

OUR SINGAPORE:
ONE PEOPLE, MANY CULTURES.
Sutra Chanting in the
Buddha Tooth Relic Temple

A monk leads the chanting of sutras, which are holy teachings. Chanting sutras is encouraged in order to help cleanse sins and cultivate wisdom. The word sutra is also used in Hinduism.

This wall is lined with niches containing small Buddha statues, donated by devotees.

A statue of the **Buddha**, the founder of Buddhism. He was born as Prince Siddhartha Gautama more than 2,600 years ago in India. After seven days of meditation, he achieved Enlightenment, giving him insight into the causes of human suffering and how to overcome it. From India, Buddhism spread to China and other countries. This is a Chinese Buddhist temple, as you can tell from the dragon decorations in the background.

Buddhists who wear the black shawl (called **hai qing** in Mandarin) sit in front of the general public. Followers can only wear the hai qing if they have taken "Three Refuges" (Buddhas, Dharma and Sangha) as their belief.

Devotees purchase these **flower offerings** at the entrance of the temple, write their names on the card attached, then light the candle. In Buddhism, light symbolises wisdom.

Members of the general public who want to take part in the ceremony sit in the back rows. They must **dress respectfully**: no sleeveless tops, for example. If necessary, they can borrow sarongs and shawls at the entrance of the temple.

This series by WHAT'S UP, Singapore's newspaper for students, takes a closer look at our country's many colourful cultures. Also online at <http://www.whatsup.sg>.

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