

## Learn Hindu mythology from great works of art



### ABC Hindu mythology in Art

#### *Acknowledgement*

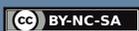
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Front cover: Uttaranchal, India, Siva and Parvati, c. 900  
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, US

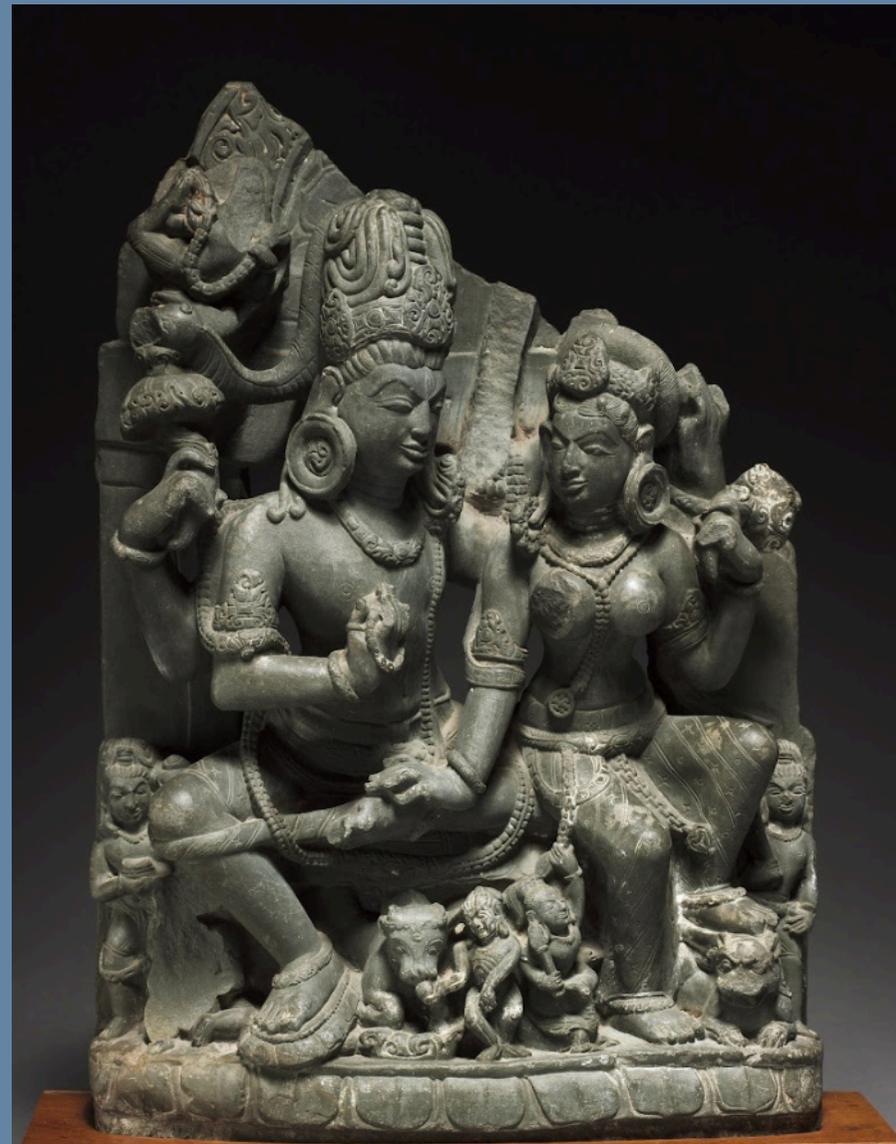
Back cover: Bihar, India, The Hindu Gods Vishnu, Shiva, and Brahma, c. 10th century  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, US

