests a later date of 479BC for the death of Buddah (p32).
500BC-200AD	The <i>Mahabharata</i> and the <i>Ramayana</i> are composed, Hindu epics.
c.270-232BC	The reign of King Ashoka.

¹⁰ Bowker, J. 1997. *World Religions. The Great Faiths Explored and Explained*. Dorling Kindersley. p.18, 30.

¹¹ Wilson, C. 1997. *The Atlas of Holy Places and Sacred Sites*. Reader's Digest Press. p.121.

¹² Central Chinmaya Mission Trust. 1978. *Sankara the missionary*. Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, Bombay. p.13.

¹³ Turner, B. (edt.). 2001. *The State'sman's Year Book. The Politics, Cultures & Economies of the World*. 137th edition, Macmillan Press Ltd. p1127.

320-475AD	The Gupta dynasty rules. Hindu culture and religion flourish.
500AD	Huns invade northern India.
1000AD	The Moslems begin to invade India. Many people fled to Nepal.
1200AD	Nepal under the rule of the Malla Kings. Sieges by Moslem armies.
1526-1857AD	Mongol conquerors ruled India.
1700AD-	Europeans bring Christianity to India.
1768	Kathmandu Valley conquered by the Gurkas. King Prithvi Narayan Shah was the founder of Nepal's modern dynasty.
1857	India becomes a British Colony
1947	India gains independence, but is divided into largely Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan.

2.1.2. Lord Shiva.

Most Hindu temples are dedicated to one particular god or goddess. The prayer room examined in this report which houses the 13th Jyotirlinga is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Shiva is one of the three supreme gods of the Hindu religion and is the principal god of creation and destruction.

As discussed, worship of Shiva extends back to the emergence of the Vedic storm god Rudra and probably earlier as an older deity whose attributes appear on seals from the Indus Valley civilisation. Originally a minor deity, he gained importance after absorbing some of the characteristics of an earlier fertility god and became Shiva, part of the trinity, or *trimurti*, with Vishnu and Brahma. In his greater form as Shiva, Jordan identifies Shiva's known period of worship as being from around 300BC.¹⁴ This period corresponds to the composition of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, extending back to 500BC.

As one of the supreme Hindu gods, in appearance Shiva is described as being fair of face with four arms, three to five and sometimes eight faces and a third eye representing enlightenment. Shiva wears the skin of a tiger and has a snake entwined around his neck. As written in Scriptures he is "seated on the throne adorned with lovely jewellery set with precious stone, who has His matted hair braided and ornamented with the moon, the Ganges and the sun".¹⁵ In the

¹⁴ Jordan, Michael. 1992. *Encyclopedia of Gods*. Kyle Cathie Ltd. p.279.

¹⁵ Central Chinmaya Mission Trust. 1978. *Sankara the missionary*. Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, Bombay. p.128.

Shiva Purana text, Lord Shiva has 1008 names. He is sometimes portrayed as the cosmic dancer of creation within a circle of fire representing the destruction and recreation of the world.¹⁶ Shiva is also a divine yogi.¹⁷ In a painting by Inayat from c1630 he appears as the Yogi seated beneath the famous Banyan Tree in the upright lotus yoga position with his hands in the teaching position.¹⁸ Shiva's sacred mount is the bull Nandi and his consorts are Durga, Kali and Parvati.

2.1.3. Linga.

Shiva is often worshipped through the linga. As written in the Shiva Purana "it is not the linga that is worshipped, but the one whose symbol it is".¹⁹ In temples dedicated to Shiva, stone linga are the focus of worship rather than an image of Shiva himself. Linga represent the male energy of Shiva, his power and presence. They are often surrounded by the yoni, the female source of life. Together they symbolise male and female energy personified by Shiva and Shakti.

