Gurudeva Founds the Hindu Church of America
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Satsang convenes in Kona, Hawaii to Hear Plans for International Council

At an April 8th satsang gathering of Church families of the Kona coast area on the Big Island of Hawaii, Gurudeva, Master Subramuniya, formally gave his blessings to the founding of the Hindu Church of America and an international policy-making body for all such Hindu Churches - the International Council of Hindu Churches. The inauguration of the Hindu Church of America first came in a talk by Gurudeva at the Feet of Lord Ganesha in Flushing, New York in early 1979. After a year's time for the seeds planted then to take root and grow the first Hindu Church has been founded this month on the Kona coast. Rev. Muni Nalluran, who received his appointment during a pilgrimage with Gurudeva to Alaveddy. Sri Lanka in 1972, will be the first minister. Markandeya Peruman, a respected business expert and analyst, accepted the appointment of General Secretary for the International Council of Hindu Churches. His duties entail two I.C.H.C. conventions each year, helping qualify new ministers and inspiring and advising all ministers. All interested parties are asked to call or write to him for information on appointment (P.O. Box 4603, Kailua. Hawaii 96740 (808) 329-5539). Gurudeva also announced the relocation of Saiva Siddhanta College from San Francisco to new headquarters in Kona as Himalayan Academy has now received the entire San Francisco facility. A site on land owned already by the Saiva Siddhanta College was selected for the I.C.H.C. offices and six possible ministers were nominated at the meeting.

Gurudeva envisioned the formation of many, many Hindu Churches in the next decade and promised as much aid, advice and assistance as possible to each of them. His comments on the Hindu Church of America can be summarized in the following points:

1. The patterns of the Hindu Churches will follow the tried and proven American Church system which is a religious social movement unique to our country. The activities on a social/cultural level provided by the Hindu Churches of America are the only guarantee possible in the United States that the next Hindu generation will be raised in a religious way. The village/social aspects of Hinduism in India are

absent in America. Therefore, without a Hindu social strata for the children to mature within and fit themselves into as they grow up they do not grow up Hindus.

2. Each minister will be set up by the Saiva Siddhanta College with all of his needs: sermons, lectures, record books, administration manuals, letterheads, pamphlets, etc. and from that point he alone is responsible for the success or failure of his ministry. The minister and his family own the physical Church property and run it as a family religious business. The wife manages all of the women's affairs, but she could serve as a minister as well.

3. Every Hindu minister is a member in good standing in the International Council of Hindu Churches. The ministers gather twice a year, give lectures, pool their experience, have seminars and establish policies. Policies are published and mailed to all the Hindu churches, but don't have to be followed as each Church is autonomous; the minister runs it as he sees fit. The Saiva Siddhanta College will write and rewrite church manuals provide literature and information to the ministers and their wives, offer a forum for philosophical discussion with senior Swamis and keep its ministers well informed in the areas of comparative religions and the different philosophies and schools of thought within Hinduism.

4. The sermons, lectures, classes and seminars conducted by the minister or by visiting ministers are as a rule non-sectarian in nature, stressing Hinduism as the Sanatana Dharma which predates sectarianism. His services are geared to the congregation itself, and generally stress in a positive way the universal principles of Hindu metaphysics common to all Hindu sects.

5. The individual Hindu Churches in a community will not offer Deity worship though one may be more sectarian than another at the minister's discretion. Hindu temples will, however, be built and derive their greatest support through the years from the congregations of the Hindu Churches in their area.