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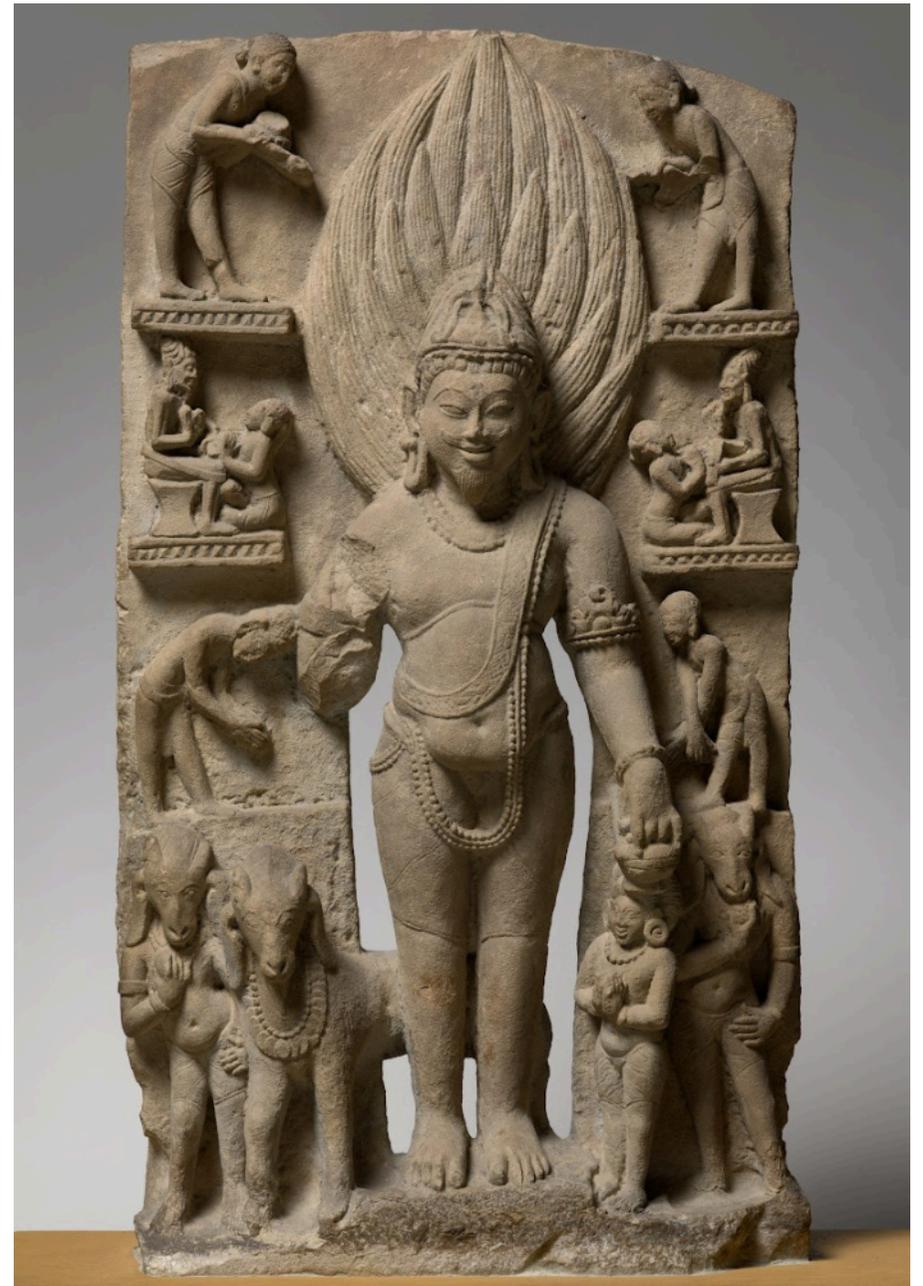
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# ABC Hindu mythology in Art

# A is for Agni

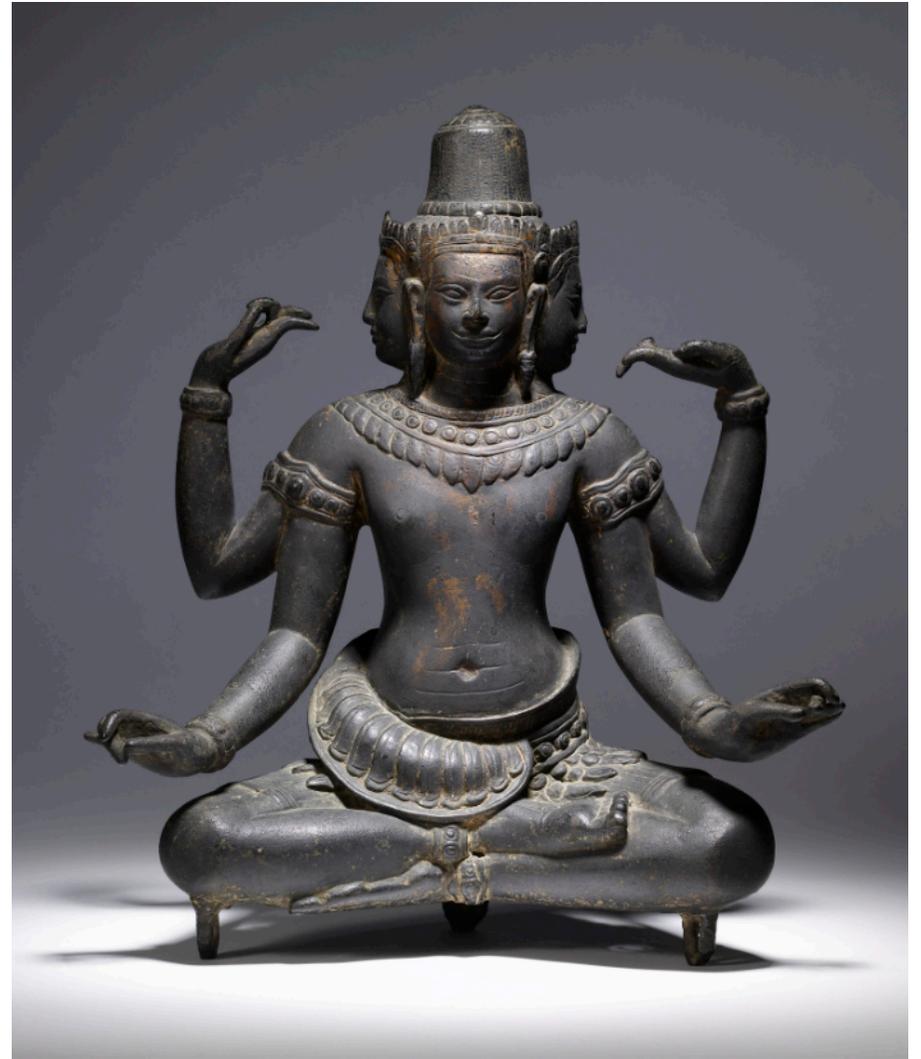
Agni, the god of fire, is the divine mediator who conveys offerings to the gods through sacrificial flames and is revered for his transformative and purifying power



