

What's happening at Thian Hock Keng?



Guided Tours of a 178-Year-Old National Monument



Thian Hock Keng kicks off its 18-day Chinese New Year Celebrations 2018 from 15 Feb 2018 at 10pm. Start the new year by joining our volunteer guides to look for hidden 'treasures' at Thian Hock Keng, a "living" national monument and an architecture masterpiece which reflects the history of Singapore.

Discover carvings, sculptures and murals iconic of our cultural heritage and traditions. Soak in the Chinese New Year festivities and learn traditional customs in a real-life classroom.

Free-of-charge! For pre-registration, please contact us or email to admin@shhk.com.sg.

Birthday of Jade Emperor

Thian Hock Keng marks the birthday of the Jade Emperor (天公诞) on the 8th and 9th Day of the 1st

Lunar month. The first 9th Day in the Lunar Calendar is considered to be the most important day as the Jade Emperor is a highly respected deity by Hokkiens. A pair of sugarcanes (pronounced *gam jia* in Hokkien dialect) are essential offering as it rhymes with the Hokkien

saying of 'thank you' (*gam xia*). Many devotees offer their prayers to the Jade Emperor at Thian Hock Keng and participate in Taoist rituals from 10pm on 23 Feb (8th Day) and from 9am to 5pm on 24 Feb (9th Day). Do join us to seek blessings for the year.



Giant Rice Turtle

Offering of Rice Turtle (乞龟) is a tradition marking *Yuan Xiao Jie* (元宵节), the 15th Day of the 1st Lunar month. In the past, cooked glutinous rice in the shape of turtles were offered to deities for longevity and peace. Thian Hock Keng celebrates

Yuan Xiao Jie by stacking a giant rice turtle with 1400 packets of rice. Devotees 'seek' consent from *Mazu* to bring a pack of rice home.

Make a date with the Giant Rice Turtle in the temple courtyard from 2 - 4 Mar 2018 (14th to 16th Day of 1st Lunar Month)!

Forgotten Traditions



In the past, affixing the **Door Gods** or *men shen* (门神) on doors was an important custom during the Chinese New Year. The images of Door Gods were initially made of peach wood carvings hung on doors. Later, printed images or drawings were used instead. Door Gods symbolize righteousness and power and are said to ward off evil spirits, providing blessings and peace for the household. Revive this tradition and affix them on your doors for the

new year!

Decades ago, the **Deity of Farming and Cow Calendar** (春牛图) was a common sight in every Chinese households in Singapore. They are now probably available only from shops selling joss papers and joss sticks. It usually comprises an illustration of the Deity of Farming and a cow. It is an ancient way of forecasting the weather and four seasons. The height of the Deity and the cow, their positions, age portrayed by the Deity illustrated, colour of the clothes he wears bear significance to how one interprets the weather for the year. For example, a barefooted Deity means drought and if he does not wear his straw hat, it means it will be hot and dry weather for the year.

Find out more about forgotten traditions and history of Chinese New Year at the bilingual exhibition in Thian Hock Keng. From 15 Feb 2018 onwards.

Thian Hock Keng

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