

15. Shiva and Parvati



- Shiva is one of the trimurti (three main deities). He is in charge of destruction. He destroys the universe by dancing and beating on his drum.
- Shiva is white with a blue throat although he is often shown with dark blue skin.
- He carries a trident (a spear with three points) and a small drum. He has snakes around his neck and arms. In his hair is the crescent moon, and the River Ganges, which he caught when it came down from heaven.
- Shiva rides on a bull called Nandi.
- He lives in Mount Kailash, a very high mountain in the Himalayas (in North India). He is often shown sitting on a tiger skin and meditating.
- Shiva's wife is Shakti, who is also called Parvati. She has many other names such as Devi, Durga and "The Goddess". She is Mother Nature; she is kind but also can seem to be cruel.
- Parvati is shown with two arms, (often holding a blue lotus in her right

hand).

- When she comes as Durga, she rides a lion and has ten arms, carrying lots of different weapons.
- Shiva and Parvati have two sons – Ganesh (see Card 14) and Skanda. Some Hindus say that they also have two daughters, Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth – see Card 12) and Sarasvati (the goddess of learning).
- The day when Shiva and Parvati got married is celebrated on a festival called Maha Shiva Ratri. It happens in February or March.
- Worshippers of Shiva are called Shaivas (it rhymes with ‘divers’). They wear three white lines going across the forehead (as you can see on Shiva in this picture).
- Worshippers of Shakti are called ‘Shaktas’.
- The other main group in Hinduism worships Vishnu. They are called Vaishnavas. So, there are three main groups in Hinduism.