

[Chronicling Hinduism's Modern Experience](#)

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## Chronicling Hinduism's Modern Experience

How 25 penniless monks living on the world's most remote land mass are making history by forging the future

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Just days before we went to press, the ancient rajput painting to the right was completed, greeting 1997 and preserving Hinduism Today's quantum leap far into the future of futures and beyond. The mathavasis in the painting are not from some distant yuga; they are the stalwart sevaks that produce this magazine each month. Many reader's queries have come on my e-mail, and even through what they call snail mail, asking how and why Hinduism Today appears in so many nations. Here it is. Every one of my 25 monks is involved in its production, in ways small and large. Yes, they look and dress exactly like that, living simply, meditating and serving with me here in a tropical jungle on our planet's most remote land mass, the Island of Kauai in the Hawaiian Islands. And, yes, the giant banyan tree, sacred river and natural waterfall are really here, too, along with parrots and cows. When you visit some day, we hope not too long from now, you can meet and talk with some of my swamis, yogis and sadhakas.

A thousand years or more ago a great book was written, the Mahabharata, recording the history of Bharat. Now revered as a religious scripture, it speaks of the glories as well as the

problems of that era and the wise solutions that dharma provides. Today in Bharat, India's official name in its constitution, this great religion still flourishes and has recently moved explosively into nearly every country of the world with its temples, ministers, priests and holy men and women. Hinduism Today has for the past 18 years recorded the history of this billion-strong religion in renaissance. It has been acclaimed by some, perhaps generously, as a modern-day Mahabharata, once again recording the Hindu experience in a new era. The small multi-national team pictured here have been the scribes and editors for a much larger group in the many nations where live Indian Hindus, Sri Lankan Hindus, Malaysian Hindus, Mauritian Hindus, Singaporean Hindus, South African Hindus, South American Hindus, Fijian Hindus and, yes, North American and European Hindus, too. The result is the living epic you hold in your hands.

Hinduism Today is just entering its 19th year of publication since its founding on January 5, 1979. My three successors, the acharyas seated just to my right in the painting, will carry it all on into the future of futures. Every Hindu order has its public service, be it a hospital, eye clinic, orphanage, school, ashram, feeding hall or priestly training center. This magazine is the primary public service designated by me for our order--along with teaching children's classes, building and supporting temples and giving away money to worthy institutions. It was during a world tour years ago through Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius, Reunion, South Africa, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Europe that I realized Sanatana Dharma had no global voice and no network of communication. Hindus in Durban had no idea what was happening with Hindus in Canada. Those in London had no connection with their brothers and sisters in Kathmandu. Hindus in India thought there were none

elsewhere. Thus, I was divinely directed by inner orders from our Yogaswami Kailasa Parampara, by my Satguru in this life, to create a means to interconnect Hindus worldwide.

The editorial policies I have laid down for the mathavasis are: to show both sides of every story; to put forward religious leaders of all Hindu sects equally, acknowledging their central role in the future of Dharma; to bring into the consciousness of Hindus and onlookers the glories of this most ancient religion on the planet; to support tradition and its maturity into contemporary times; to maintain a strict nonpolitical point of view, meaning not taking sides; to give a voice to cultural, artistic and spiritual leaders as well as to the common woman, man and youth. In summary, our monastic order has committed itself to foster Hindu solidarity as a "unity in diversity" among all sects and lineages; to inform and inspire Hindus worldwide and people interested in Hinduism; to dispel myths, illusions and misinformation about Hinduism; to protect, preserve and promote the Hindu religion and to nurture a truly spiritual Hindu renaissance.

It is the duty of my monastics to continue maintaining Hinduism Today as our way of giving back an infinitesimal part of what this profound heritage has given us, to be a reliable voice, to speak to the many needs of all Hindus, to defend ahimsa, noninjury, to persist as a global presence, a resource of Indian spirituality, to bring forth the ancient Vedic arts and sciences and promote the Vedas as the number-one scripture of Hinduism. By all this we may empower the next generation to come up strong in the richness of their heritage, with well-defined metaphysics applicable to modern life, giving them security and faith in their work place, in the corporate

office, factory, field, or as a small businessman, entrepreneur, politician or scientist. These are ambitious goals, but we have found and trained, as of 1997, over 100 skilled and articulate lay people around the globe to help make it all happen month after month. Jai Vasara Hindutva, jai, jai, jai.

## Tracing an Evolution

After 18 years as a newspaper, we've reincarnated as a magazine

1979: Hinduism Today, a quarterly, is founded in Hawaii as "a bridge between East and West." Monks trained in typesetting and the graphic arts.

1981, Oct: The in-house journal moves to new quarters, adopts newspaper size, international character.

1985, Sept: Spot color added, and we start publishing every two months.

1986, July: HT goes completely digital with innovative Macintosh computers, tossing out obsolete photo-imaging technology.

1987, July: MacConnection honors HT for its innovative Desktop Publishing. Big Bucks Award; well, \$500 was a lot back then. Apple Computer, impressed with HT's use of Mac "empowerment tools," flies team to Kauai to capture first-ever publications network for a worldwide Apple training video.

1987: HT goes monthly, adds new features, more color.

1988, Oct: Nine just-invented Mac IIs added to enhance Hawaii's largest publishing network.

1989, August: Unique franchise system developed to print paper in South Africa, Mauritius, UK, Holland, India and Malaysia.

1992: Wow! Full color explodes on the desktop.

1994: HT (and the Vedas) published electronically on the Web, hailed by Publisher's Weekly and Yoga Journal as content-rich site visited by thousands weekly.

1995: HT acquires blazing-fast 9500 Macintoshes. Every monk has robes, japa mala and Power Mac.

1996, Dec: Newspaper transforms into magazine. New journalists and photographers appear. Lots of gain, so where's the pain?