The origin of the lingam, the phallic stone pillar sacred to Shiva, is illustrated in Hindu myth. According to the story, an argument raged between the gods Brahma and Vishnu as to who created the universe. Their quarrel was interrupted when a towering lingam crowned with flame rose from the depths of the cosmic ocean. When Brahma and Vishnu investigated it, the lingam burst apart, and in a cave-like sanctuary deep within they found the ultimate creator, Shiva.²⁰

There are thirteen Jyotirlingas. All are described as being self formed icons of egg shape. In Hindu Scriptures the universe is described as being egg shaped. Of all the Jyotirlingas, the thirteenth is considered to be very close to descriptions in the ancient Scripture, "Shiv-Puraan". The subject of this report, the 13th Jyotirlinga, is called Mukti-Gupteshwar-Mahadev, one of 1129 names

¹⁶ Wilson, C. 1997. *The Atlas of Holy Places and Sacred Sites*. Reader's Digest Press. p.120.

¹⁷ Cotterell, Arthur. 1989. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Myths and Legends*. Collins Publishers Australia. p.161.

¹⁸ Bowker, J. 1997. *World Religions. The Great Faiths Explored and Explained*. Dorling Kindersley. p.36, 37.

¹⁹ Bowker, J. 1997. *World Religions. The Great Faiths Explored and Explained*. Dorling Kindersley. p.22.

²⁰ Cotterell, A. 1989. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Myths and Legends*. Collins Publishers Australia. p.72.

for Lord Shiva.²¹ Many other lingas are in the form of black mounds. The earlier twelve lingas are called: Somnath, Mallikarjuna, Mahakaal, Mamaleshwar, Waidyanaath, Bhimshankar, Ramnath, Naagnath, Vishwanath, Trayambak, Kedarnath and Ghushmanatham.

The icon examined in this report is the thirteenth and the last Jyotirlinga. The story of its formation are written in the *Mahabharata*. It is summarised as follows: Following a battle the defeated *Pandavas* were banished into the forest for twelve years. During their period of exile members of the *Pandavas* arrived at large Ashram located in Nepal. This Ashram was a central place for meditation. According to the Scriptures, until this time the 13th Jyotirlinga or Shivaling lay in the Ashram for 7000 years. While living in the Ashram, Apanda Arjuna, a Pandavas warrior, went hunting. Confronted by a wild boar Arjuna fixed an arrow in his bow intending to kill it. At this moment another hunter claimed the boar as his game. Both hunters released their arrows striking the boar at the same time. The two argued over the kill and fought for 21 days. As Arjuna weakened he made a linga from mud and prayed only to find that his opponent was also Lord Shiva. Shiva had been testing the valour and skill of Arjuna. Shiva was pleased and said that he would always be with him.

2.1.4. A Gift from the King of Nepal.

Nepal is an independent Himalayan Kingdom located between India and Tibet. Approximately 86% of people in Nepal are Hindu.²² The 13th Jyotirlinga was a gift given to the Australian people in 1999 by the late Majesty Maharajadhiraja Birendra Bir Bikram Sháh Dev (b.1946-d.2001). Accompanying the icon were 7996 hymns arranged in 8 volumes. These hymns were composed specifically for this icon by the Chief Priest of Nepal's King Mehendra Bir Bikram Sháh Dev, who died in January 1972. The late crown prince Dipendra Bir Bikram Sháh Dev visited the prayer room in September 2000 to view the icon.

All the thirteen Jyotirlingas form part of the Pashupatinath of Nepal, the main temple of Shiva built in Kathmandu in 1697. Here, the learned scholars are considered to be the trustees of Hinduism. As the main authority on Hinduism and as the trustees of the Jyotirlingas, these scholars sought special permission from the King of Nepal for the transportation of the 13th Jyotirlinga to and its

²¹ Lord Shiva has 1008 names as well as 108 Rudra names and another 13 names for the Jyotirlingas.

²² Turner, B. (edt.). 2001. *The State'sman's Year Book. The Politics, Cultures & Economies of the World*. 137th edition, Macmillan Press Ltd. p.1131.

consecration in Australia. The icon was consecrated on the 14th February 1999 when various stars and planets align as described in the epic *Ramayana*, a phenomenon which occurs once every 100 years. Consecration of the icon was carried out under the instruction of the Jagadguru, the highest spiritual leader in India.