Uttar Pradesh, India  
Agni, God of Fire, c. 1000  
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, US

# B is for Brahma

Brahma, the god of creation and one of the Trimurti alongside Vishnu and Shiva, is depicted with four heads and is responsible for the creation of the universe and all living beings



Cambodia  
Seated Brahma, c. 12th-13th century  
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, US

# C is for Chandra

Chandra, the god of the moon, is associated with the night, fertility, and the mind, and is often depicted riding a chariot across the night sky



Rajasthan, India  
Chandra, The Moon God, Folio from a Shakunavali  
(Book of Dreams and Omens), c. 1710-1720  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, US

# D is for Durga

Durga, a fierce and powerful goddess, embodies the divine feminine energy and is revered as the protector against evil, often depicted riding a lion or tiger and wielding multiple weapons



Badra, India  
Durga Slaying the Buffalo Demon Mahisha, c. 800  
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, US

# E is for Elephant-headed Ganesha

Ganesha, the elephant-headed deity, is worshipped as the remover of obstacles, patron of arts and sciences, and the god of beginnings



Karnataka, India  
Seated Ganesha, c. 1200-1300  
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, US

# F is for Fierce Kali

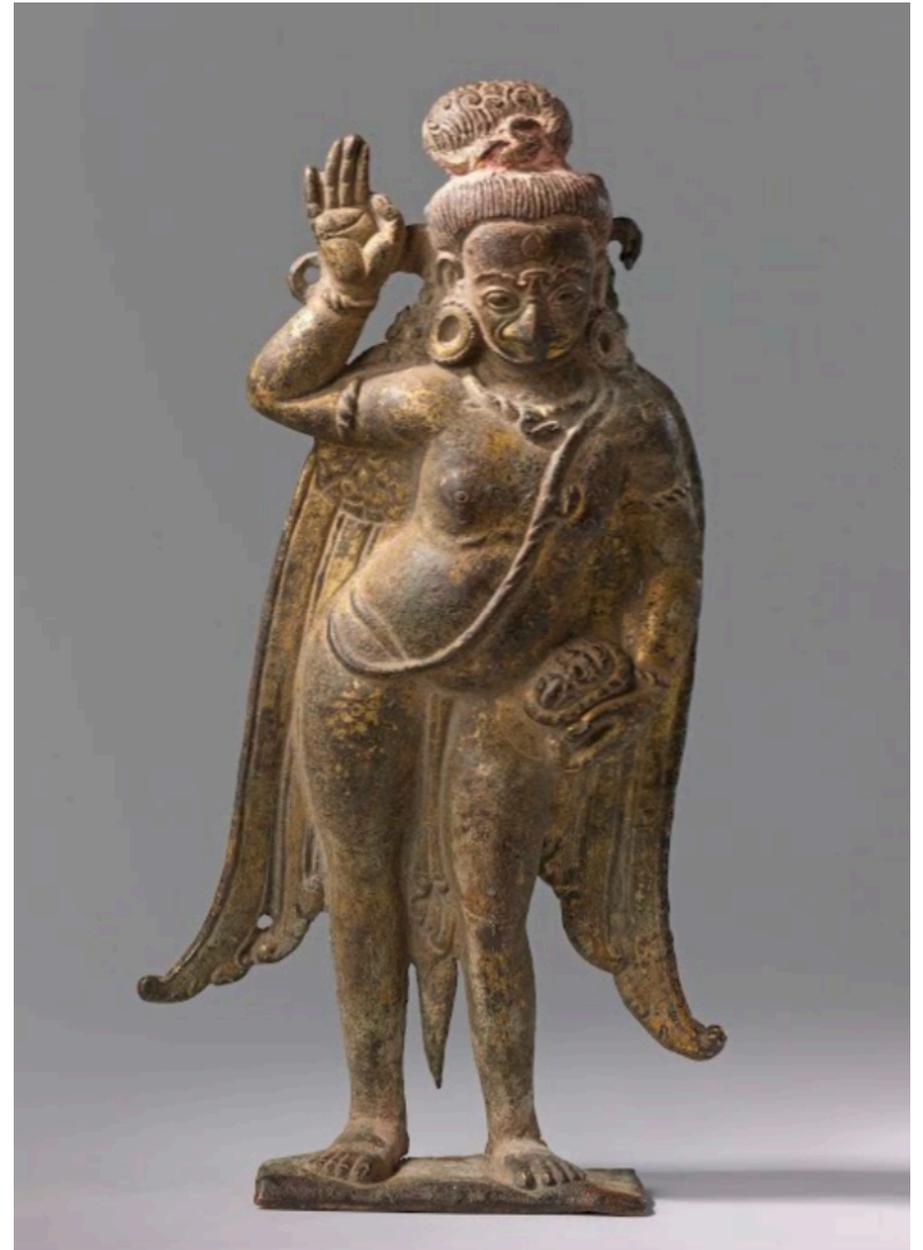
Kali, the fierce and powerful goddess, represents time, destruction of evil forces, and the ultimate reality beyond worldly appearances



