

Jainism is an Indian religion that originated in the Ganges valley in the fifth century BC at about the same time as Buddhism. Jains came to Leicester in the 1970s as part of the diaspora from Uganda of people of South Asian background. The Leicester Jain Centre is situated in a converted Methodist chapel and in May 2015 it celebrated the 30th anniversary of the installation and dedication of its main images. Besides temples and areas of worship for the four main sects or traditions of Jainism, the Jain Centre has a Museum, which consists of a series of display cases containing dioramas illustrating the history and beliefs of the Jain religion. As well as 'spreading knowledge and understanding of the Jain faith' the Museum was intended to be 'as a major tourist attraction, a great benefit to the city of Leicester, its business community, and its entire people.' This presentation will consider to what extent the museum has achieved these aims, while discussing Museum's history, its present usage and plans for its future. The presentation will also attempt to situate the format of the displays within the South Asian tradition of diorama display.