

7. The Temple



- Hindus worship in the temple. They also worship at home.
- One Indian word for temple is 'mandir'. The mandir is the home of God.
- The centre of the mandir is the shrine, which contains the murtis.
- The murtis are sacred statues of God, or of different gods and goddesses.
- Some temples have just one murti; others have many different murtis.
- The priest worships the murtis. He treats them as if they are very special people, like kings and queens.
- Every day he (or she) will bathe them, put on new clothes and offer them arti (see photo-card number 8) .
- Many worshippers come to see the arti. In some temples, there are six arti ceremonies every day.
- There are many things to notice inside a temple:
 - A place to put shoes (you cannot go in without taking them off)
 - A bell next to the door in the main hall
 - The shrine at the front of the main hall
 - Sometimes smaller shrines at the sides
 - Priests who do the worship

- The room where priests prepare for arti
 - Pictures and posters of saints and the different deities
 - Hindu symbols, such as the Om sign
 - Holy books, like the story of Rama & Sita and the Bhagavad Gita
 - A kitchen for cooking, for the murtis and for guests.
 - Prasada – holy food (which is vegetarian)
 - Holy water (which was used to bath the murtis in the morning)
- Temples are sacred places. They should have a special atmosphere – peaceful; a place where we can pray, think about life or just be with ourselves.
 - Sometime, like on festival days, the temple is very busy. There is an atmosphere of celebration.
 - There are other holy places also. Most of them are in India.
 - Many Hindu people in Britain visit India. They visit relatives. They also go on pilgrimage, visiting holy places.
 - The most important holy places are (1) Varanasi (connected with Shiva) (2) Vrindavana (where Krishna lived) (3) Ayodhya (the capital of Rama).
 - Some rivers are also holy. Most important is the river Ganges. Hindus believe that it came down from heaven.