

Hindu icon in Mt. Shasta

by Dawn Fazende

Several locals gathered at the Shasta Center of Universal Peace recently to consecrate a world renowned Hindu icon, known as a Shiva Linga.

The 5,000 pound granite stone gained national attention when members of San Francisco's Hindu and New Age populations petitioned the city to construct a shrine to house it.

City officials declined, citing laws governing separation of church and state, and the Linga was removed from its location in Golden Gate Park.

Just how the Linga arrived in Golden Gate Park is a mystery. San Francisco city employees claim it is a traffic barricade which was arbitrarily moved to the park four or five years ago because no one knew what else to do with it.

Swami Vandana Jyoti of the Shasta Center disputes that claim.

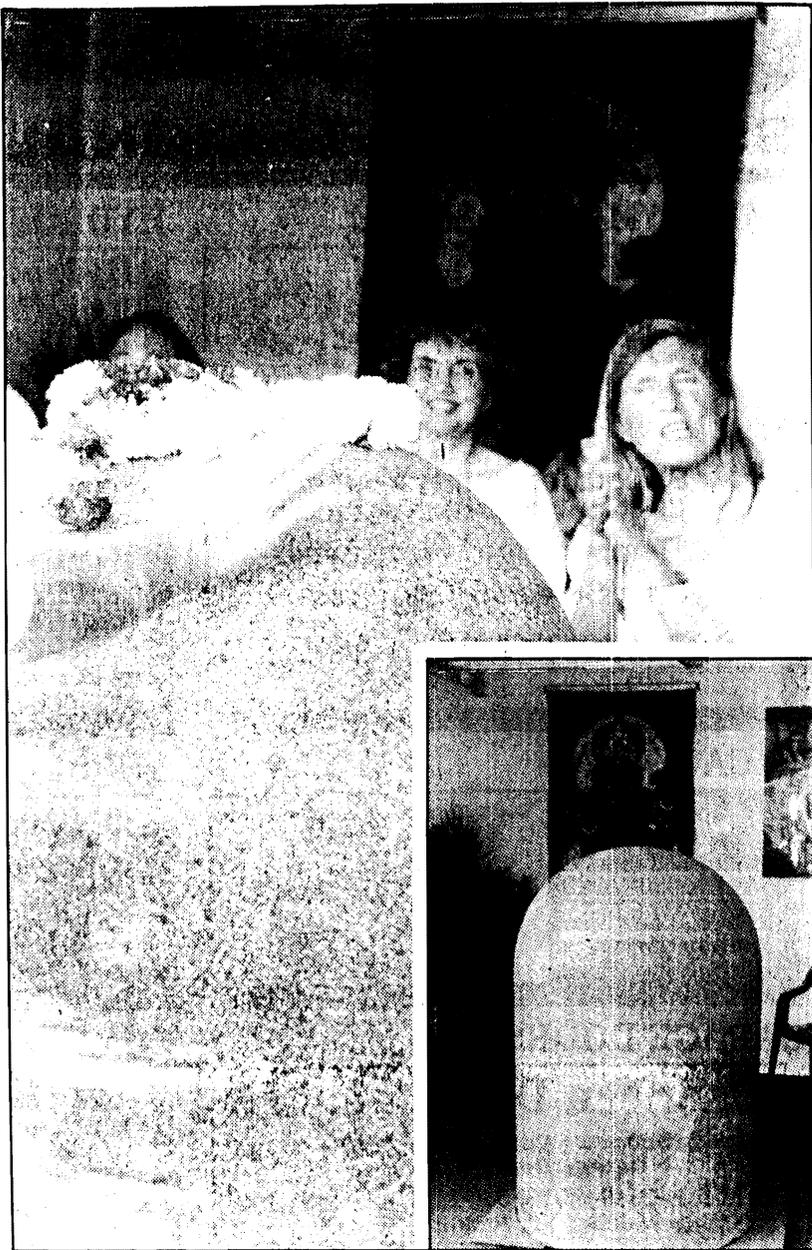
"We have several devotees from the Bay Area who say they prayed at the Linga for seven or eight years before its removal. Traffic barricades are usually concrete, this Linga is granite. Its origin is a mystery. However, we have heard rumors that it was once in a French monastery purchased by the Hearst family in the 1920's and was shipped here by them."

Its origins are of no concern to the tourists who visited the Linga in Golden Gate Park. City officials concede that hundreds of pilgrims of all faiths came to the park from around the world to worship at the Linga. It was a stopping point on many tours.

According to Hindu philosophy the Shiva Linga acts as a symbol indicating the existence of God, just as a planet infers the existence of a universe.

It is believed that when you look upon the Linga your mind is at once elevated and you begin to think of God.

Any who wish to visit and sit with Mount Shasta's Shiva Linga are invited to call Swami Vandana. "We welcome any and all devotees. But we will protect the integrity of



Photos by Dawn Fazende
Joanna Cherry and Nada Shakti were among those participating in the Shiva Linga puja, a ceremony which took place at 310 Lake Street recently. The inset photo shows the Shiva Linga prior to dedication.

our neighborhood."

The shrine is in a small garage at 310 Lake Street. Large groups would be inappropriate at this time.

The Shasta Center for Universal

Peace is in the process of purchasing 150 acres of property upon which to build a proper center. It is hoped that this Center will provide suitable surroundings for sacred representations of all faiths.