According to the Hindu Scriptures the 13th Jyotirlinga is the last icon of the current cycle of creation and destruction. As the last Jyotirlinga, members of the Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir Society explained, it was necessary for the icon to be consecrated in the southern hemisphere. Australia, they continued, is located at the 'mouth of the snake', a symbol of protection and an ornament of Lord Shiva. Outside the Somnath temple enshrining the first Jyotirlinga, an arrow points along an unobstructed path of light towards the south pole, only compounding their view that the 13th Jyotirlinga should be consecrated in Australia. And so it was. The icon has since been housed in a consecrated prayer room situated in Sydney's outer suburb of Minto. Originally known as Campbellfields, Minto was renamed in 1882 in honour of Gilbert Kyngmount, Earl of Minto, then governor-general of India.²³

2.1.5. Early Hindu Immigrants in Australia.

In 1839, as interest emerged in cheap coolie labour for plantation work, indentured labourers recruited from the hills of Bengal. These workers were Hindus from the Dhangar caste. By the late nineteenth century Hindu, Muslim and Sikh workers had arrived from other parts of India and Afganistan as domestic servants, labourers, camel drivers and free immigrants.²⁴

With Australia's 'White Australia Policy' and intervening years of war, the migration of people from India and surrounding countries was minimal in the early twentieth century. Some neo-Hinduism and Buddhist inspired orders filtered into Australia from the turn of the century, but a greater variety of transcendental movements and teachers arrived in the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, since the late 1960s following liberalisation of Australia's migration policy, many educated and professionally trained Hindu people of ethnic Indian origin have migrated to Australia.²⁵

²³ Pollen, F. 1996. *The Book of Sydney Suburbs*. Constalk, Pymble. p. 175.

²⁴ Bilimoria, P. 1989. *Hinduism in Australia. Mandala for the Gods*. Spectrum Publications, Melbourne. p. 20-22.

²⁵ Bilimoria, P. 1989. *Hinduism in Australia. Mandala for the Gods*. Spectrum Publications, Melbourne. p. 22-28; 41-43.

2.2. Historical Themes.

A number themes have emerged from the history discussed at state and national levels. These are:

- **Religion:** The integration of Hinduism within a multi-cultural society. The practice and focus of worship in new surroundings and circumstances.
Religious icons in Australia.
- **Migration:** The migration of people from Nepal, India and other Hindu countries to New South Wales and Australia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
Adaptation to new surroundings and circumstances.
- **Ethnic Influences and settlement:**
The formation of ethnic communities in New South Wales and Australia and the continuity and integration of their cultural beliefs and practices.

3. THE ICON AND ITS PRESENT SITE.

The icon was viewed by Dr Louise Steding on 10 September 2001 in the company of Mr Prem Misra and Mrs Rama Misra from Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir Society. This visit was during the time of the morning ritual performed by a Brahmin Priest.

3.1. The Icon as a Geological Entity

As a geological formation the 13th Jyotirlinga is a metamorphic rock probably dating back to the Palaeozoic era.²⁶ The Palaeozoic is the oldest geological era which began 545 million years ago and ended around 290 million years ago. Geologist Dr Dietrich Steding suggests that as a geological formation the icon may be as old as 300 to 400 million years and derives from molten rock at depths from 30 to 50 kilometres below the earth's surface.

The 13th Jyotirlinga originates from northern India in what is now Nepal, the mountainous region of the Himalayas. Most metamorphism occurs as a result of mountain building which involves high temperatures and pressures. Given from a mountainous region the lighter streaks within the rock are likely to be the result of such high pressure as various sediments were smeared into others.

It is not possible to determine the mineral composition of the rock without closer examination.²⁷ Possibly the darker rock may be an amphibole or a dark basalt. It may have a high content of hornblende or greywacke, a dark coloured sandstone containing fragments of various rocks. The lighter streaks appear to be quartzite or quartz.

