

Confucius' Birthday

Confucius' Birthday (孔子诞) falls on 16 Oct (丁酉年农历八月廿七). Thian Hock Keng marks Confucius' birthday with a 2-day festival on 15 and 16 Oct. Besides Buddhist prayer rituals and blessing ceremonies (开智慧仪式), there will be traditional Chinese Court Dance performances (六佾舞) on 15 Oct. The temple welcomes



devotees to register for one of the prayer rituals and participate in the blessing ceremony that follows. Click [here](#) for more information.

Traditional Court Dance (六佾舞)

The origin of this traditional Chinese Court Dance can be traced to more than 2000 years ago where it was performed to honour Emperors and dignitaries. When Confucius passed on, this court dance was performed annually in



remembrance of a great teacher.

Today, Thian Hock Keng continues to put up this traditional court dance every year during Confucius' birthday. The name of the dance "*Liu Yi Wu*" (六佾舞) was derived from the fact that it comprises 36

dancers performing in a square formation of 6 rows and 6 columns. However, due to space limitation at Thian Hock Keng, an improvised version by dancers from Singapore Chinese Dance Theatre is performed in celebration of Confucius' contributions and teachings.

Confucius and His Values

Confucius (551 – 479 BC) was born into a tumultuous yet open era and Confucianism was founded based on his values, teachings and aspirations. He took on the challenges to advise federal lords to practice compassion and benevolence. Over the years, it was further developed and propagated by scholars to become a philosophy widely adopted in today's society.



Did You Know?



During the construction of Thian Hock Keng from 1839 to 1840, craftsmen expressed messages of cultural heritage and traditions through the carvings, sculptures and murals. You can find many symbols of success, achievements and wealth in the temple. Just to name one: crustaceans (甲壳类动物) are

used to represent "*ke jia*" (科甲) which means to succeed as scholars in ancient imperial examinations. Can you spot these symbols in Thian Hock Keng?

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