

## [Hindu Temples Being Built Throughout U.S.](#)

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# Hindu Temples Being Built Throughout U.S. Newest Additions to be Erected in Chicago, Livermore and Malibu

Several new major temples were opened or begun across the country this past month. In Northern California, the Hindu community obtained an appropriate site. In Chicago over 17 acres were acquired for a Sri Rama Temple. In Southern California progress is being made on the plans for a Vishnu Temple and of the East coast, the already famous ISKCON "Palace" was officially opened. This is in addition to known existing temples in upstate N.Y.; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Flushing, New York; Houston, Texas; San Francisco, California; and Kapaa, Hawaii.

Several months ago, when the Northern California group was unable to obtain permits for their property in Pleasanton, due to small but vocal local opposition, the Supervisors from a neighboring city of Livermore approached the Temple group and invited them to build their Temple in Livermore. The land is a well situated four acre parcel, flat and with convenient utilities (a problem at the previous site). The site costs \$65,000 and the committee is busy raising the remainder of the funds necessary for its acquisition. A Ganesha puja was held on September 7th to bless the beginning of the project. The purpose of the puja was to invoke the blessings of Lord Ganesha, the Remover of Obstacles, in the acquisition of the land. The committee members remarked that even as soon as they began to plan for the puja, everything started to go right for the purchase of the future temple site. Thousands of dollars were raised right at the puja itself. The new temple will have four sanctums, one each for Lord Ganesha, Lord Siva, Goddess Durga and Goddess Lakshmi.

The Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago obtained a 17.6 acre site in Lemont, a suburb of Chicago for a Sri Rama Temple and community center. The Temple group was able to pay cash for the land, approximately \$150,000. They have set ground breaking for next spring.

The land has been acquired for a Lord Venkateshwara (Vishnu) Temple in Malibu,

California and presently there is discussion about which direction the temple should face. According to the traditional temple architecture, it should face East, which would be into the mountains behind the site and away from the nearby city of Malibu. Ganapati Stapathi recommended that it face the city, which is to the West. The matter has not yet been settled, for while Agamic temple architecture definitely specifies East, some of Hinduism's most renowned temples face other directions. Many of these temples grew up from tiny roadside shrines, shrines underneath special trees considered sacred, from lingams and from holy spots and natural landmarks such as rocks and river convergences. They grew into large temples through worship there by more and more devotees and never having had their original orientation according to rules of temple architecture, now face many different directions. Additionally, there are requirements that at least some of the deities face the major population centers in the area.

Each direction has a significance. The Kadavul Hindu Temple faces South-East. That direction is guarded by Agni, the god of fire, its weapon is the Shakti or spear, and its color red. In fact, the Temple spot was shown to Gurudeva in a vision of Lord Muruga who struck His Vel (spear) three times on the spot where the Siva Deity was to be placed, and now the Temple is noted for its fiery darshan and shakti.

A West facing temple is to be guarded by Varuna, god of water or oceans. The weapon is the noose (often carried by Ganapati) and the color is black, the color of Krishna. With Malibu famous throughout the country for its ocean beaches, it would seem appropriate that the guardian god of the direction of the temple would be of the ocean. Perhaps the only direction considered by some to be truly inauspicious is South, the direction of Yama the god of death.

In New Vrindavan, West Virginia, ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) opened officially "Prabhupada's Palace" during the festival of Janamastami, August 30 to September 1. The Palace is located on a 2,000 acre tract of land in the hills of West Virginia and is modeled after the ancient temples of Vrindavan in India. Its magnificence and splendor remind one of Hinduism's glorious past - of the great religious monuments built by devout and holy kings.

Facilities include a secondary and primary school, a University of Art Academy and residential communities. ISKCON is re-establishing the traditional gurukulam form of teaching and raising its children completely within the religion. When the

children are asked what they want to be when they grow up, they respond. "I want to be a pujari in the temple," or "I want to do great things for my religion," or "I want to be a swami and teach others my religion." Swami Prabhupada was a close friend of Gurudeva, Master Subramuniya, during his mission in the United States. They met shortly after the Swami's arrival in California and shared a fine association throughout the years.

The Palace has black and gold leaf walls inlaid with Persian onyx. Stained glass windows decorate the palace and marble floors lead to rooms made of onyx, teak, marble and gold. In the central court, a gold figure of Prabhupada is seated on a gold throne. The domed ceiling is decorated with oil paintings depicting the life of Lord Krishna. Later more temples will be built on the site. All work is done by ISKCON members who have trained themselves in the many rare arts necessary for such work.

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