After eventually being moved to the earth's surface the rock has undergone secondary formation processes through weathering. This weathering was in response to changed conditions of temperature, pressure and chemical environment at the surface. Such processes have involved, for instance, breakage, erosion and abrasion. In ice covered regions like the Himalayas, rocks

²⁶ Dr Dietrich Steding is a geologist from the Geologische Forschung und Erkundung, Freiberg, Germany. Refer to Appendix 1.

²⁷ It was not possible to remove the sacred icon from the temple for closer examination. Nor was it possible to handle this object given its holy status. Naturally the cutting of a thin-section was not requested. Consequently a detailed photograph of the icon was examined by geologist Dr Steding.

are often carried through the ice then dragged along river beds, resulting in unusual forms.

The upper portion of the rock is dark in colour and egg-shaped in form.²⁸ It may be that originally a dark layer of rock was located in a higher position. Its form has to do with variations in rates of cooling and in the hardness of different sediments. Various minerals in rocks differ in their rate of weathering. Quartz, for example, is highly stable. These factors, coupled with weathering and abrasion would result in secondary formations like the upper egg-shaped portion of the rock as well as the ridges encircling it.

3.2. A Timeframe.

As described above, the geological date for the 13th Jyotirlinga probably extends back to the Palaeozoic Era, some 300 to 400 million years ago. In identifying the possible age of the object as an icon, information derived from archaeological and anthropological data needs to be considered.

Artefacts are commonly defined as being items that are 'made or modified' by humans. Once the object was adopted for use and assumed a role in Hindu society it became an artefact. In this case the 13th Jyotirlinga is worshipped as an icon created by and being the embodiment of Lord Shiva. The icon is modified in that it is dressed, decorated, placed and fulfils an important role in the religion, culture and lives of many people.

So, when did the object become an icon? As discussed in Chapter 2, similarities have been identified between deities of the Indus Valley Civilisation and Shiva in the form of the Vedic god Rudra and as the seated Yogi. To this extent, the beginnings of worship dedicated to Shiva appears to extend back 4500 to 3500 years ago. But in what way did this earlier pre-Aryan worship manifest itself? Did it involve the 13th Jyotirlinga?

In the early Vedic texts, written 3500 to 3000 years ago, Shiva in the form of Rudra was barely mentioned. By 2500 years ago, stories in the *Mahabharata* describe the formation of the linga, though the specific period to which legend

²⁸ Of all the Jyotirlingas, the 13th is considered to be closest in form to descriptions written in Hindu Scriptures. The egg-shape form symbolises the universe. The ridges or chakras encircling the egg-shape represent celestial steps to the Universe.

refers is not clear. According to the *Mahabharata*, the linga already lay in the grounds of the Nepalese ashram for 7000 years. However, it was after a battle between Arjuna and the Lord Shiva that the linga became the embodiment of Shiva. As such, the time span for the existence of the linga identified in the *Mahabharata* is between 10000 and 2500 years. It is referred to here as the 'period of sacredness' of the linga.

While the existence of the 13th Jyotirlinga is acknowledged within the 'period of sacredness', its use as a focus in ritual also needs to be identified. At the close of the Vedic Age around 2500 years ago, many temples were built as the old Vedic rituals and sacrifices became more elaborate. However, it was between the sixth and the eleventh centuries, that Hinduism spread through sacred texts about the eternal trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. It was this expansion that led to the personal worship of each god, particularly between 950AD and 1050AD. The 13th Jyotirlinga is an icon specifically for the worship of Shiva. It is possible that the icon received prominence in Hindu ritual at this time. As such, a 'period of ritual use' may date from 1050 years ago.

No matter which aspect of age is considered, the 13th Jyotirlinga has great antiquity. Yet, despite its antiquity, the various perspectives of its existence and history are a reminder that it is not the age of an item that makes it so great but rather what it represents.

3.3. The 13th Jyotirlinga.

The 13th Jyotirlinga is a consecrated icon. Like many precious icons which have been removed from their temples, some for protection during times of invasion, the 13th Jyotirlinga has been removed and relocated in Australia. Like other icons the 13th Jyotirlinga has been reconsecrated and placed within its new consecrated surrounds, a prayer room at 203 Eagleview Road in Minto. As such, the 13th Jyotirlinga is an artefact in situ. As an icon it is dressed with beads, a chain and a robe, it is painted with colourful pastes, adorned with flowers and surrounded with offerings and items associated with worship.

