



# Chee Tong Temple (Wong Loo Sen See Chee Choong Temple) in Kuala Lumpur

By Roland Nansink

**Chee Tong Temple** in Kuala Lumpur – officially known as the **Wong Loo Sen See Chee Choong Temple** (黃老仙師慈忠廟) – is a historic Chinese temple that uniquely integrates **Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism** in its worship [cj.my](http://cj.my). Founded in the mid-20th century, this temple has become a cultural landmark in the Cheras area of Malaysia's capital. It is renowned for its trio of principal deities – **Wong Loo Sen See, Chai Tin Dai Sing** (the Monkey God), and **Tai Siong Lou Guan** – each symbolizing one of the three main Chinese religious-philosophical traditions. The temple plays an active role in the local community through religious activities, charitable services, and festive celebrations. Below is an in-depth look at the temple's history, architecture, deities, community role, festivals, and the special **ritual of writing and burning** practiced by devotees. By Roland Nansink

## Historical Background and Founding

The Chee Tong Temple's origins trace back to a Chinese religious sect that emerged in Malaya in the 1950s. According to temple records and oral history, the cult of **Wong Loo Sen See** (黃老仙師, *Huang Lao Xian Shi*, meaning "Immortal Master Huang Lao") began with reported divine apparitions. In one account, the deity first manifested through a spirit medium in Borneo, where a temple was briefly established and later lost in the jungle [cj.mycj.my](http://cj.mycj.my). The movement truly took root on the Malayan peninsula around **1950** when a **Master Liew Juin** (廖声俊, Liao Shengjun) experienced the deity's presence in **Malacca** [cj.my](http://cj.my). Liew Juin became the founder of the Wong Loo Sen See religious sect, spreading its teachings and gathering disciples across Malaya. By **1957**, devotion to Wong Loo Sen See had already reached the Kuala Lumpur and Petaling areas, even before any formal temple was built there [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my).

In **1960**, devotees in Kuala Lumpur formally established a Wong Loo Sen See temple – what would become Chee Tong Temple – initially operating out of a humble rented zinc-roofed shack on Chan Sow Lin Road [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). Under the guidance of Master Liew Juin and local pioneers, the community grew rapidly. Early followers were drawn by the deity's reputed miracles and teachings; they shared stories of how worshipping the "**Immortal Master**" could impart supernatural skills (such as enhanced martial arts) and healing through **written charms** [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). As membership increased, the small makeshift shrine could no longer accommodate the crowds of devotees coming to seek blessings and cures. Plans were made to construct a proper temple building.

By the late 1960s, with generous support from devotees and even the government, a new temple was built at **2½ Mile, Jalan Cheras** (Cheras Road) [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister at the time, **Tun Abdul Razak**, personally visited the old Chan Sow Lin premises in 1968 and, on behalf of the government, contributed **RM70,000** towards the new temple's construction [b.cari.com.my](http://b.cari.com.my). Thanks to additional donations from the community (over **RM200,000** in total), the grand new Wong Loo Sen See Chee Choong Temple was completed. A consecration ceremony was held on **2 September 1968** to officially sanctify the temple [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). The following year, Finance Minister **Tun Tan Siew Sin** officiated the temple's public opening, underscoring the significance of this institution in the eyes of the nation's leaders [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my).

Today, the temple stands as one of Kuala Lumpur's oldest Chinese temples founded after Independence. It has been in continuous operation for over six decades (celebrating its 56th anniversary in 2016 with the opening of a new hall)b.cari.com.my. A small altar within the temple honors Master Liew Juin, the founding guru, for his role in establishing the sect's presence in Kuala Lumpur [cj.my](#). Throughout its history, Chee Tong Temple has stayed true to Wong Loo Sen See's teachings and maintained fraternal ties with sister temples around Malaysia and Singapore. Every year, temple officials from across these **Wong Loo Sen See** temples gather at the Kuala Lumpur temple for a reunion and seminar – for example, an annual **Chinese New Year** assembly to strengthen fellowship and moral guidance among the network of temples [cj.mycj.my](#).

