

[Hinduism Comes Alive in Saskatchewan, Canada](#)

Category : [July 1987](#)

Published by Anonymous on Jul. 01, 1987

Hinduism Comes Alive in Saskatchewan, Canada

Murugan, Jai Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada: not the most likely place on the planet for a Hindu temple, especially one of striking Indian design.

Situated on the vast Canadian prairies. Saskatoon is a small but bustling city of 175,000 people, serving an agricultural community extending 150 miles out from the city.

With a Hindu population of about 200 families, it is somewhat surprising that the temple was built, especially when comparing it to the other Canadian and American cities with a substantially larger Hindu population. In this sense, Saskatoon's accomplishment is an example. Dedicated people with a desire to create a religious future for their children and their children's children, can accomplish much, even as a small group.

It was in the early sixties that a few Indian families established residence in Saskatoon. They were mostly teachers at the local University. Gradually, the population grew. The first swami to visit was Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Order. His initial visit in 1969 brought the Hindu religion alive. He established monthly satsangs to be administered by his devotees, each volunteering the use of a home in turn.

In 1981, an old church was purchased for use by the Hindu community, but quickly outgrown. It was decided to build a temple. A site was chosen and construction began on August 7, 1984, and continued through a bitter Canadian winter until Ramavani Day, March 31, 1985, when the temple was officially opened.

Murthis of Lord Narayan and Goddess Lakshmi were carved in marble in Jaipur, India, and shipped air freight especially for the temple. Lord Ganapati also sits on the altar, directly in front and below Narayan and Lakshmi, the two main deities. The cost of the temple was \$240,000 (Canadian) with a operating cost of \$1500 per month. Devotees have responded generously to meet the need. Several families have donated over \$5000 each. Some gave more than \$10,000.

Today, the temple - especially on Sundays - is a hub of activity. As many as 300 people or more attend the festivals. Although the worship is distinctly North Indian in style, devotees from all traditions attend. Bhajan groups are established in several languages, and the Society sponsors drama presentations as well as music and dance classes.

Much effort has been made by the Temple Society to blend with the local community. With this end in mind, the Society has a representative on the Council of Christians and Jews, and has hosted Rotary Club meetings, as well as initiated, various inter-faith seminars.

The Sri Lakshmi Narayan Temple at 107 La Ronge Road, Saskatoon, Canada.

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