

## [At The Movies](#)

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Sectarian Hinduism:

Lord Shiva and His Worship

Written and Produced by David M. Knipe. 30 Minutes.

University of Wisconsin, Dept. of South Asian Studies, 1242 Van Hise Hall, 1220 Linden Drive Madison, Wisconsin 53706 \$45.

Sectarian Hinduism: Lord Shiva and His Worship is filmed in an interesting way. Producer/narrator David Knipe, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, is sitting cross-legged on a Persian rug in the foreground as he narrates an intriguing sequence of still shots and moving film unfolding in the background. With this nice technological touch, Prof. Knipe is sketching the broad view of Siva worship by tracing its complex development from the first records of history in the Indus Valley.

Lord Siva never changed, but mankind did. And as mankind changed, different aspects of Lord Siva's vast and multi-faceted nature come to the foreground, making this Deity Hinduism's most enigmatic God. This is the historical parable Prof. Knipe is telling. He starts with the Siva Lingam, perhaps as old as man himself, which he describes as "the immutable sign of the universe" and the "creative power that brought the cosmos into being." From this timeless beginning he guides us through history to reveal the many changing images of Siva. First, there was Prajapati, the "Lord of creatures." Then, there was Bhairava, "the terrible one" and Rudra, "the God of destruction." Later in the Svetasvatara

Upanishad, He was hailed as Hara, "the Great God." Still later, devotees exalted Him as Nataraja, "Lord of the dance," Maha Yogin, "master of yoga," and Ardhanarisvara, "half-female Lord." Prof Knipe does well in explaining Siva's varied forms (ranging from the benign to the terrible) as indications of His transcendent nature. His lucid and organized presentation of a complex subject is concise and objective, which makes this film intelligible for teenagers as well as adults. Prof. Knipe doesn't garnish the facts, nor is he inclined to speculate. His video is provocative in its impartiality. We are impelled into a spiritual search of our own with the question: "Who is this Lord Siva?" As Prof. Knipe says in his closing statement: "If we could understand Him, He would not be God."

This exquisite film, which includes brief descriptions of the Pasupata, Vira, Kashmir and Saiva Siddhanta sub-sects of Saivism, is the third video in a 15-tape series entitled Exploring the Religions of South Asia. Later videos in the series further elucidate Hinduism and analyse additional Eastern religions such as Buddhism, Islam and Jainism. All 15 tapes are part of a college curriculum and are therefore presented in the formal style of an educational documentary.

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