

EKLINGJI IS LORD SHIVA: THE IDOL OF FOUR FACES; THE HALLMARK OF EXCELLENCE IN SPIRITUAL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

Eklingji refers to Lord Shiva as the ruling deity of the Mewar region of Rajasthan, India. Worshipped in the form of a four-faced Shiva lingam, it represents the cosmic power of Lord Shiva and is a significant site of devotion and history, deeply connected to the Mewar royal family. The main idol at the Eklingji Temple is a black marble figure of Lord Shiva, featuring four faces, a unique depiction of the deity. Each face represents a different aspect of Shiva: East: Surya (the Sun God); West: Brahma (the Creator); North: Vishnu (the Preserver); South: Rudra (the Destroyer) Eklingji is considered the guardian deity and ruling deity of the Mewar region. The rulers of Mewar, the Guhila dynasty, considered themselves stewards of Eklingji and ruled in his name. The main Eklingji temple complex is located in Kailashpuri, a village near Udaipur in Rajasthan. The temple dates back to the 8th century and has been an integral part of the Mewar dynasty's history and culture.

KEYWORDS: Eklingji, Surya, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Bibhuti.

INTRODUCTION

Eklingji is Lord Shiva, specifically the four-faced, black marble idol of Lord Shiva worshipped at the Eklingji Temple in Rajasthan, India. He is the guardian and ruling deity of the Mewar region, and the Maharanas (royal family) of Mewar consider themselves his custodians, ruling on his behalf. The four faces represent **Lord Brahma (west), Lord Vishnu (north), Lord Surya (east), and Lord Rudra (south)**, with a **Shivlinga at the top embodying Sadashiva**.

A four-faced idol of Shiva, made of black marble. He is the guardian deity of the Mewar region and the supreme power of the universe. The Maharanas of Mewar consider themselves custodians of the deity, ruling the land in his name. The Eklingji Temple in *Kailashpuri, near Udaipur, Rajasthan*. Eklingji refers to a significant temple complex dedicated to Lord Shiva, located near Udaipur in Rajasthan, India, and is considered the presiding deity and ruling god of the Mewar region. The main shrine houses a revered four-faced black marble idol of Shiva, and the complex is an important spiritual centre with deep historical ties to the Maharanas of Mewar, who ruled as his dewan.



Figure 1: Eklingji deity and temple.

Eklingji is a form of Lord Shiva, and the associated temple is a major pilgrimage site in Rajasthan. The temple complex is situated in Kailashpuri village, near

Nagda, about 22 km from the city of Udaipur. The temple's history dates back over 1,400 years, coinciding with the founding of the Mewar kingdom.



Figure 2: Idol having four faces.

The sanctum features a magnificent black marble idol of Lord Shiva, adorned with jewels and ornaments. The temple itself was rebuilt in the 15th century. The complex is not just the main shrine but includes other areas that reflect the rich spiritual heritage of the region. The temple is open for devotees during specific hours, typically from early morning to evening. The darshan (prayer) timings at Eklingji Temple near Udaipur are from 4:30 AM to 7:00 AM in the morning, 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM in the afternoon, and 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM in the evening, seven days a week. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, worshipped as Eklingji, and is the guardian deity of the Mewar region.

It is not true that only males are allowed in the Eklingji Temple. While there are dress codes in place, such as restrictions on inappropriate attire like shorts and sleeveless tops, the temple is open to both men and women, and the primary rule is to enter barefoot, which

applies to everyone. The Eklingji Temple is a revered site dedicated to Lord Shiva, and both men and women are welcome to visit.

- **Dress Code:** The main dress code requires visitors to be barefoot. Additionally, inappropriate attire is restricted, and recommended dress includes full-length clothing. Modest attire is recommended, and shorts, mini-skirts, and sleeveless tops are prohibited.
- **No male-only policy:** There is no mention of a policy that excludes women from the temple.
- **Purpose of the dress code:** The rules are intended to maintain the sanctity and discipline of the shrine, with the temple committee urging devotees to respect the changes.
- **Photography: Mobile Phones:** Photography inside the sanctum is generally not allowed, notes Rawla Sarkar. Mobile phones are prohibited inside the temple to maintain sanctity.

