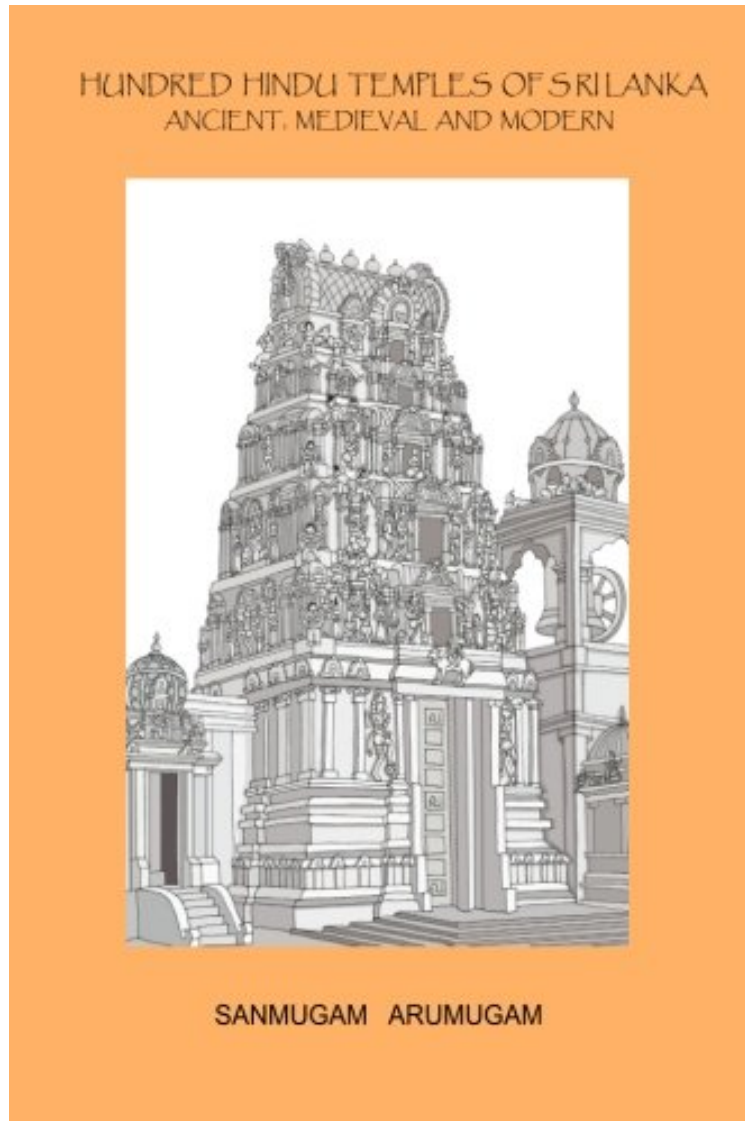


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Hundred Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka: Ancient, Medieval and Modern

Mr Sanmugam Arumugam

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Hundred Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka: Reviewed by Hugh KarunanayakeBy Hugh KarunanayakeHinduism being a religion almost exclusively practiced by the Tamil

community, it is axiomatic that most ancient Hindu temples in Sri Lanka were located in the North and East of the country where the vast majority of Tamils have lived for centuries. However it must be noted that the practice of Buddhism in Sri Lanka has incorporated, over the ages, within its traditions, the worship of gods of the Hindu pantheon such as Vishnu, Ganesh, Murugan, Pattini etc. Consequently, most Buddhist temples around the country have structured devales devoted to the worship of gods of the Hindu pantheon. This book however concentrates on the stand alone Hindu temples around the country of which there are many but with little or scanty information on their existence in books written in the English Language. Sanmugam Arumugam's book is therefore a very significant contribution to the available literature in English, on the practice of Hinduism in Sri Lanka as manifested in the hallowed temples devoted to Hindu deities. The present publication consists of six sections into which the various temples have been categorised according to the deity venerated in each category viz, Vinayakar, Sivan, Murugan, Vishnu, Sakthi, and other lesser known deities. Each temple is described with much detail and description relating to the origin of the temple, its inscriptions, architecture, as well as associated legend and lore. Descriptions have been supplemented with photographs. The temples discussed date back to ancient times, mostly however from the medieval era through to the Chola period (980 to 1070) and the modern era. Many Hindu temples were destroyed by foreign invasions during the 16th to 19th centuries and their cultural significance lost forever. It could be surmised that many of the temples discussed in this book have also suffered a similar fate during the ethnic conflict that enveloped the north and east of the country in the late twentieth century and shortly thereafter, a fact that makes this work all the more significant if not poignant. The book is encyclopaedic in character and is replete with a glossary, which is of invaluable assistance to the reader unfamiliar with the many religious specific terms used in it. This addition to the study of the Hindu religion in Sri Lanka will be invaluable to the student, researcher, and general reader. Thirumugam Arumugam deserves our warm approbation for reproducing this work. He has not only exercised his filial obligations but also contributed to a better understanding and appreciation of the Hindu religion as evident in the work of its votaries in Sri Lanka. Hugh Karunanayake

This book is a combined revised reprint of two books by the late Sanmugam Arumugam. The two books are *Ancient Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka*, Second Edition 1982, and *More Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka*, 1991. These two books have long been out of print. *Ancient Hindu Temples* describes 52 Temples, including the oldest Hindu Temple still existing in Sri Lanka which is Siva Devale No. 2 in Polonnaruwa. *More Hindu Temples* goes on to describe 54 additional temples, some ancient and some relatively recent. Many of the temples are illustrated by photographs. The contents of both of the above books have been merged in this single Volume. Sanmugam Arumugam was a Chartered Civil Engineer and a graduate of Kings College, London. He worked in the Irrigation Department in Sri Lanka for 32 years, retiring as a Deputy Director in 1965. He then worked as a Director of the Water Resources Board for six years. He was President of the Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka in 1966-67. He was the author of several technical papers and books including the monumental 461 page book, *Water Resources of Ceylon* 1969, which remains a standard reference resource on the subject to this day. After his retirement he turned his attention to writing about Hindu Temples. Apart from the two books reprinted in this volume, his published works include *The Lord of Thiruketheeswaram*, 1980, *Koneswaram* 1986, *Lombok and its Temples* 1990, and *Stone Sculptures in Colombo Hindu Temple* 1990. His final work was *Dictionary of Biography of the Tamils of Ceylon* 1997, which includes the profiles of over 775 Ceylon Tamils. He passed away in the year 2000, at the age of 94 years, working on his word processor right up to the very end.