In the sanctum of the prayer room, the 13th Jyotirlinga rests on the female 'yoni', a platform of black granite which symbolises the female source of life personified by Shakti. Strings of plastic and wooden beads, a gold chain and fine strands of string are draped around the icon (Figure 3.1). These decorative

items are also symbolic representations. Rudraksha Beads, for example, are the sacred beads worn by Shiva. Lord Shiva also carries beads as a symbol of his teaching. The string represents his sacred thread, formed by one of Shiva's three protective serpents. Another serpent is wrapped around the base of the Shiva linga in the form of an ornamental silver snake.

In front of the altar, Nandi the bull watches over the Shiva linga. Nandi, the animal mount of Lord Shiva, also represents fertility and like Shiva, has been dressed in robes with beads and flowers. To the rear, elevated above both Nandi and the altar, is a statue of Shiva. Seated on a granite platform this statue of Lord Shiva overlooks the interior of the temple. So too do three portraits on the tiled walls of the inner sanctum. One portrait shows Parvati, daughter of the sacred Himalaya mountain and wife of Shiva, in prayer. The other two portraits are of Shiva himself, awake and in meditation.

3.4. Worship of the Icon.

Viewing and being in the presence of the icon are central to worship. The worship and honour of the gods is the main way for a Hindu to attain release from rebirth. From birth to death, Hindu people observe various ceremonies in order to break the cycle of reincarnation and to move on to the supreme or ultimate place. These rituals are a part of Hindu life and are imbued with rich symbolism.

Each morning a Brahmin priest conducts the ritual sustenance of the 13th Jyotirlinga. He is the intermediary between the worshipper and the god. At the beginning of worship, or Puja, the Priest summons the presence of Shiva in the temple through prayer or *mantra*. While chanting in Sanskrit from the Scriptures the Priest begins the ritual bathing of the icon. First, the beads, chain and thread are removed. A thin stream of water then falls onto the Jyotirlinga from the base of a silver bowl. With this water the priest washes the icon. He then rubs fragrance on the icon and, using pastes specially prepared each morning, paints the symbol of Shiva's third eye of enlightenment onto the Jyotirlinga. The pigments used are red ochre, white ash and tan sandalwood. The icon is then dressed in cloth resembling Lord Shiva's tiger skin and crowned with a flower petal, a symbol of royalty.

Continuing the ritual sustenance, the Priest makes offerings of milk, fruit and three types of cooked food are made to the icon. Sometimes sweets are also offered. Two candles are waved over the icon and, using a conch shell, a drum, and brass bells, the priest summons new creation. As the ceremony draws to a close a fan symbolising peace is waved over the Jyotirlinga and Shiva's mount Nandi. The priest then moves around the larger area fanning all 1008 icons of Shiva encased along the walls of the room. These statues bear the 1008 names of Shiva in the form of *mantra* or prayer. Another 108 human made black lingas represent the Rudra names of Lord Shiva and a further 12 icons are replicas of the 12 Jyotirlingas. Using holy water from the bathing of the 13th Jyotirlinga the priest blesses the prayer room, a blessing which extends to everything within 5 kilometres of the sanctum.

To the left of the linga a lamp burns 24 hours. This lamp accompanied the linga on its journey from Nepal. It burns to show all people, plants and animals the way to heaven. In Hindu belief, its flame burns our impurities, leads us to light and removes our darkness. Such beliefs, like many of the hymns, are universal. They are prayers for happiness and peace, good fortune and freedom from disease for all people.

4. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT.

The following assessment of significance is presented in two parts. Part 4.1 is based on the views of the local Hindu community. Part 4.2 focuses on the definitions, standard criteria and guidelines established by the NSW Heritage Office for assessing the significance of items of heritage.