Himachal Pradesh, India  
Goddess Kali Trampling Upon Shiva, c. 1771-1800  
Sanskriti Museum, New Delhi, India

# G is for Garuda

Garuda, the legendary bird-like creature, serves as the mount of Lord Vishnu and symbolizes power, speed, and freedom



Nepal  
Garuda, c. 1100-1200  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands

# H is for Hanuman

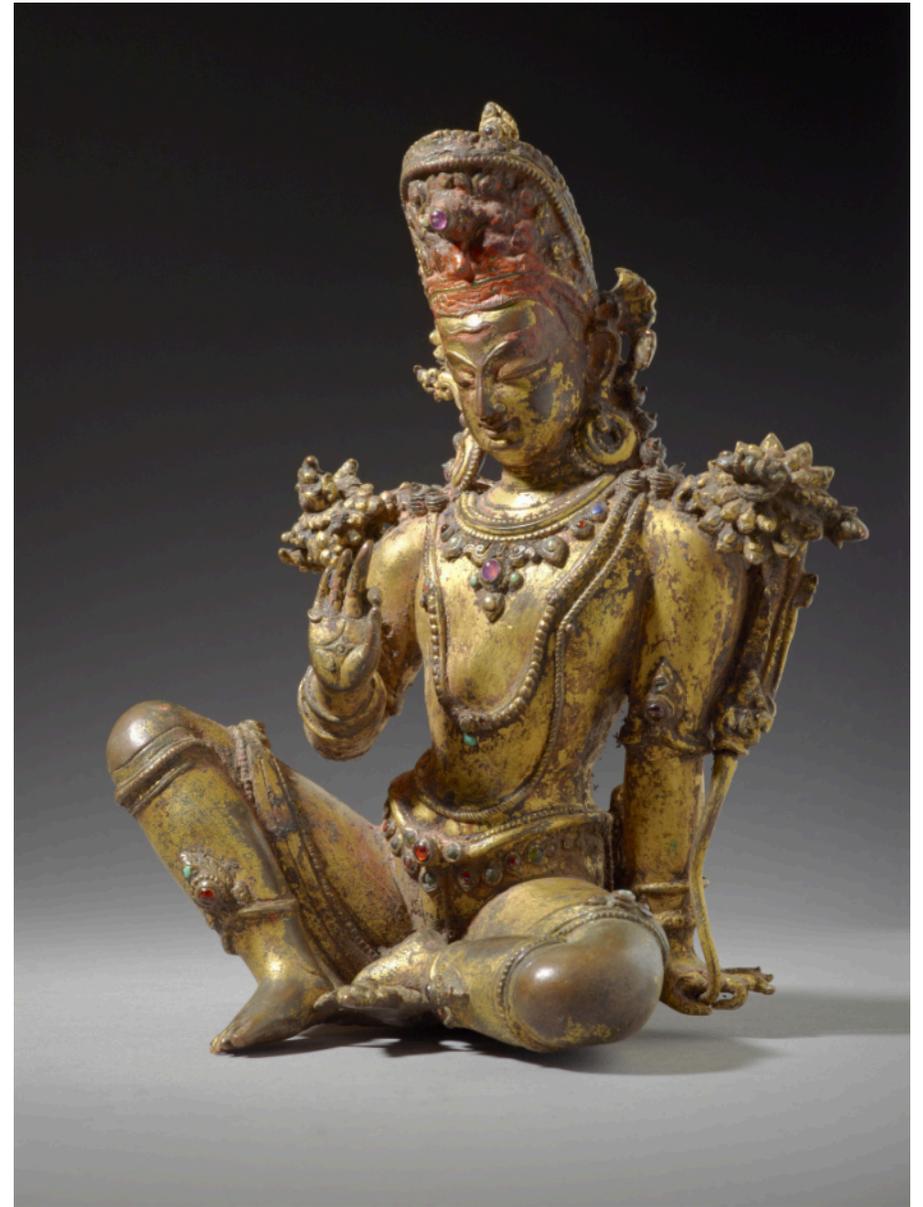
Hanuman, the devoted monkey god, is revered for his incredible strength, unwavering loyalty to Lord Rama, and selfless service



Angkor, Cambodia  
Hanuman, c. 1100  
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, US

# I is for Indra

Indra, the king of the gods, is associated with thunder, lightning, rain, and warfare, often depicted riding the white elephant Airavata



Nepal  
Indra, Chief of the Gods, c. 16th century  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, US

