

## [Global Dharma: 1995 Year in Review](#)

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Education/Youth: Search for Sensible Values

Each December we look back to the trends of the year. Education was one theme frequently highlighted. His Holiness Swami Sahajananda of the Divine Life Society, in Durban, has worked a miracle with getting kids to do sadhana through his youth camps. Investigation of school in India revealed a still British-based system with academic merits, but few spiritual values. Progressive UK schools, like the Swaminarayana school, offer Sanskrit in early grades. In Fiji, the Then India Ikyā Sanmarga Sangam has 26 schools which will be using Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami's graded new religion course for 17,000 students. Our reporter's search for Hindu children's books in Madras revealed mostly Hindu comics and stacks of non-religious kids books from the West. Hindu religious education is progressing, but has a long way to go.

#### Hindu of the Year: Leaders Who Forge the Future

Pramukhswami maharaj was an easy choice to receive the Hindu Renaissance Award for 1995. He and his devotees have made us proud with the new UK mandir--only the latest in a list of remarkable achievements, not the least of which is having established a large and disciplined monastic order. Part of the Hindu renaissance work is to lift up from historical obscurity the true, spiritual leaders of mankind. Hinduism Today made a humble contribution to the task in our Hindu Timeline. While

hundreds may have been missed or forgotten, we list those who received the award since it was founded in 1990 and other renaissance leaders of the past--that we may seek to know and follow these transcending beings: Swami Satchitananda, 1994; Mata Amritanandamayi, 1993; Swami Chinmayananda, 1992; Swami Chidananda Saraswati, 1991; Swami Paramananda Bharati, 1990. Satya Sai Baba, (born 1926); Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, (1896-1977); Swami Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952); Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975); Swami Sivananda (1887-1963); Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950); Satguru Yogaswami (1872-1964); Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902); Swami Dayananda Sarasvati (1824-83), Sivadayal (1818-78); Kadaitswami

### Progress Report: We Have Spanned the Globe

The image that Hinduism comprises a religion in bharat with tentative communities in other nations was dispelled forever this year. Deep roots and foundations appeared in post-apartheid South Africa, where perhaps the most progressive Hindu community in the world culminated a year of celebration with a giant World Hindu Conference. Swami Maheshwarananda celebrated his 50th birthday with public honors in Austria, the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries. Sri Lankan refugees are becoming German citizens, building temples and their priests are giving namakarana samskaras to Europeans joining Hinduism. Swami Prakashananda manifested his exquisite Barsana Dham Center in the conservative state of Texas in the US with positive coverage of the opening on CNN. Caribbean Hindus, over 200,000 of them, showed remarkable religious dynamism in their Eastern USA communities. Hindus received recognition for their contributions in various nations. Charismatic living

saints like Mata Amritanandamayi traveled the world awakening thousands with the message of the Vedas. Hindu based Brahma Kumaris, Siddha Yoga Dham, ISKCON and dozens of swamis preach the principles of Sanatana Dharma to millions of non-Hindus. Lord Ganesha Himself surprised us all by taking milk, not in one temple, but the world over. Transcending race, national boundaries, ethnic backgrounds, we have again, as in ages past, come of age.

Hinduism Today Network:  
Global Team, Correspondents and Resources

This year solidified the team and network that comprises Hinduism Today. Sri Bhagavan has given us the help of capable, responsive correspondents from New Delhi to New York. An unusual network of communications arose with reliable readers, leaders and scholars contributing important information, research, insights and news from far off places. Most significant this year are our new franchisees, Sri Asoka Varma from Kerala, Sri S. Gokool in South Africa and Dohadeva Samugam in Singapore/Malaysia. Another unusual feature of 1995 were the many calls for help. Notable was textbook publisher, Houghten Mifflin's request that Hinduism Today's editorial team edit their grade six social studies course chapter on Hinduism to be used throughout US public schools.

Art and Culture: Indian Treasure

A continuing global explosion of Indian art showed itself this year. France's Festival of Avignon drew 120 artists from India or Indian traditions. Dance company consultant Thomas Erdos says, "Indian dance has become a necessity. People in Europe are asking for it." Indian music on CD ROM has made low-fidelity recordings obsolete, bringing exquisite Hindu

spiritual music to homes throughout the world. Ensemble performances by Bharatya Vidya Bhavan in UK, music mandalis in India and soulful artists like flutist Chaurisia graced our pages. Tribal arts, Rajput painting, traditional rangoli/kolam painting continue to fill volumes of stunning new art books unveiling to the world the treasury of Indian art. You can watch an outstanding performance of bharata natyam by a non-Indian Australian on stage in Sydney or be delighted in Singapore by the refined abhinaya of a Mauritian girl who studied at Kalakshetra in Madras. Giant sculptures like a new 65-foot statue of Shiva, thriving institutions like Prabhat Kala, (both in Bangalore,) and vast numbers of people studying Indian art outside of India, all indicate a new dynamic for Bharat's culture.