**According to sect lore**, Wong Loo Sen See's mission was divinely ordained to spread a unified doctrine of virtue. Temple chronicles relate that the deity finally identified himself as the spirit of **Huang Shigong**, an ancient Taoist sage, sent by the Jade Emperor to establish the “Huang Lao Xian Shi” teachings in Southeast Asia [cztemple.weebly.com](#). In the late 1950s the deity directed followers to build the **first Huang Lao Xian Shi temple in Malacca**, considered a sacred Buddhist locale, before extending the movement to other states including Selangor (Kuala Lumpur) and Singapore [cztemple.weebly.com](#). The founding of the Kuala Lumpur temple in 1960 was thus seen as part of this divinely guided expansion. This rich spiritual history underpins the temple's identity and is often retold to devotees, emphasizing that Chee Tong Temple was established “*by imperial decree*” of Heaven to 救济善信 – save and aid the virtuous people [cztemple.weebly.com](#). Architectural and Cultural Features





*Front view of the Wong Loo Sen See Chee Choong Temple in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur, showing its traditional Chinese architectural style.* The Chee Tong Temple’s architecture reflects a blend of traditional Chinese temple design with local influences from the 1960s era of construction. The temple complex, situated along Jalan Cheras, greets visitors with a classic **pagoda-style entrance gate** and a broad front porch supported by red pillars. The roof is adorned with **green glazed tiles** and upturned eaves, evoking Southern Chinese temple aesthetics. At the ridge of the roof are ornamental **dragons and scroll-shaped** roof-ends, symbolically guarding the temple and warding off evil. The façade features octagonal bagua (eight trigram) motifs and Chinese calligraphy; the temple’s name “慈忠廟” (Ci Zhong Miao, meaning “Temple of Mercy and Loyalty”) is prominently displayed above the main doorway. This name encapsulates two of the core virtues – **Compassion** (慈) and **Loyalty** (忠) – upheld by the temple.

Inside, the temple’s main prayer hall is spacious and serenely decorated. The focal point is the **main altar**, which is set against an elaborate grotto-like backdrop sculpted to resemble mystical mountains and caves. The three principal deity statues are seated here in dramatic fashion, each larger-than-life and gilded in gold. Intricate carvings and murals depicting auspicious symbols (such as clouds, cranes, and peaches of longevity) embellish the interior walls, highlighting the temple’s cultural richness. The atmosphere is heavy with the fragrance of incense, and dozens of



wooden fortune plaques and red lanterns hang from the ceiling, attesting to prayers offered by devotees over the years. On the altar table in front of the deities, devotees place offerings of fruits, flowers, tea, and oil lamps in reverence.

Notably, **Chee Tong Temple's design and rituals consciously embody the unity of Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist elements**. This is a core tenet of the Wong Loo Sen See sect's identity [cj.my](http://cj.my). For example, one can see inscriptions of the **Ten Principles** of Wong Loo Sen See – Compassion, Loyalty, Trustworthiness, Righteousness, Propriety, Ethics, Chastity, Filial Piety, Honesty, and Virtue – displayed within the temple, reinforcing Confucian moral values [cj.my](http://cj.my). Simultaneously, objects like the **bagua mirrors** and **incense urns** reflect Taoist ritual culture, and the presence of Buddhist iconography (in the form of the Monkey God's imagery, who is linked to Buddhist lore) adds to the multi-faceted spiritual atmosphere. The temple's cultural features thus serve not only aesthetic purposes but also symbolize the amalgamation of the Three Teachings (三教合一) that the temple embraces [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my).