# J is for Jatayu

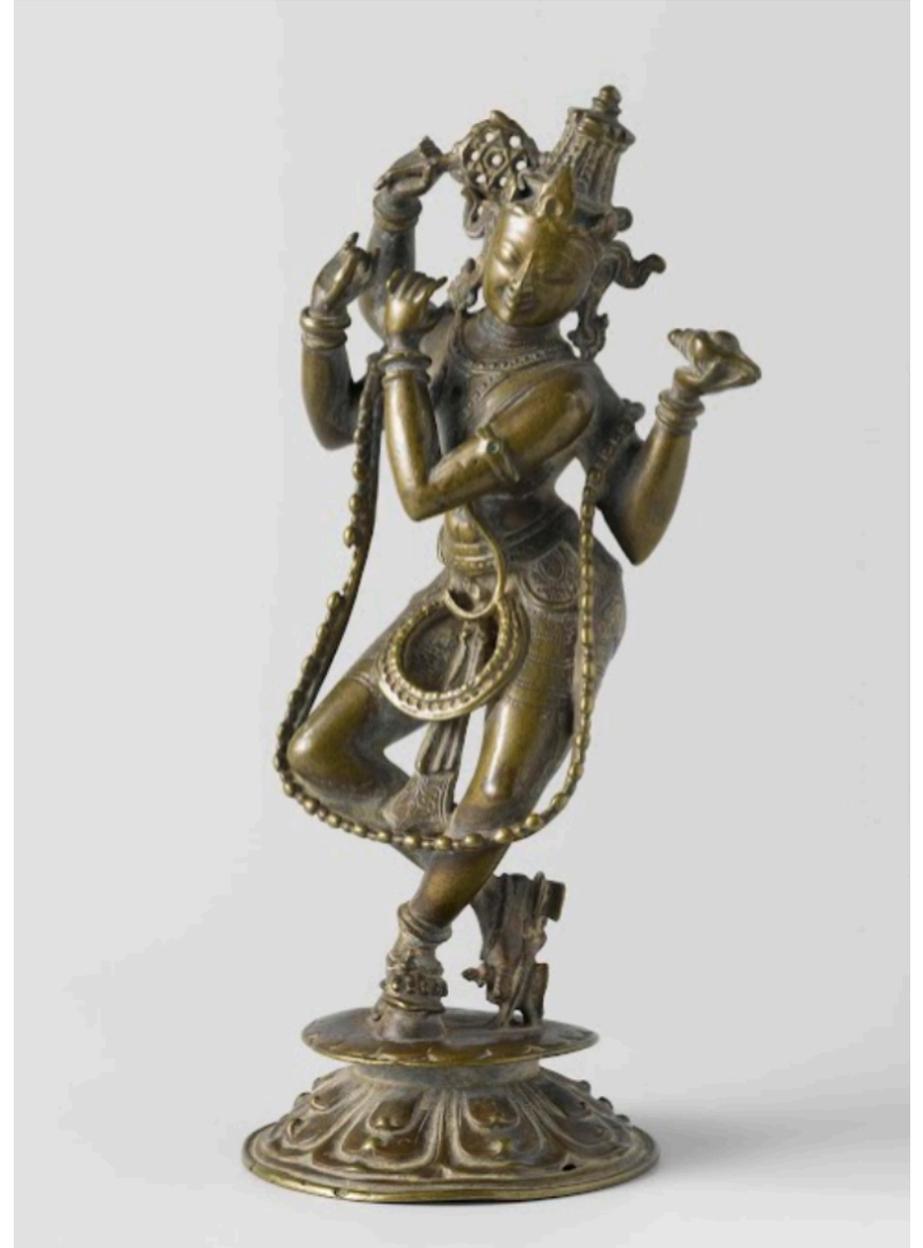
Jatayu, the noble and valiant bird from the Hindu epic Ramayana, is known for his courageous attempt to rescue Sita and his ultimate sacrifice in the battle against Ravana



Shri Gobinda Chandra Roy  
Jatayu (Rama's Mythical Bird) Hinders Ravana's Chariot,  
Trying to Prevent Abduction of Sita, c. 1890  
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, US

# K is for Krishna

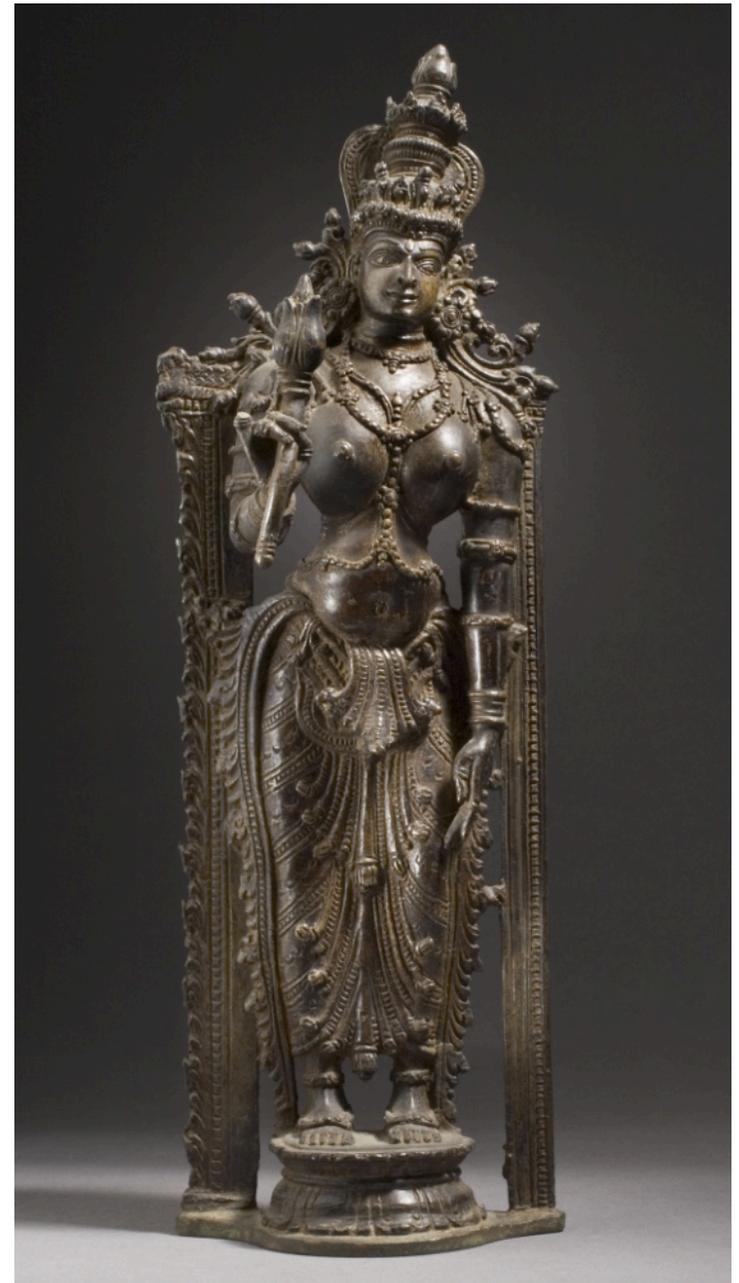
Krishna is revered as the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu, known for his divine playfulness, teachings in the Bhagavad Gita, and captivating stories from his life



