

NEWS & EVENTS > Exhibition: "Chetti Melaka of the Straits - Rediscovering Peranakan Indian Communities"

BY JORDI BALTÀ PORTOLÉS
06 SEP 2018 - 04 MAY 2019

Exhibition: "Chetti Melaka of the Straits - Rediscovering Peranakan Indian Communities"



Between 6 September 2018

and 4 May 2019, the **Indian Heritage Centre** in Singapore, an ASEMUS member, presents an exhibition entitled "**Chetti Melaka of the Straits - Rediscovering Peranakan Indian Communities**". The first of the Indian Heritage Centre's **community co-curated exhibitions**, the event results from the collaboration with the Association of Peranakan Indians (Chitty Melaka). A majority of the items on display have been contributed by members of the Chitty Melaka community, and **many will be seen in public for the first time.**

Background

Situated at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean region and the Far East, the Malay Archipelago has always been a **region of cultural confluence and diversity**. The region saw the influx of migrant communities who brought with them their unique socio-cultural traits ranging from language to religion, fashion to cuisine. Over time, these traits adapted to the multicultural milieu of the local society and resulted in polyglot environments best exemplified by the Chetti Melaka. The **Chetti Melaka**

(or Chitty Melaka) are descendants of Tamil traders who settled in Melaka during the reign of the Melaka Sultanate (15th- 16th century) and married local women of Malay and Chinese descent. Predominantly Hindu of the Saivite (followers of Shiva) denomination, **the community speaks a unique combination of Malay, Tamil and Chinese, that has been called Chetti Creole** by scholars. They trace their roots to Kampung Chitty in Gajah Berang, Melaka, and it is estimated that there are 5000 Chettis in Singapore.

"To be a Chetti Melaka is something unique. We are of Tamil ancestry; we are of mixed blood, initially with Malay matriarchal lineage principally, but over time with Chinese and others. The land of origin of our people is Melaka. This is embedded in our name, which we retain and should retain wherever we may live now." Gerald Francis Pillay, October, 2014.

Further information

For additional information about the exhibition "Chetti Melaka of the Straits - Rediscovering Peranakan Indian Communities", please visit <https://www.indianheritage.org.sg/en/whats-on/exhibitions/detail/chetti-melaka-of-the-straits>

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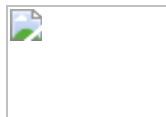
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