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**Introduction to World Religions**

**Site Visit Report #2**

For my second site visit report, I attended the second program of Seeking the Sacred of Asia: An Interfaith and Food Event. During the event, there was only two performers and one speaker. Despite there only being a few presenters, much information on the Indian faiths of Hinduism and Jainism.

The first presenter played music on a traditional Indian string instrument and was accompanied by a drummer playing *tabla*. He played six songs covering everything then offered an explanation of his instrument and the drummer explained his. The drummer explained how the *tabla's* beats are formed by sounds that tell a story. He demonstrated this with a story about a fireworks show.

The second presenter was a dancer trained in classical Indian dance. She performed a song about a girl calling out for her lover with her bells. This was emphasized by the bells adorning the dancer's dress. The dance was also very expressive and formed a complete story through movement.

The third presenter was Dr. Ramaswamy Sharma. He was an expert on Hinduism and Jainism that travels to many colleges and speaks on the subject. He started with an explanation of how the main symbol of Hinduism represents the three

main deities of the Hindu faith; Ganesh, Shiva and Vishnu. Fasting is also a very large part of the Hindu faith. He also explained how Bhog, the offering of food, is how Hindus honor their gods. After the food is offered as Bhog, it is transformed into Prasad, which means grace. In the Hindu faith, there are many vegetarians. This is due to the fact that Hindus are not supposed to eat food that even look like meat. They take this belief from the sacred book of the Hindu faith, the Vedas. There are many thousands of Vedas and all of them are condensed down into a large book called the Bhagavad Gita.

Dr. Sharma then explained the three different types of food in the Hindu faith. The first is called *tamasic* food. This is the worst kind of food. This category includes meat, poultry, fish and eggs. Overeating is also considered *tamasic*. The second type of food is called *rajasic*. This includes foods that are spicy, hot, bitter, salty, dry and sour. These foods maintain equilibrium of the body. Eating quickly is considered *rajasic* and is bad for overall health. The final category is called *sattvic*. These are the foods that increase vitality and are good for your overall health. Foods included in the *sattvic* are light, soothing foods. These are mostly vegetables. These foods have a balance of all flavors and are the best thing for a follower of the Hindu faith to eat.