Odisha, India  
Krishna Playing the Flute, c. 1500-1700  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands

# L is for Lakshmi

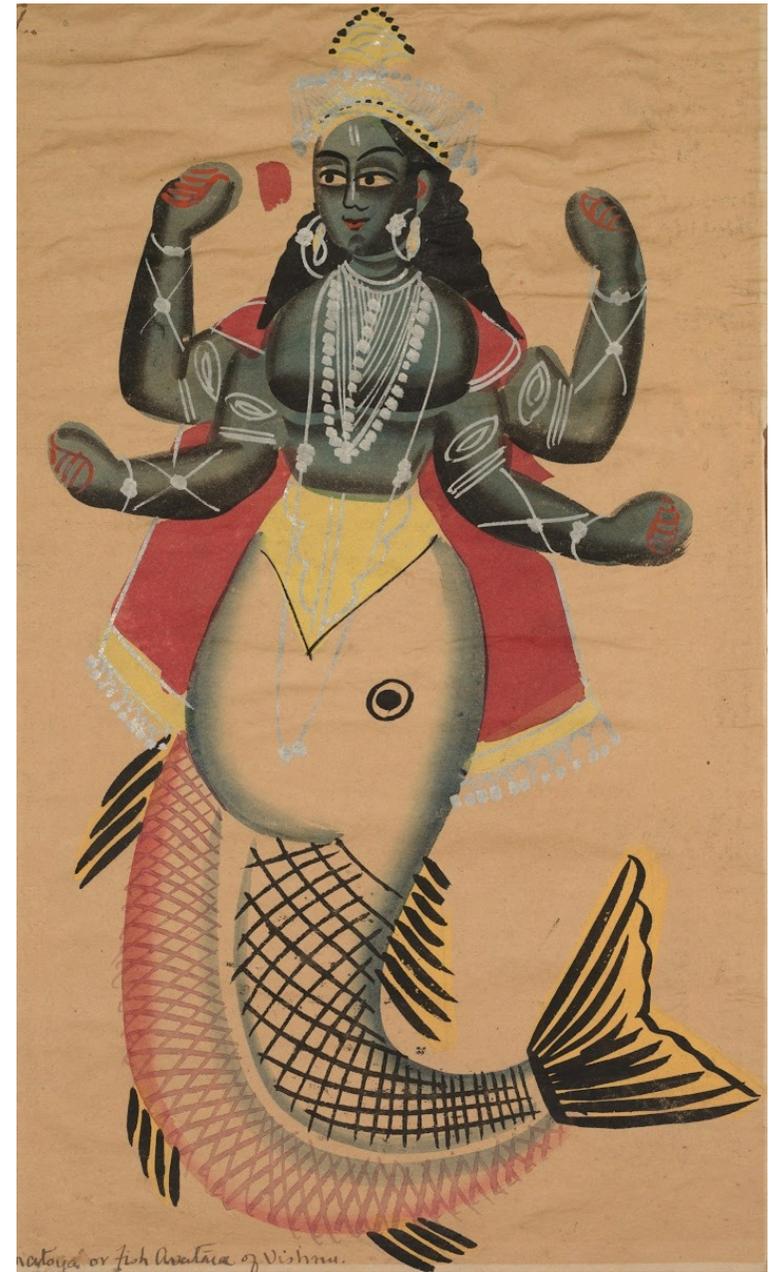
Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, prosperity, and fortune, is revered for bringing abundance and auspiciousness into the lives of her devotees



Kerala, India  
The Hindu Goddess Shri Lakshmi, c. 16th century  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, US

# M is for Matsya

Matsya, the first avatar of Lord Vishnu, appears as a fish and saves Manu, the progenitor of humanity, during a great flood by guiding his boat to safety



Kolkata, India  
Matsya, Fish Avatara of Vishnu, c. 1890  
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, US

# N is for Nataraja

Nataraja, the cosmic form of Lord Shiva as the divine dancer, symbolizes the cycle of creation, preservation, and destruction, with his rhythmic dance representing the eternal flow of time and the universe



Tamil Nadu, India  
Nataraja, Shiva as the Lord of Dance, c. 1000  
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, US

