

Hindu Gods and Goddesses

All around the world people follow different religions and beliefs. One of these religions is Hinduism. The Hindu religion believes in lots of gods and goddesses rather than one god, and throughout the world myths and legends about these gods are passed through the generations.

Ash Mistry and the Savage Fortress is based on one of these myths and legends – the epic story Ramayana. To help you familiarise yourself with the gods and goddesses that are referred to in the story, below is a short biography of each key character.

Can you read the information and answer some questions about the gods and goddesses?

Rama

Lord Rama is one of the most admired Hindu gods. He is famous for the epic battle between himself and the evil Ravana. He is drawn holding a bow and arrow, ready to destroy evils. He is also often pictured sitting with his wife Sita and brother Lakshman.

Sita

Sita is the wife of Rama, beautiful, charitable and loyal. Sita was a foundling, discovered in a furrow in a ploughed field, so is regarded as the daughter of Bhuni Devi, goddess of the Earth.

Ravana

Ravana is the ten-headed king of the demons. His abduction of Sita and eventual defeat by Rama is one of the most famous stories in Indian Mythology. In Hinduism, a man who behaves wickedly is described as behaving like Ravana.

Kali

Kali means 'the black one'. She is the goddess of time and death and the destroyer of demons. She has wild eyes, a protruding tongue and she holds a bloody sword. She also holds the head of a severed demon, with several more demon heads attached to her belt and wears a necklace of skulls.

Vishnu

Vishnu, whose name means 'All-Pervading', is the protector of the world, and the restorer of moral order. He is peaceful and compassionate. Vishnu has four arms, and in each hand holds a symbolic object. The Conch represents the sound of creation. The Chakru, or discus, represents the mind. The lotus flower represents glorious existence and the Mace represents mental and physical strength. He has a curl of hair on his chest to represent immortality. Rama is one of the mortal forms of Vishnu.



Kali - Illustration by Sarwat Chadda