

[A Temple Comes Alive](#)

Category : [January/February/March 2006](#)

Published by Anonymous on Jan. 01, 2006

ANCIENT RITUAL

A Temple Comes Alive

The sanctum of Hawaii's all-granite Siva temple is energized by a rare, traditional rite

In the early morning hours of July 21, 2005, a rare ceremony was held for the San Marga Iraivan Temple at Kauai's Hindu Monastery, also home to Hinduism Today's editorial offices. Dr. V. Ganapati Sthapati, the temple's chief architect, and Adisaiva priest Kandasamy Gurukkal conducted the garbhanyasa, literally "embryo placement." This ceremony is only done to mark the halfway point in the construction of all-stone temples, so it is rarely performed these days. Ganapati Sthapati has only conducted two others in his 50 years of building.

The garbhanyasa ceremony enlivens or divinizes the inner sanctum of the temple for the first time. It is akin to the ceremony done for a mother, around the fifth month of pregnancy, in which herbal substances are ingested to promote the health and spiritual protection of the baby at the time of the quickening, the baby's first movements in the womb. The objective is similar with the temple, which is regarded as a living being. This ceremony is a crucial moment in the temple's spiritual manifestation. Eighty-one substances, including gold, gems, herbs, roots, various types of soil, grains, medicines, miniature puja articles and symbols of God Siva were placed in a small golden box. The box was then sealed in a niche inside the sanctum, considered the womb. The substances nourish the energy seed that will continue to grow and one day germinate at the temple's final consecration.