# O is for Omkareshwar Shiva

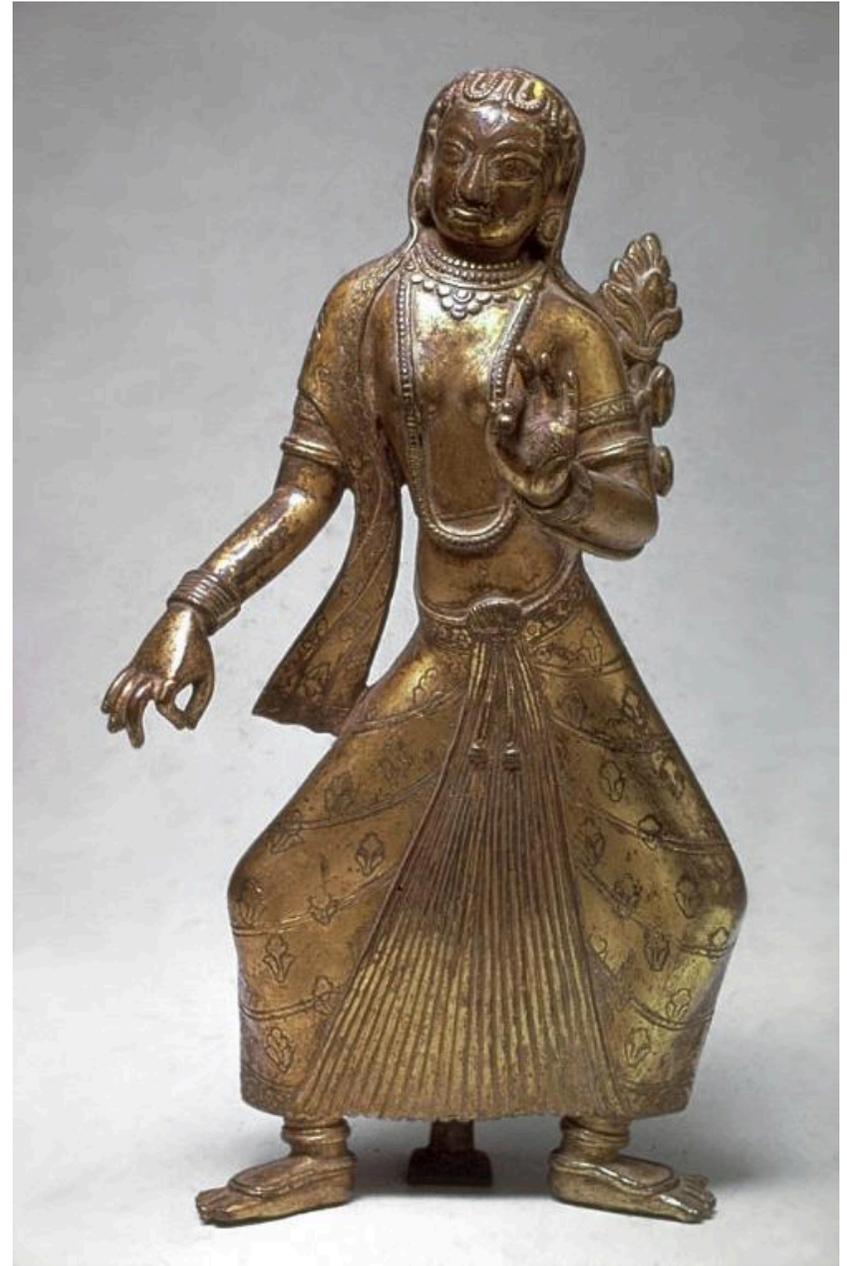
Omkareshwar Shiva, the deity worshipped in the Omkareshwar temple, is a revered form of Lord Shiva, representing the divine power of creation, preservation, and destruction