Key Issues: Crucial Knots  
Sanatana dharma faced issues  
of crucial importance in 1995:

Nepal's Hindu Identity came under attack as Christian missionaries and Muslim immigrants put pressure on the Hindu majority and Buddhist tribals. Does Nepal have the right to preserve its ancient original identity and laws as a Hindu nation? Indian Hindu organizations sent contingents to the Himalayan nation as the situation heated up.

**Priest Abuse:** A sad story emerged when letters to the editor complained of abuse in US temples--Hindu priests underpaid, overworked, intimidated with threats and treated with contempt by officials. It was a shameful comparison to the well-respected clergy of other religions. Sambamurthi Sivacharya, former head of the South India Priest Association, said it is just as bad or worse in India. A public rebuke of callous management came quickly from our readers and our publisher.

**Christian Zeal:** Hindus took offense when US evangelist Pat

Robertson labeled Hinduism as "demonic" and advocated keeping Hindus out of the US. The story, uncovered by Julie Rajan, resulted in an unexpected avalanche from readers. It triggered reprints in dozens of Indian journals and generally put Hindus on the protective alert worldwide.

Supreme Court Hindu: On July 2nd, 1995, after nearly 15 years of litigation, the Supreme Court of India denied the Ramakrishna Mission's petition to be declared an independent, non-Hindu minority religion. Their original intention was simply to protect their schools from government take over, but the process evolved into an ideological investigation of the definition of Hinduism in relation to universalist Vedanta. The high court judged RK Mission to be unequivocally Hindu. Ironically, the Mission was allowed to maintain control of its schools in accordance with earlier precedents for other religions' missions. All ended well.

### Mother Spirit: Shakti's Work

Remarkable women graced the pages of 1995. The mother spirit is actively at work for family and for humankind. Mata Amritanandamayi, Swamini Priyananda of the Chinmaya Mission and Gurumayi Chidvilasananda of Siddha Yoga Dham gave us strong leadership. The courageous editor of Manushi, Ms. Madhu Kishwar, created one of India's most important vehicles for social conscience. With frank openness women are engaging in self-examination and self-protection, as we discovered in our coverage of the South Asian Women's Conference. Women film director's are exposing the dark side of abuse and oppression in the social life in India. Our "Working Mothers" stories showed women understand their importance at home, though many remain committed to the male vocational paradigm of self-development.

### Myths Dispelled: Historical Hoax

The myth of the aryan invasion cracked wide open in 1995. The writings in the Vedas and the anthropological evidence show the Vedic Aryans were the indigenous Indians, the same multi-racial society that developed the Harappan and Mahenjadaro cultures. It is a culture at least 5,000 years old. The "Aryan/Dravidian" split is a baseless historian's contrivance. The historic new book, Cradle of Civilization, jointly authored by George Feuerstein, David Frawley and Subash Kak, just released at the end of this year, definitively thrashes the old idea that the Vedas were written by invading nomads from central Asia. A few mainstream American text books are finally admitting the invasion theory may be wrong.

### Bharat Mata: New Life and Innovation

While there is much well-founded wailing and lament over india's inevitable modernization, 1995 stories from Bharat show the continuing resilience of Hinduism in the mother land. Kumbhamela was as big as ever. Not only that, a new Kumbhamela was engineered in the South by Sri Sri Sri Thiruchi Mahaswamigal and Sri Sri Sri Balagangadharanathaswami to serve the many who cannot go north. ISKCON built a magnificent new temple in Mayapur. Successful globe trotting sons of India like Swami Pragyananda and others are focusing their work back home, building new centers to serve India, with a fresh new vision well informed from years of travel. Meanwhile, devotees the world over are contributing to the renovation of perhaps the most magnificent of all Hindu temples, Sri Meenakshi in Madurai. In the face of death threats, thousands still trekked to see Lord Siva in Amarnath this year. New Delhi came to a complete halt while the devout fed Lord Ganesha with milk. The Sankaracharya of Kanchi put in a computerized spiritual questions and answers phone service between Madras and Kanchi. Satya Sai Baba

continues his miraculous work of manifestations with more social service institutions and ever wider educational activities. We found superstars of the Mumbai film industry who still do puja. We find Sita Ram Goel and Ram Swarup still strong at the ideological helm in their Voice of India offices in Delhi. India is being revitalized.

There, where there is no darkness, nor night, nor day, nor being, nor nonbeing, there is the Auspicious One, alone, absolute and eternal. There is the glorious splendor of that Light from whom in the beginning sprang ancient wisdom.--  
Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.4.10