

HINDUISM VOCABULARY

asana	special, symbolic posture, seated or standing, used in yoga and in the representation of the gods
attribute	an object or physical characteristic used as an identifying symbol
avatar	appearance of a deity in another form
circumambulate	to walk around (something) in a complete circle, as a ritual of respect
consort	the spouse of a deity
dharma	law; religious or moral duty
discus	a round disk thrown as a weapon in ancient India; attribute of Vishnu
garbagriha	"womb chamber" the inner, shrine of a Hindu temple.
incarnation	"to be made flesh"; that is, to be born into the world
karma	the total actions in a person's life that determine the next state of existence
linga	symbol of creativity and fertility in the form of the male sexual organ
mace	a heavy club used as a weapon and a symbol of authority; attribute of Vishnu
moksha	"release" or "liberation" of the soul from reincarnation and its union with the Divine, the goal of Hinduism
mudra	symbolic hand position
naga	serpent
prana	the breath of life; the vital breath or spirit

reincarnation	to be born again as another form of life or into another class of human society
shaivite	worshiper of Shiva; having to do with the worship of Shiva
shaakta	worshiper of Shakti, the Goddess
shakti	the Goddess; female energy and power of a deity, often represented as a goddess beside Shiva with the two representing the female and male principles of the universe
shikara	dome-like cap to the pyramidal tower of a South Indian Hindu temple or the entire tower of a North Indian temple.
transmigration	the passing of the soul at death into another body
trident	a three-pronged spear; attribute of Shiva
vaishnavite	worshipper of Vishnu, having to do with the worship of Vishnu
vedas	the four religious books of sacred knowledge and priestly rituals of the Brahmans composed in the first millennium B.C.E.
vehicle	animal mount of a deity which identifies the god or goddess
yoni	symbol of creativity and fertility in the form of the female sexual organ

Molly Schardt, *Unity and Diversity in the Art of India*, Education Department, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1993 (with some additions and modifications)