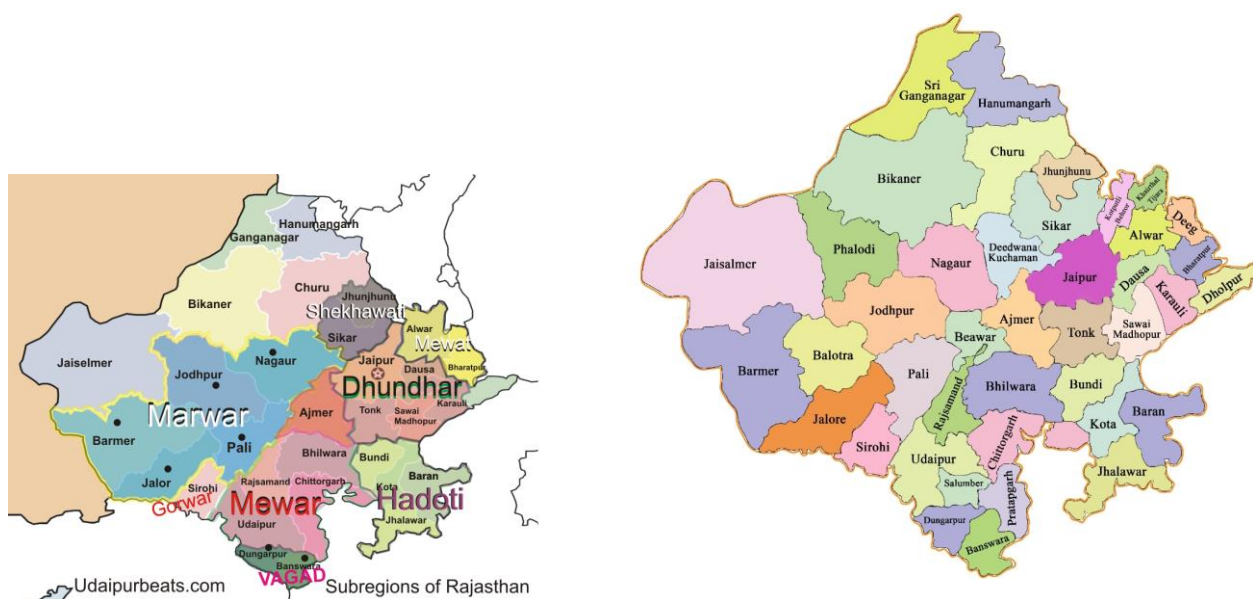


Figure 3: Sub regions of Rajasthan.

Nobody can stay overnight at the Eklingji Temple because it closes after its evening puja 7.30 PM and opens again the next morning at 4.30 AM, with specific hours for darshan (viewing) and religious ceremonies. Devotees can visit during these scheduled times but are expected to leave once the temple closes, similar to other religious institutions that do not offer lodging for the general public.

Reasons for the Closure:

- **Scheduled Puja and Ceremonies:** The temple operates during specific hours to facilitate daily rituals and allow devotees to offer prayers and see the deity.
- **Religious Etiquette:** Temples generally do not allow overnight stays for the public to maintain the sanctity and order of the religious site.
- **Temple Operations:** The limited hours are part of the temple's operational schedule, which includes opening and closing times, and are not for extended visitor stays.
- **Visiting Hours:** The temple typically has morning and evening timings for visitors to enter. For example, one set of timings might be from 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM and then from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM, though these hours can vary.

"Eklingji bhog" refers to the food offerings made to the deity Eklingji, a form of Lord Shiva, at the Eklingji Temple in Rajasthan, India. These offerings, known as prasad, are an integral part of the daily rituals and special festivals celebrated at the temple, such as Maha Shivaratri and Shravan Mondays, when devotees offer milk and water to the Shiva lingam.

Offerings: "Bhog" is a Sanskrit word for an offering of food made to a deity as a sign of devotion and love.

Prasad: The food offered to the deity is then distributed among the devotees as "prasad," a sacred meal that is believed to bestow blessings.

Bhog at Eklingji Temple:

Daily Rituals:

Food offerings are a part of the temple's daily rituals, where devotees offer simple foods and prayers to the Lord Eklingji.

Festivals: Special bhog is offered during significant festivals like Maha Shivaratri, Pradosh Vrat, and the month of Shravan, when the offerings become more elaborate.

Significance: The act of offering bhog is a way for devotees to connect with the divine and express their faith and gratitude to Eklingji.

In the late 15th century, Ghiyath Shah of Malwa Sultanate attacked Mewar, and devastated Eklingji's temple. The original Eklingji Temple was built in the 8th century by Bappa Rawal, the founder of the Mewar dynasty.

Bappa Rawal (c. 8th century), also known as Kalabhoja, is traditionally regarded as the founder of the Guhila dynasty's rule in Mewar, in present day Rajasthan, India. He is considered the first great ruler of the early Kingdom of Mewar and is credited in later chronicles with repelling Arab invasion into northwestern India. While the main structure dates from the 8th century, the temple has undergone several renovations and reconstructions over the centuries, notably in the 15th century, to preserve it. It is located in the town of Eklingji, near Udaipur, and is dedicated to Lord Shiva.

8th Century: The initial construction of the temple was carried out under the patronage of the Guhila dynasty, specifically by Bappa Rawal.

15th Century: The temple's current form was established during the rule of Maharana Raimal.

Historical Records: The temple's history is detailed in the 15th-century text, the Ekalinga Mahatmya.



Figure 4: Bappa Rawal.

Spiritual Significance: The temple has been a vital spiritual center for the rulers of Mewar, who consider Eklingji their ruling deity.

Significance of deity

Deity of Mewar: Eklingji is the presiding deity and guardian of the Mewar region, with the royal family traditionally considering themselves subservient to the deity.

