



Homegrown Gurus: From Hinduism in America to American Hinduism

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Exploring homegrown movements and figures, proclaims “American Hinduism” as a distinct religious tradition.

Today, a new stage in the development of Hinduism in America is taking shape. After a century of experimentation during which Americans welcomed Indian gurus who adjusted their teachings to accommodate the New World context, “American Hinduism” can now rightly be called its own tradition rather than an imported religion. Accordingly, this spiritual path is now headed by leaders born in North America. *Homegrown Gurus* explores this phenomenon in essays about these figures and their networks. A variety of teachers and movements are considered, including Ram Dass, Siddha Yoga, and Amrit Desai and Kripalu Yoga, among others. Two contradictory trends quickly become apparent: an increasing Westernization of Hindu practices and values alongside a renewed interest in traditional forms of Hinduism. These opposed sensibilities—innovation and preservation, radicalism and recovery—are characteristic of postmodernity and denote a new chapter in the American assimilation of Hinduism.

“...a valuable examination of some prominent American Hindus who have spread Hinduism among Americans and also, in diverse ways, Americanized what was once a foreign and exotic religion.” — *Anthropology Review Database*

“Concentrating on North America, this volume offers a timely and important group of essays that examine American Hinduism as a distinctive tradition ... It also uses a theoretically sophisticated approach to examine the complexities and issues—such as authenticity, innovation, preservation, recovery, and radicalism—that arise from the meeting of divergent cultures ... Highly recommended.” — *CHOICE*

Ann Gleig is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Central Florida.

Lola Williamson is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Millsaps College and the author of *Transcendent in America: Hindu-Inspired Meditation Movements as New Religion*.

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