

Multiculturalism in Action

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FUN with Interculturalism

Multiculturalism in Action Project is a community outreach program to promote cross-cultural awareness and appreciation among different ethnic groups in Hong Kong. Visit our website below to access our information kits for free: <http://arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~ant/knowledge-transfer/multiculturalism-in-action/index.html> Enquiries are welcome!

South Asians in Hong Kong

South Asia is a geographical concept which refers to countries located in the Southern part of Asia, including: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Ethnicity	Number	%
Indian	28,616	0.4%
Pakistani	18,042	0.3%
Nepali	16,518	0.2%
Other Asians (including Bangladeshis and Sri Lankans)	7038	0.09%
Source: 2011 Census		

The 2011 Census shows that South Asians make up about 1% of the Hong Kong population

History

South Asians first settled in Hong Kong in the 19th century. They were Indians who came as police, soldiers, as well as traders in tea, textile, and jewellery, among others. With the independence of Pakistan in 1947, and of Bangladesh in 1971, Hong Kong began to have its Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities.

The history of Nepalis in Hong Kong can be traced to the stationing of the Gurkha regiments in the British Army in 1948. Their four main duties included border control, internal security, explosive ordnance disposal, and sea support. “Trailwalker” and “Hike for Hospice” are charitable activities started by the Gurkhas.



Ex-Gurkhas observing Remembrance Day in Hong Kong



Sri Lankan dishes

Nowadays, South Asian women and men are employed in different occupations in Hong Kong. These range from accountants and athletes, to entrepreneurs and homemakers, teachers and construction workers, and lawyers and bankers. South Asian cuisines, health practices (such as yoga) and religious festivals, have become a part of local daily life and our local heritage, making Hong Kong a multicultural and vibrant metropolitan city.

Integration

South Asians have made Hong Kong their home and adopted the local lifestyle. South Asian groceries and restaurants can be found especially in Tsim Sha Tsui, Jordan, Yau Ma Tei, and Yuen Long. Many of the restaurants have a Chinese name and provide a Chinese menu, catering to customers of all ethnicities.

Many South Asian festivals and customs are practiced in Hong Kong. For instance, Durga Puja (Festival of Mother Goddess) is celebrated by Hindus from India and Bangladesh, while the Gurungs from Nepal celebrate Losar (New Year).



Durga Puja is a Hindu festival celebrated in Hong Kong

Losar (Gurung New Year), celebrated in Kam Shan Country Park



South Asian philanthropists have contributed to the development of education, public health, and transportation in Hong Kong. These include the founding of the University of Hong Kong, The Belilios School, Ruttonjee Hospital, and Star Ferry.

Challenges

Generally speaking, the biggest challenge for South Asians in Hong Kong is learning Chinese. Many speak their local dialect at home so there are few chances to practice Chinese. Although some of them speak fluent Cantonese, reading and writing Chinese is still an obstacle for employment and higher education.

A lack in cultural sensitivity in public services often leave South Asians feeling that they are discriminated. For example, the healthcare system in Hong Kong needs to be more considerate of the religious and cultural needs of ethnic minorities. The Muslim community may find additional difficulties as there are few halal fresh meat stores, and not all restaurants provide for a halal diet.

FUN with Kabaddi

Kabaddi is a traditional village game popular throughout South Asia. It is now an official event in the Asian Games. Kabaddi means “begin living”. This is a game of agility, teamwork, and strategy.

The sport is played by two teams each with 7 members. One person, the raider, crosses the center line to tag members of the opposition, the stoppers. As the raiders cross the line, they keep saying the word “Kabbadi, Kabbadi...” nonstop. Before they run out of breath, they must return to their own side.

If the stoppers capture the raiders before they can return to their own side, the stoppers’ team gets one point. If the raiders succeed to return, then the raiders’ team gets points depending on how many stoppers are tagged. Those who are tagged will be eliminated. The game proceeds very quickly and there is a lot of excitement in the audience.



Pakistani and Chinese young people practicing kabaddi

*Try your skills in kabaddi !
Come join our hands-on sessions !
Give it a try!*

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