

Cultural Field Study Research Project

The Hindu Community and Cultural Center at the Shiva Vishnu Temple was founded in 1977 but completed construction in 1986. The temple's foundation stone to signify its construction date was inaugurated by a famous South Indian actor, Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao. This organization is a non-profit organization, and it runs on donations provided by the devotees. The weekday hours of operation are on Monday to Thursday from 9 am - 12 pm and 6 pm - 8 pm. The weekend hours of operation are 9 am - 8 pm. The goals of the HCCC are to provide devotees with religious services and volunteering opportunities and celebrate cultural events. The HCCC also offers services such as renting facilities, spiritual services, youth and education classes and programs, human services events, cultural events, and concerts. On average, 150,000 people visit the cultural center and temple every year. To confirm, I have personally accessed the records during my volunteering days at this cultural center. I selected this site because it keeps me grounded in my roots. I volunteered at the Hindu Community and Cultural Center at the Shiva Vishnu Temple for about 2-3 years. I would pack offering bags for the devotees, handle the cashier transactions, and assist the priests working inside the temple and center. Additionally, volunteering was a liberating experience for me. I was able to give back to my community here in the United States.

For my site, I chose the Hindu Community and Cultural Center at the Shiva Vishnu Temple, which explicitly connects to the major themes explored in the course, such as cultural and religious discrimination. This site was constructed for the Indian American population to worship their chosen god while living in the United States. Not just that, anyone is allowed into temples to learn about the religious affiliations of Hinduism. It is said that Indians who immigrated to the United States have crossed seven seas to come into the country to expand culturally. The themes discussed in this course demonstrated how important it was for people of different cultures to make their place in this country. For most Indian people, the religious faith of Hinduism is essential and defines our culture. Cultural discrimination, for instance, is similar to what has happened to the African American population. After the decline of slavery and the Reconstruction, Black Wall Streets became a symbol of economic and financial stability for black communities. It made them feel like they had created a place in the United States. It is

essential to acknowledge the historical existence of Black Wall Streets because of the constant challenges black people faced because of systemic and internalized racism. If it weren't for institutionalized racism and discrimination, Black Wall Streets would still exist.

To reflect on my experience, going to the Hindu Community and Cultural Center at the Shiva Vishnu Temple was more nostalgic than religious. I am in college now, and it reminded me that I used to have so much more time on hand when I was in high school. I had time to think about what I was doing and, more importantly, involve myself within my community. Initially, when this project was assigned, I did not know what site I could find near me. Then I thought about it for an hour or so.

I watched the professor's lecture to fully understand what was required for a good score on the field study assignment. Next, I started to watch the sample video posted on Canvas. I saw that one student had visited a Japanese museum, and another went to a Chinese American exhibit. I noticed that both people went to an exhibit in San Jose, but I chose a place in Livermore. Based on what I understood, I decided that a cultural center at a temple would be the best place to conduct field study research. I even had my parents drive me to the Hindu Community and Cultural Center to take the field study photo. In conclusion, this project was an excellent reminder to keep going to the cultural center whenever possible to feel connected to my community. It's nice to know that SJSU offers a course that allows everyone to explore diverse cultures.