4.1. Significance as expressed by members of the local Hindu community.

In describing the significance of the 13th Jyotirlinga, the author considered it important to document the views of people from our Hindu community. Eight people were asked to contribute their understanding of the icon's significance from their Hindu perspective. These people are considered to be respected and knowledgeable spokespersons for and members of the local Hindu community. They are: Mr Prem Misra and Mrs Rama Misra, Mr Vasu Narasimhan, Mr Shailendra Maharaj and Mrs Amrita Maharaj, Mr Varanasi Balasubrahmanya Sastry and Mrs Suryabhanu Varanasi, and Mr Neti Sivaramakrishna Sastry.²⁹

In describing the significance of the 13th Jyotirlinga, spokespersons for the Hindu community expressed their immense honour at being the "chosen people" to whom this icon should come.

"For me this is God sent". Instead of dying in Varanasi I can be very happy and spiritually fulfilled here."

Varanasi is India's most holy city. It is dedicated to Lord Shiva and for this informant, as for all Hindu people, to die in Varanasi means direct ascendance to heaven.

Like all ethnic groups who have come to Australia, the cultural heritage and religion of the Hindu community is of immense importance to them, as indeed it is to many Australians in the wider community. As described in this report, Hinduism is a way of life. One man recalled,

"When I migrated (to Australia) the most important thing was that I would miss a place of worship. I am so happy. God is everywhere but I need to find a special place."

²⁹ Mr Prem Misra is the president of the Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir Society. Mr Vasu Narasimhan is the secretary of this Society. Mr Bala Subrahmanya Sastry Varanasi is the Vice President of the Sydney based Telugu Association Inc.

Similarly, a woman expressed relief and happiness for her children that,
"now I know they are not missing out on anything".

For these people, the 13th Jyotirlinga is particularly special because the icon is not human made. It is a consecrated natural formation. As another man explained,

"There are thousands of Shiva lingas everywhere, but the Jyotirlingas are consecrated and are therefore very significant. The 13th Jyotirlinga is the most sacred. It was reconsecrated by the Jagadguru... Priests came from India and one from Nepal."

That the Jyotirlinga is not 'man made' means that the icon "is created by God and is in God's own form". Had it been made by men, a woman explains, "it would carry the thoughts of men". In this way the 13th Jyotirlinga is the embodiment of Lord Shiva, in form and thought. "We are so lucky that it came to this continent" it was said again. "For us God sits there (in the prayer room) watching us and protecting us".

The shape of the icon too has special significance. It resembles the self formed Mt Kailash. Mt Kailash in Tibet is the Mountain Abode of Lord Shiva. With mound and base, the form of the 13th Jyotirlinga is more complete.

The presence of the 13th Jyotirlinga in Australia is particularly important in the representing the existence of God everywhere.

" For Hindus it signifies that God is universal. He is not in any one place. This Shiva linga has no beginning and no end ... It represents the universality of the divine spirit."

Expressing passion for the expanse of Lord Shiva's embrace, for another spokesperson there is,

"great significance that this country (Australia) is a focus of the Lord Shiva through the 13th Jyotirlinga."

The 13th Jyotirlinga is the one Jyotirlinga that is located outside of India. This reinforces not only its immense significance as a physical representation of the universality of God, but also the uniqueness of the icon itself and its importance in reference to the other twelve Jyotirlingas.

"It is written in the Scriptures that this Shiva linga will represent universality of the (Hindu) faith ... When I lived in India, we prayed

to Lord Rudra, who always resides on the south part of the earth, to please protect people from the miseries. This (the icon) is the reality. Now I know what the prayer means."

In a cosmic view of significance, it was explained how the shape of a snake is created by electro-magnetic forces breaking through the ionosphere. The snake is an ornament of Lord Shiva and protector of the earth. At the South Pole, where the mouth of the snake is located, the serpent "swallows the bad things and focuses on light and energy for us." As such, Australia is a focal point in the 240 million year creation-destruction cycle described in Hindu philosophy.

