

A Cultural Celebration

As the evening turns dark and music and prayer fill the atmosphere, worship and tradition begin.

Junior Chaitali Patel attends Garbea yearly at the end of October, at public locations in larger towns, to celebrate and worship a god as part of her Hindu culture.

"We go for religious purposes," Patel said. "It only happens one a year. We pray regularly, but we only meet at that one time."

At this event, a god is chosen to be praised and the celebration involves eating, dancing, singing and praying through the night. After everyone has eaten, Dandiya, a dances performed with sticks, is done.

"We dance a lot," Patel said. "We get dressed up a certain way because that is the tradition."

The dress code includes traditional wear; however, the males wear more modern day clothing such as a dress shirt and pants. The females, on the other hand, wear the chunyacholi which is a blouse that wraps around your whole body and follows with a long skirt.

"I get mine from India," Patel said. "My family there sends it to me. They get it from a store and send it here. It's kind of like a prom dress shop."

Other rituals are also practiced at this ceremony such as passing around an aarti (a flaming pate) while signing and praying.

"My favorite thing is definitely dancing because I feel like I'm getting a workout when I'm doing it," Patel said. "It's fun when you dance all night and you're dressed up really nice."

The event starts in the evening and ends late at night as the people celebrate the one yearly event.

"I think it's special because you get to go and praise a god," Patel said. "I get to see all my friends that are Indian and the event represents my culture."

Patel has practiced Hinduism her whole life and has attended Garbea every year. She is familiar with all the customs the event has, from what to wear to what to do.

"I think it reflects who I am," Patel said. "I want to be involved in my culture and my religion and it's just a fun way to do it."

Story by Jennifer Aguirre



Chaitali Patel¹¹ and friends Sarina and Anisha *Photo courtesy of Patel family*



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