

[Island Temple Greeted with Aloha Spirit](#)

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SOCIETY

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Hindus find a native place among the multicultural Kauaians

This tiny, remote land mass of barely 60,000 people is manifesting a living vision of unity in diversity. "We are all Kauaians" is the slogan among a populace of Japanese Buddhists of the Soto, Zen and Shingon sects, Japanese Christians, native Hawaiians, Hindus, Philippine and Portuguese Catholics, yoga practitioners and "New Ager." The island's cultural and religious diversity is nearly unique in America. Here Christians form a minority of 30 percent; outnumbered by followers of Japanese Buddhism and Shintoism at 36 percent. Hinduism fits easily here because of its close affinity to Buddhism, and its parallels with the Hawaiian religion. Its low-key, non-proselytizing presence is appreciated. Commented one native Hawaiian, "The Hindus have come with respect for our local Gods." The local people have embraced Gurudeva, his devotees and the Island Temple as their own, as eloquently expressed by island leaders.

Maryanne Kusaka, Mayor of Kauai: As the island emerged from the deep Pacific, God of all worlds gazed at the intriguing formation sitting apart from the rest in the archipelago. Lush, green mountain ridges had pulled together on Mt. Waialeale to cradle the Alakai Swamp, the source of its spectacular

waterfalls and rivers. "My Island Temple!" He said. Today, a stone temple is being built at a most breathtaking site overlooking the Wailua River by our friends at Kauai's Hindu Monastery. Working in community partnerships with Gurudeva's following has enriched our lives with a spirituality of peace and love, a nurturing Aloha that inspires good beginnings and joyous achievements.

Benjamin J. Cayetano, Governor of Hawaii: On behalf of the people of the State of Hawaii, I am pleased to join with Gurudeva in inviting you to share in his vision of a magnificent temple to be constructed on our beautiful island of Kauai. This extremely ambitious project will fulfill a dream that began nearly a quarter-century ago. The unique cultural and spiritual legacy of present-day Hawaii is a rich multi-cultural tapestry woven from the history of the ancient Hawaiians and the successive generations of immigrant peoples that followed. The Iraivan Temple will be a welcome addition to this diverse spiritual heritage as we move into a new millennium.

JoAnn A. Yukimura, former Mayor of Kauai: It is with great anticipation that we on Kauai look to the manifestation of Gurudeva's magnificent vision. The Island Temple will stand as a proud reminder of God's spirit which surrounds, embraces and upholds all of us in love. People the world over will come to see the Island Temple, many to worship in its beauty and peace. We hope they will also share in our island life as we strive to live as a community of Aloha. I am deeply grateful for the joy, love, hard work and many material and spiritual gifts that Gurudeva and his Saiva Siddhanta Church have contributed to Kauai.

Mary Kaliko Thronas, Kauai County Council Chair: It is my extreme pleasure to endorse Saiva Siddhanta Church for its inspiring undertaking to build America's first traditional Hindu stone temple on Kauai. This magnificent spiritual sanctuary will bring pride to your contributors, visitors and most importantly to your followers. The spirit of Aloha and the natural beauty of Kauai will significantly add to the temple's sacredness and its attraction of all spiritual seekers from around the world. I also commend your fundraising methods. I believe that "people pulling together build a solid foundation that strengthens their spirit and commitment for each other."