Though built in the late 1960s, the temple has been well maintained and periodically renovated. In 2016, a new hall was opened to commemorate the temple's 56th anniversary [b.cari.com.my](http://b.cari.com.my), providing additional space for gatherings and community events. The overall layout now includes the main deity hall, side halls for ancestral tablets and minor deities, administrative offices, and even a traditional medicine clinic (described later) within the temple grounds. Outside, there are large cast-iron incense burners for devotees to make offerings, as well as a small garden area with statues. At night or during festivals, the building is lit up with decorative lights and lanterns, creating a picturesque scene for worshippers and tourists alike. Indeed, the temple's “**majestic and solemn**” architecture and ever-burning incense have made it a local attraction; on weekends, many families visit not only to pray but also to admire the site and take photographs [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my).



## The Three Main Deities: Stories and Symbolism

At the heart of Chee Tong Temple's spiritual practice are its three **patron deities**, each deeply rooted in Chinese mythological or philosophical tradition. These deities are **Wong Loo Sen See**, **Chai Tin Dai Sing** (齊天大聖), and **Tai Siong Lou Guan** (太上老君). They are enshrined side by side on the main altar, representing the unity of Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist teachings, respectively [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). Devotees believe that by honoring all three, one can achieve a more complete blessing – encompassing moral virtue, spiritual enlightenment, and cosmic harmony. Below, we explore the detailed stories and symbolism of each of these deities:



*The gilded statues of the temple's three principal deities – (from left) **Tai Siong Lou Guan** (Taishang Laojun), **Chai Tin Dai Sing** (Great Sage Monkey God), and **Wong Loo Sen See** – on the main altar. Each deity has a distinct iconography and significance: the figures are depicted as robed elders or divine beings, and behind them is a sculpted landscape symbolizing their celestial realms. Incense sticks and offerings from devotees can be seen in the foreground, underscoring the active worship of these gods.*



## Wong Loo Sen See (Huang Lao Xian Shi) – The Immortal Master

**Wong Loo Sen See** (黃老仙師) is the central deity of the temple and the eponymous “**Immortal Master**” who inspired its founding. In the Chinese name, *Huang* (Wong) and *Lao* (Loo) evoke the **Yellow Emperor (Huangdi)** and **Laozi**, two sage-kings associated with wisdom, and *Xian Shi* (Sen See) means *immortal teacher*. Indeed, Wong Loo Sen See is revered as a benevolent teacher deity who emphasizes Confucian ethics and moral cultivation. Temple doctrine regards him as the guiding spirit behind the movement – a deity who descended to impart teachings for the betterment of society [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). In practice, he is considered the patron who watches over the temple’s faithful, answering prayers related to health, guidance, and moral dilemmas.

**Legends and story:** According to sect tradition, Wong Loo Sen See made his presence known through spirit-writing and trance mediums in the 20th century. As mentioned earlier, devotees believe that he is an incarnation of **Huang Shigong**, an ancient Taoist master sent by Heaven to establish this faith [cztemple.weebly.com](http://cztemple.weebly.com). One temple chronicle recounts that in **1937**, in a village in Negeri Sembilan, a young medium unexpectedly went into a trance and the divine presence of Wong Loo Sen See descended (known as “仙师下凡”, the Immortal Master coming to the human world) [cztemple.weebly.com](http://cztemple.weebly.com). Initially the deity spoke cryptically and only later, through sand-writing and planchette divination, revealed his identity and mission. He proclaimed a new “**Huang Lao Xian Shi Ci Jiao**” sect to help people through teachings and spiritual healing, without immediately disclosing his true origin [cztemple.weebly.com](http://cztemple.weebly.com). After persistent questioning by followers, the spirit finally divulged that he was the immortal **Huang Shigong**, acting on the Jade Emperor’s decree to spread the way of **Huang-Lao** (an ancient philosophy blending Taoist and Confucian ideas) for the salvation of mankind [cztemple.weebly.com](http://cztemple.weebly.com). This revelation gave tremendous authority to his teachings. Under his guidance, devotees established temples (the first being in Malacca in 1957) as centers to propagate Wong Loo Sen See’s doctrine [cztemple.weebly.com](http://cztemple.weebly.com).