"When destruction takes place all the earth must come back to the South Pole. When creation begins again the earth will break apart and drift towards the North Pole. In this cycle, Australia always remains beside the South Pole ... As the absorber of positive energy Australia nourishes the rest of the world in spirituality"

Several of the spokespersons commented with reverence on the vibrant energy which can be felt once you enter the prayer room. It is an energy that brings "peace of mind". As one woman said, "I find peace within myself in His presence." For women of the Hindu faith the "true soul is Lord Shiva, our true husband". Through true devotion, their aim is to be with Him, the divine, in the next life.

Throughout life Hindus search, pray and perform rituals in order to ultimately become one with God, "a god who is really formless". As it was explained to me, it is most difficult for normal people to reach out and relate to a formless God. Here the 13th Jyotirlinga fulfils an important role as an intermediary "to reach the divinity". As such the icon is extremely significant to the Hindu religion. Indeed, as one spokesperson noted, many religions, like Christianity, Islam and Shintoism, involve sacred and holy icons as a means of reaching out to God.

4.2. Significance of the Subject Heritage Item (based on the guidelines of the NSW Heritage Office).

When assessing the significance of an item or site, four broad criteria are widely used by heritage consultants in NSW. The criteria are derived from definitions in the Heritage Act 1977 and have been standardised by the NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning in the *NSW Heritage Manual*.³⁰ The four criteria are: historical significance, aesthetic significance, technical significance and social significance. Representativeness and rarity are widely used to assess the degree of significance of the item or site.³¹

The 13th Jyotirlinga is considered to be significant for the following reasons:

- 1. As a gift from the His Majesty Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, King of Nepal the icon is a great honour for the Australian people. (SHR criterion: Social significance [d] and rarity [f]).
- 2. The icon has great religious importance for the Hindu community. It is central to their fulfilment of spirituality. This significance is highlighted by its consecration under the direction of the Jagadguru, the highest spiritual leader in India. (SHR criteria: Social significance [d]).
- 3. The icon is culturally and socially significant as an integral part of the heritage of our Hindu community, their religion and their philosophy. It is fundamental to their everyday life. (SHR criteria: Social significance [d]).
- 4. The icon is part of a long and continuous historical process which extends from its geological formation and its inclusion in Hindu Scriptures to its worship as an icon and its eventual arrival in Australia from Nepal. It is an item of great antiquity and is integral to past and present Hindu worship. The historical antiquity of the icon spans possibly 4500 years. Its geological age is much greater. (SHR criterion: Historical significance [a]).
- 5. As an important religious and cultural heritage icon, the 13th Jyotirlinga is associated with the history, culture and religious practices of the Indian and

³⁰ NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1996. *Heritage Assessments in NSW Heritage Manual*. HO/DUAP, Sydney.

³¹ NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1996. *Heritage Assessments in NSW Heritage Manual*. HO/DUAP, Sydney.

Nepalese Hindu community and now holds a prominent place in our recent migration history and the religious diversity of this country. (SHR criterion: Historical significance [b]).

•6. The 13th Jyotirlinga has great value through its spiritual and cultural association with the Hindu community in Australia. It is held in very high esteem by the Hindu community and fulfils an important role in this community. (SHR criteria: Social significance [d]).

•7. The icon is an artefact. Religious icons have not been the subject of much attention in Australian historical archaeology. Knowledge about this artefact, its significance and its context has potential to contribute to a greater understanding of our Hindu community. (SHR criterion: Social and technical significance [d&e]).

•8. As a religious icon, the 13th Jyotirlinga is unique in Australia. As one of only thirteen Jyotirlingas in the world, this icon is also extremely rare. (SHR criteria: Rarity [f]).

4.3. Statement of Significance.

The 13th Jyotirlinga is considered to have historical, technical and social significance on local, state and national levels. It is significant as a religious and ceremonial object that is very important to the Hindu community of NSW and Australia and is central to their everyday religious worship and philosophy. The icon is a rare heritage item, it is unique to Australia and is held in very high esteem. It is integral to the history and culture of Indian and Nepalese migrants in NSW and Australia.

It is recommended that this icon be listed on the State Heritage Register of NSW, the Register of the National Estate, the National Trust register and the Campbelltown Local Environmental Plan.

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