印度留学生：小印度不是印度
25 January 2008

新加坡商业管理大学（SMU）地下一楼校园在22日下午变成“印度”，本地印度文化协会的舞团让观众进入富印度色彩的高深舞蹈文化。

舞团演出“Navrang”（“九种颜色”），这半个小时的节目里介绍了9种主要的舞蹈类型。本项目是SMU艺术节的节目之一，参加者都是SMU的学生。

表演者之一21岁的沙鲁（Charu Srivastava）是印度文化协会的会长，她来新加坡已经14年。

“我爸爸是船员，常常来回印度，当时在新加坡找不到工作全家搬到这里”，这位个子小、样子活泼的女生解释说。

另外两位协会成员19岁的尼哈丽卡（Niharica Sand）和18岁的巫 дела （Uttara Gupta）表示，她们来新加坡不到两年，本来两位想到美国读书，不过“妈妈觉得新加坡更安全，更让她放心”，尼哈丽卡笑着说。

三位穿着彩色传统舞蹈服装，展现印度舞蹈的美态。

沙鲁幽默地说，“我们修读市场营销，经济和信息技术管理等大学专业太闷了，难怪我们爱跳舞。”三位女子年纪轻轻，却对推广印度文化怀着一种决心。

“我刚到的时候，同学问我，在印度的马路上是不是种大麻？”，巫 dela 回想当年与本地人交流的经验，并模仿那名本地人的怀疑表情说。

“我的天，那时候很伤心，不过，我很快发觉本地人对印度人多么的不了解。”

协会的福利主任尼哈丽卡同意说，“我到这里人家就问我，是不是很穷之类的问题。当时觉得很奇怪。”

来自印度第二大都市孟买的尼哈丽卡，对很多新认识的朋友错以为印度人没钱而感到不可思议。
这三位年轻女生跟新加坡小印度的移民工人很大不同。

“我的经验是，新加坡人把本地的小印度当作是整个印度的代表。这个概念不对。”大部分在新加坡的印度人来自印度的南部，跟东、西、北部的生活方式很不一样。

不过，这三位活跃会员以积极的态度在新加坡生活。“新加坡人比较慢热，不过，只要打破别人对你的歧见，就很可能跟他们谈得来”，白皮肤的尼哈丽卡说。

新加坡也不断的在改变。“我14年到这里的时候，似乎没有印度北部餐，很难找，现在，连大学餐厅也有的到”，沙鲁笑着说。

舞蹈者也喜欢突显印度和中国的共同点。“我们面积大，国内有很多不同的民族、语言和饮食文化。”

通过跳舞和表演她们希望继续改变本地人对印度的概念，加强对印度的了解。“我给观众新的知识，自己跳得开心，有更好的交流方式吗？”沙鲁笑着说。

SMU 艺术节在1月18日到2月1日将举行，学生节目包括戏剧、大学合唱团和西班音乐表演。

更多消息请上 SMU 艺术节查询。
The basement of SMU was converted into India on the afternoon of 22 January 2008. The Indian Cultural Society put up a high quality, truly Indian performance. As part of the SMU Arts Festival, 'Navrang' (means 'Nine Colours' in English) features nine different kinds of Indian dance in half an hour. Participants are all students of SMU.

One of the performers, Ms Charu Srivastava, 21 years old, is the president of the club. She has been in Singapore for 14 years. "My dad worked on the ship and he used to travel back and forth between India and Singapore. When he found a job here, our whole family decided to move here", said Charu Srivastava.

Another two members, Ms Niharica Sand and Ms Uttara Gupta said that they had only been in Singapore for less than two years. Initially they had wanted to study in the United States. However, their mothers thought Singapore provided a safer environment. Hence, they are in Singapore instead for the assurance of their mothers.

All three are dressed in colourful traditional Indian costumes, displaying the beauty of Indian culture.

Charu said: "It is very boring to only study Marketing, Economics, and Information System. No wonder we are so addicted to dancing." The three girls are all very young, yet they are all very determined to promote Indian culture.

"When I first came, my classmates asked me if we grew marijuana on the roads of India," recalled Uttara. "Gosh, I was so sad at that time. But very soon, I started to realize how little Singaporeans knew about India."

Welfare director Niharica agreed: "When I first came, people asked me if I was very poor. I found it really odd then."

Coming from the second largest city in India (Mumbai), Niharica found it impossible to understand why Singaporeans thought Indians were poor.

These three girls are very different from the construction workers we see at Little India.

"My experience told me that Singaporeans saw Little India as the miniature of India. This was very wrong." Most Indians living in Singapore came from Southern India, which was very different from the North, West and East of India.

Nevertheless, these three girls have been very positive about living in Singapore: "Singaporeans take a while to warm up to you. But if you can break the stereotypes, you can still talk to them much more easily," said Niharica.

Singapore has been changing too. "When I first came 14 years ago, there were hardly any Northern Indian restaurants. Now you can even have Northern Indian food in university canteens!" said Charu.

These girls also found many things in common between India and China: "We are both big countries. Our countries have very diversified races, languages, and food culture."

They hope to change people’s view of India through their dance and promote a better understanding of India. "I bring to the audience new knowledge and at the same time, I enjoy dancing on the stage. What can be a better means of cultural communication?" said Charu.

The SMU Arts Festival is held from 18 January to 2 February, showcasing theatre, choir and western dance. The festival website http://www.acf.sp/artsfest has more information.