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TEMPLE BUILDERS

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A Global effort funds pillars, bells, and towers

Nageswaran and Rajeswari nagaratnam had no idea that they would become temple builders when, in 1993, they sojourned from Sydney, Australia, to celebrate a major festival at Kauai's Hindu Monastery. But upon hearing about the opportunities to sponsor unique elements of the Island Temple, they eagerly volunteered to fund the carving of the gomukai, which means, "cow face" (the highly ornate spout connected to the central sanctum, photo below) for ^{US}\$15,000, becoming the first to sponsor a single temple artifact.

Many more from forty countries have since rushed forward, including a generous US sponsor of the stupi vimanam, the gold-plated capstone, for \$108,000. Another item sponsored is Nandi, the sacred bull found in front of all Siva temples, sponsored by three Singapore ladies for \$25,000. The three side entry towers, gopurams, have also been sponsored, the east tower by the Australian Nagarats for \$50,000. The west golden tower was

sponsored by the Saiva Siddhanta Church mission of Germany. The north golden tower was sponsored by the Amman temple of Denmark. It's rare for one temple to help build another, but this epitomizes the inspiration of giving the Island Temple is instilling in those who learn about it.

Dozens of artifacts still need funding. Of the two ornate handrails, one was sponsored by the Mardemootoo family of Mauritius for \$21,000. The other remains. Of 32 primary pillars supporting the roof, 12 have been sponsored by devotees in the US and Malaysia; 20 await funding at \$21,000 each. Of 30 carvings of Kauaian nature spirits that joyfully uphold the central chamber, 18 remain to be sponsored for \$5,000 each. Atop the railing around the temple will be 170 stone tridents symbolizing love, action and wisdom. Only 37 more need patrons at \$1,008. Sponsorships can be paid monthly. Pick what inspires you most, and join in!