

This thesis aims to be a comprehensive essay on the cult and iconography of one of the most significant religious and mythological symbols of the Hindu tradition. The essay is divided into three main chapters. In the first chapter, the origin of Shiva will be discussed, beginning from the pre-Arian cultures to the present days. The second chapter will describe the various faces and forms of imaging Shiva, his iconic and aniconic shapes, as well as his attributes and their symbolism. The third chapter will become a short overview of the main shaivistic sects.