Mandhata, India  
Shiva, c. 11th century  
Omkareshwar Temple, Mandhata, India

# P is for Parvati

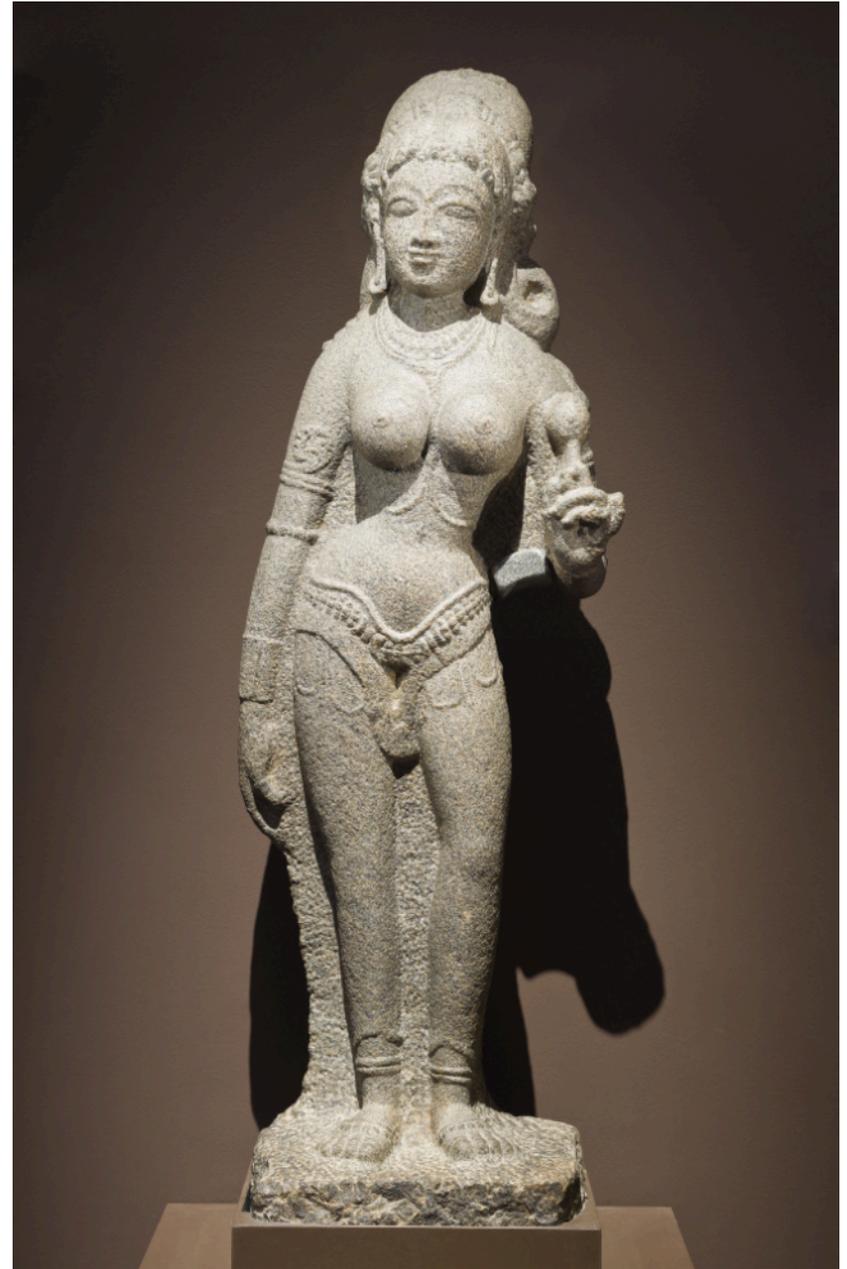
Parvati, the goddess of love, fertility, and devotion, is the consort of Lord Shiva and is often depicted as a gentle and nurturing figure



Nepal  
The Hindu deity Parvati as a dancer, c. 1500-1600  
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, US

# Q is for Queen Sita

Sita, the noble and devoted wife of Lord Rama in the Hindu epic Ramayana, is revered for her unwavering virtue, courage, and loyalty



Tamil Nadu, India  
Sita as Goddess, c. 1100  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, US

# R is for Rama

Rama, the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu, is celebrated as the righteous and noble prince who embodies dharma and heroically rescues his wife Sita from the demon king Ravana in the epic Ramayana



Tamil Nadu, India  
Standing Rama, c. 11th century  
Asia Society Museum, New York, US

# S is for Shiva

Shiva, a member of the Trimurti, is revered as the god of destruction and regeneration, embodying the dualities of asceticism and householder, fierce destroyer and compassionate benefactor



Kashmir, India  
Standing Shiva Mahadeva. c. 700  
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, US

# T is for Tara

Tara, one of the Mahavidyas and a fierce goddess, embodies the protective and compassionate aspects of the divine mother, often depicted as guiding her devotees through the tumultuous ocean of existence



Nepal  
Tara, Goddess of Compassion with throne and nimbus,  
c. 13th-15th century  
The Newark Museum of Art, Newark, US

# U is for Uma

Uma, another name for the goddess Parvati, represents beauty, devotion, and motherhood, and is the gentle and nurturing consort of Lord Shiva



Nepal  
Goddess Uma, c. 1000  
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, US

# V is for Vishnu

Vishnu, a member of the Trimurti, is revered as the preserver and protector of the universe, often depicted with a serene demeanor and holding a conch, discus, mace, and lotus



Uttar Pradesh, India  
Vishnu in His Cosmic Sleep, c. 11th century  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, US

# W is for Wind God Vayu

Vayu, the god of wind, is revered as the life-giving force that sustains all living beings, and is often depicted as a powerful deity riding a deer or holding a banner



Central India  
Vayu with His Deer, c. 7th-9th century  
Brooklyn Museum, New York, US

# X is for Xatriya (Kshatriya)

Xatriya (Kshatriya), the warrior and ruler class in the traditional Hindu varna system, is responsible for protecting society, upholding justice, and governing with courage and honor



Delhi, India  
Krishna and the Kshatriya Maidens Proceed to Dvaraka:  
page from a Bhagavata Purana series, c. 1520–30  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, US

# Y is for Yamuna

Yamuna, a sacred river and a goddess, is revered as the sister of Yama, the god of death, and is associated with purity, life, and the nurturing of all living beings along her banks



Rajasthan, India  
The River Goddess Yamuna and Attendants, c. 800  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, US

# Z is for Zebu

Zebu, a type of humped cattle, is revered as a sacred animal symbolizing strength, prosperity, and non-violence, often associated with deities like Shiva, whose sacred bull Nandi is a zebu



Indus Valley  
Humped bull (zebu), c. 3000 BCE  
Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, US