Spiritual Importance: The idol embodies the multifaceted aspects of Lord Shiva and is revered by devotees and tourists.

The height of the black marble Eklinga statue itself is 3.5 feet, while the temple's shikhar (tower) is 50 feet high, with a 60-foot circumference. The four-faced idol, representing different forms of Lord Shiva, is said to

"lengthen" to 50 feet, though the meaning of this description is unclear.

Eklingji Height Details

Idol Height: 3.5 feet (carved from black marble)

Temple Shikhar Height: 50 feet

Temple Shikhar Circumference: 60 feet

"Lengthening" Statue: The description of the idol "lengthening" to a 50-foot height is noted, but its specific meaning is not fully explained.



Figure 5: Sculpture of eklingji temple.

Eklingji is a black marble lingam, a form of Lord Shiva, considered the presiding deity of the Mewar region. The temple is dedicated to Eklingji and is a significant religious site in Rajasthan.

"Ekling" (एकलिंग) refers to a form of Lord Shiva, particularly in the context of the Eklingji Temple in Udaipur, Rajasthan. The name is derived from the Sanskrit words "ek" (one) and "lingam" (phallic symbol), signifying a single, supreme deity, and is associated with the royal family of Mewar. The term can also refer to a single lingam (a symbol of Shiva) or a solitary lingam within a specific area. "Phallic" describes the phallus, or male penis, and both words derive from Latin and Greek. A phallic symbol is an object that resembles a penis, either physically or in meaning. Something that is phallic is shaped like an erect penis. Phallic can also mean relating to male sexual powers.

Lord Shiva: "Ekling" is a name for Lord Shiva, representing him as a singular and Supreme Being.

The Lingam: The word can also refer to the Shiva lingam, a symbolic representation of Lord Shiva and the life-giving phallic symbol.

Cultural Significance

- **Eklingji Temple:** The name is most famously associated with the Eklingji Temple complex in Udaipur. The four-faced black marble idol of Lord Shiva in the sanctum is known as Eklingji.
- **Mewar Dynasty:** The deity is considered the principal kuldev (family deity) of the Mewar Maharana (kings) and the Gahlot Rajput dynasty.
- **Other Meanings:** In a more literal sense, it can describe a single lingam that is alone within a specified area.
- **Biological Term:** In biology, eklingi refers to a single-sex organism, one that possesses only male or female reproductive organs.



Figure 6: Vibhuti or bhasma and entrance of eklingji temple.

Vibhuti or bhasma, which is sacred ash, is used in Hindu pujas and is applied by devotees of Lord Shiva, including at the Eklingji Temple. The ash symbolizes the impermanence of the physical body and the importance of spiritual wisdom, and it is used as a mark of devotion, blessing, and protection in rituals. Vibhuti, also known as

Bhasma or Tiru Niru, is a sacred ash made from burnt wood, cow dung, and sometimes cremated bodies.

Symbol of Impermanence: Lord Shiva applies ash to his body to remind devotees of the ephemeral nature of physical beauty.

Reminder of Ultimate Truth: The ash signifies that all things return to ash, emphasizing spiritual truths over materialism.

Blessing and Protection: Devotees apply it to their foreheads and bodies as a sign of devotion and as a form of spiritual protection.



Figure 7: Eklingji is Lord Shiva: the idol of four faces; the hallmark of excellence in spiritual level.

At the Eklingji Temple: While the Eklingji Temple itself is a prominent pilgrimage site dedicated to Lord Shiva, the practice of applying sacred ash is a general Hindu tradition. Devotees visiting the temple can offer prayers, perform traditional rituals like puja and aarti, and use vibhuti as part of their worship and devotion to Lord Shiva.

God of yoga, meditation and arts. “Eklingji” is one of the many names bestowed upon Shiva. It signifies “Oneness”.

REFERENCES

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CONCLUSION

The Eklingji Temple is an 8th-century Hindu temple complex dedicated to Lord Shiva, located in the Udaipur district of Rajasthan, India, about 22 km north of Udaipur. It holds deep significance for the Mewar royal family, who consider the deity their ruling god. The temple features a four-faced idol of Eklingji in its sanctum, intricate carvings, and is known for its beautiful architecture and strict rules, including a ban on photography and the use of mobile phones. Dedicated to Eklingji, a form of Lord Shiva which is four faces, which holds special importance for the Mewar dynasty. The temple is architecturally impressive, with intricate carvings, embossed silver plates on the walls, and a double-storied structure with a colossal pyramidal roof. The temple complex has ancient inscriptions and a history tied to the Guhila and Mewar dynasties. Situated in the town of Eklingji, near Nagda, in Rajasthan. The temple typically opens at 10:30 AM and closes around 1:30 PM, with another session in the evening around 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM. Photography, mobile phones, bags, and shoes are not allowed inside the temple complex. A strict dress code is also in place to ensure appropriate attire. The temple is deeply connected to the Royal Family of Mewar, who view it as the spiritual seat of their kingdom. Shiva has been considered “The Destroyer” in the Trimurti which includes Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu. Shiva has been regarded as the patron