

[Progress Report on Canadian Ganesha Shrine](#)

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Devam, Shanmuga Early in the month of April work was scheduled to begin on the Hindu Cultural Center in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The chairman of the building committee, Dr. Ramakrishna Gupta, has met several times with the Canadian Church group concerning the possibility of establishing a shrine for Lord Ganesha as an integral part of the Center. It was learned recently that the Cultural Center will contain a shrine room designed for a variety of uses. There will be an empty pedestal upon which the Deity of each group's particular choice may be placed, but not permanently installed. The Deities will be kept in a nearby glass case when not in use.

Dr. Gupta was interested in the proposal of the Canadian Saivites to see that a shrine be established for Lord Ganapati. Master's original instruction was to house the Deity in a simple outdoor shrine, open to the elements as one often finds Ganesha in India and Sri Lanka. When the Canadians mentioned this, Dr. Gupta was initially concerned for the exposure to weather. It was ultimately decided that the shrine could be established near the entrance to the main building and that it would eventually be enclosed by an addition to the main building when construction was well under way. The shrine would then become the sanctum sanctorum within a larger room.

Dr. Gupta has proposed a plan in which the Canadian group in conjunction with the Tamil people in the community would work with an architect to make provisions in the master plan of the Center for the eventual addition to the main building that would be required. The group is now working to form a committee within the Tamil Association to effect this proposal as well as to oversee the construction. The plan is to establish the small shrine soon, and then let the worship and financial responses dictate what future construction is feasible. Sushil Kalid is also supporting the effort in Edmonton. He has suggested that the group have a special puja on the site when the final details are in place to sanctify the Deity. This ceremony is now planned to take place in July on or around Guru Purnima. The plan calls for efforts to be concentrated on the informal establishment of the shrine so that worship may begin without delay, to be followed by the more formal and

long-term efforts. For now the Deity will continue to be carried from home to home as needed each week until installed. Such a permanent installation may have to await further support in the area, enough to merit a full-time pujari who might be brought in from India to conduct the pujas. There are special immigration provisions in Canada which provide for bringing into the country members of a religion when there are no indigenous leaders. Once the Deity is installed it may not then be moved.

The Canadian Saivites write that "Dr. Sanmugasundaran's visit here last summer was the first gathering of a religious nature to be held among the Edmonton Tamil community...In learning of our weekly pujas and gatherings Dr. Shan has said, 'Lord Ganesha is now literally in your midst all the while and therefore He will lead you properly.'

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