

OUR SINGAPORE: ONE PEOPLE, MANY CULTURES.

Full Moon Puja at Sri
Lankaramaya Buddhist Temple

This is a statue of the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. A puja is a way of honouring the Buddha. On full-moon nights, this temple observes a special puja. It's regarded as a time for Buddhists to learn more about their faith. Besides making offerings, the temple's devotees also attend talks and meditation sessions organised by the monks.

During a puja, symbolic offerings are made to the Buddha. Flowers represent the Buddhist teaching of impermanence: everything goes through the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Oil lamps symbolise enlightenment.

At the heart of this temple is a 60-year-old Bodhi tree. Its sapling was brought from Sri Lanka. It was beneath such a tree that the founder of Buddhism meditated and finally achieved enlightenment. During a puja at this temple, devotees walk around this tree chanting the "Triple Gem" – Buddha, Dharma (the teachings) and Sangha. (the community).

The devotees usually wear white to attend a puja, as the colour represents purity.

This temple was founded by Buddhists belonging to the Sinhalese community, who started arriving in Singapore in the 1860s. Sinhalese are the main ethnic group of Sri Lanka, the large island to the south of India. Today, many of the temple's devotees are Sinhalese, although it also receives Buddhists from other races. Sinhalese usually practise a form of Buddhism known as Theravada, which is also common in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia.

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