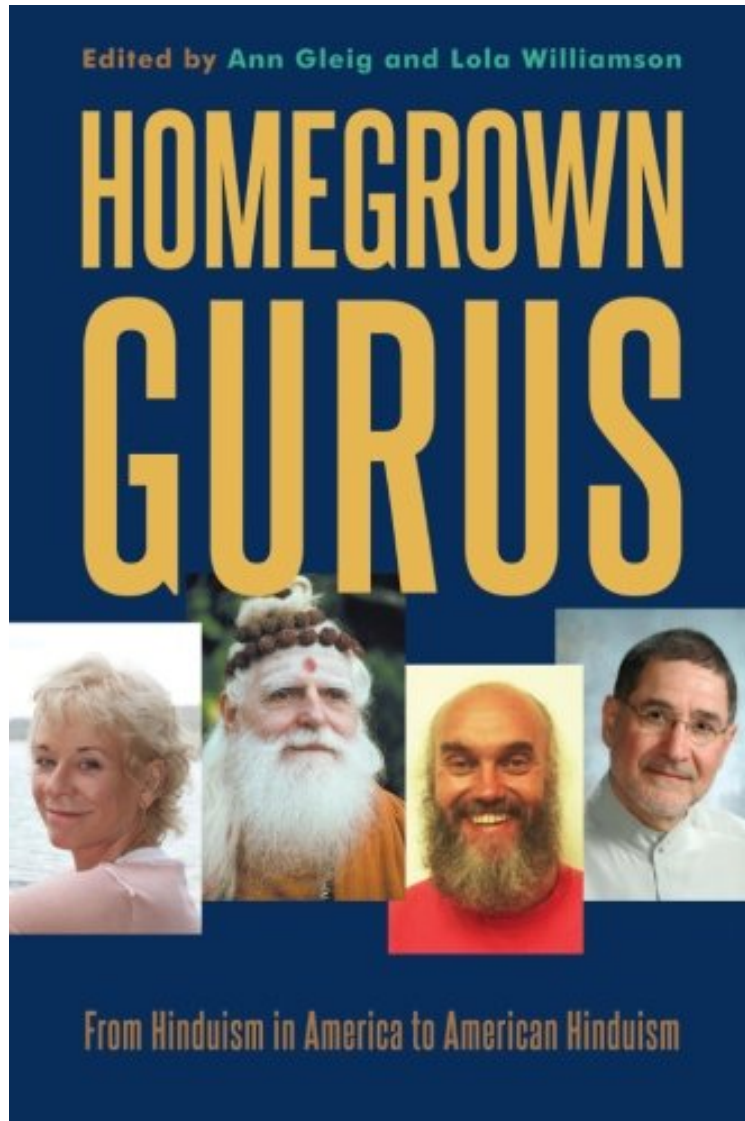


# Homegrown Gurus: From Hinduism in America to American Hinduism

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**From State University of New York Press : Homegrown Gurus: From Hinduism in America to American Hinduism** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Homegrown Gurus: From Hinduism in America to American Hinduism:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. ... and Lola Williamson are to be commended for their excellent book, Homegrown Gurus By Carol Brown Editors Ann Gleig and Lola Williamson are to be commended for their

excellent book, *Homegrown Gurus: From Hinduism in America to American Hinduism*. In their Introduction they give us a clearly delineated historical progression of the "three major waves" of gurus who arrived in the United States and who became noted leaders of new religious movements. The first wave began in the nineteenth century with Swami Vivekananda of India, the first to bring Hinduism to America; the second occurred in 1965 and following with the lifting of the Asian Immigration Act that permitted Indian and Asian gurus to immigrate to the United States, and the third wave was comprised of primarily North American students/disciples of second-wave gurus or those who traveled overseas to join teachings in India and Asia, and then returned to the United States to carry on their guru's traditions. But in the process of adapting to new terrain from the first through third waves, it was necessary to try to make sense out of Eastern religiosity for Western audiences. So, the teachers and teachings evolved, they became blended creating what the authors call "American Hinduism." Gleig and Williamson have compiled a fine collection of essays by distinguished authors, who, with depth and clarity, inform us concerning specific gurus and their teachings within American Hinduism. In the book's Conclusion celebrated scholar Jeffrey Kripal reminds us that we are closer in time and space to this third wave of American Gurus and their anomalous experiences, which are crucial to our understanding their spirituality and histories. *Homegrown Gurus* offers us an opportunity to put aside our assumptions and think in new terms. As a retired professor of religion, this is truly what is needed today for the study of new religious movements and by extension of religion in general. Well done!

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The Human Face Beneath the Masks of God By Donte Rashawn Sharpley The field of religious studies, much like the religions themselves, tends to exalt the old and dismiss the new, always looking backward into the hinterlands of history in search of greater authenticity. While this yearning for yesteryear seems to be an inescapable part of the human condition, it misses the point - a point which the editors of *Homegrown Gurus* elaborates with subtlety, precision, and grace: that religion is a living thing and living things breath, grow, give birth and ultimately pass away. Although this sparkling collection of essays can be read for its sheer narrative enjoyment, it remains a cerebral yet accessible work of significant scholarship in its own right. Each chapter describes a way in which one of the religions of India has been reborn on Western shores, re(caste) in lighter shades of skin, how they negotiate the tensions between the ancient and modern, as well as the human and divine. And in the final analysis it is the human dimension and the "glorious messiness of it all" that is the book's greatest strength; for, while each chapter functions as a history of a specific lineage's transformation in the West, as a whole, they serve the far more interesting purpose of unveiling the deep mechanics and tectonic movements of religion itself. Insofar as they accomplish this goal, the editors succeed in revealing the human face beneath the masks of God.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This collection of biographies surrounding popular guru cultural leaders details ... By Kailash Dhaksinamurthi This collection of biographies surrounding popular guru cultural leaders details the struggles incorporating traditional conservative Indian Hindu beliefs and practices (eg bhakti, temples, vedic liturgy, and caste) into the liberal American New Age post hippie popular culture. The book highlights the seekers' sometimes indiscriminate search for a charismatic leader as catalyst for a metaphysical and cultural alternative. With depth it shows the necessary change in biographies of gurus as the seeker populace changes. For an in-depth review of Kauai Saiva Siddhanta Temple as covered in one chapter of this book see my response to "Jutika's" review below.

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. 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

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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""The empirical record testifies to the fact that religions typically change just as everything else changes under specific conditions, including, here, historical and specific conditions. The beauty of Gleig's and Williamson's book is its careful and detailed accounting of that phenomenon as Hinduism, after washing across the shores of America with earlier gurus, took root and grew in specific and innovative ways under the charisma and creativity of America's own homegrown gurus. Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies 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 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""The empirical record testifies to the fact that religions typically change--just as everything else changes--under specific conditions, including, here, historical and specific conditions. The beauty of Gleig's and Williamson's book is its careful and detailed accounting of that phenomenon as Hinduism, after washing across the shores of America with earlier gurus, took root and grew in specific and innovative ways under the charisma and creativity of America's own homegrown gurus." -- Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies ..".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 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." -- CHOICEAbout the AuthorAnn 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.