**Symbolism and role:** Wong Loo Sen See symbolizes **virtue, wisdom, and benevolence**. In the triad of deities, he represents the **Confucian aspect**, often referred to as the “*Virtue Gate*” (德門) of the Three Teachings [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). The temple emphasizes that Wong Loo Sen See’s teachings “*converge the Tao, Buddhist, and Confucian truths*”, with him specifically championing Confucian ideals [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). The deity’s ten guiding principles (慈、忠、信、義、禮、倫、節、孝、廉、德) – encompassing **compassion, loyalty, trustworthiness, righteousness, propriety, ethics, chastity**

(**integrity**), **filial piety**, **honesty**, and **virtue** – are essentially a concise version of Confucian moral tenets [cj.my](http://cj.my). Devotees look to Wong Loo Sen See for moral guidance in their daily lives. In iconography, he is typically depicted as a sage-like figure, sometimes with a long beard and scholarly attire, holding a wooden tablet or scroll, signifying knowledge. At Chee Tong Temple, his statue sits alongside the other two, sometimes identified by the particular hand implements or inscriptions near him. Worshippers pray to Wong Loo Sen See for wisdom in decision-making, recovery from illnesses (often through his blessing of healing charms), and for harmony in the family – all concerns reflecting the Confucian values he upholds.

### **Chai Tin Dai Sing (Qi Tian Da Sheng) – The Monkey God**

**Chai Tin Dai Sing** (齊天大聖), literally “Great Sage Equal to Heaven,” is better known as the **Monkey God** – the deity form of **Sun Wukong** from the classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West*. This figure is one of the most beloved characters in Chinese folklore. In the novel, Sun Wukong is a magical monkey born from stone, who attains incredible powers, rebels against heaven, and later attains enlightenment by protecting the monk Tripitaka on a pilgrimage to India. Over time, Sun Wukong was deified by popular religion with the honorific *Qi Tian Da Sheng*, and many Chinese communities, especially in Southeast Asia, worship him as a **protector and trickster god**. At Chee Tong Temple, Chai Tin Dai Sing is one of the three main deities, representing the **Buddhist** facet of the triad [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). This may seem curious, since Sun Wukong is not a Buddha per se, but in the context of the sect he is sometimes referred to with a Buddhist title (in the Singapore temple, for instance, he is called *Da Sheng Fo Zu*, the “Great Sage Buddha”) [cztemple.weebly.com](http://cztemple.weebly.com). This reflects his role at the end of *Journey to the West*, where he is granted the title “Victorious Fighting Buddha.” In essence, the Monkey God signifies the **spirit of enlightenment through perseverance**, aligning with Buddhist ideals of overcoming obstacles on the path to truth.

**Legends and story:** The story of Sun Wukong is rich and well-known. As told in *Journey to the West* (16th century), Sun Wukong was born from a sacred rock and gained immortality through Taoist practices. He declared himself “*Equal to Heaven*” after challenging the heavenly hierarchy, which led to his imprisonment under a mountain by the Buddha. Five centuries later, he was released to accompany the monk Xuanzang (Tang Sanzang) on a quest to retrieve Buddhist sutras from India. Along the journey, Sun Wukong battled demons, protected his master, and gradually learned humility and compassion. His mischievous, fearless nature combined with eventual spiritual growth made him an archetype of **transformation from impetuous rebel to enlightened hero** [mythopedia.commythopedia.com](http://mythopedia.commythopedia.com). In Chinese folk faith, separate from the novel, Sun Wukong’s worship likely began in Fujian and



Guangdong provinces and spread among diaspora communities. By imperial decree of the Qing dynasty, temples were dedicated to the Great Sage in some regions [journeytothewestresearch.com](http://journeytothewestresearch.com). As a deity, he is often invoked for protection, justice, and swift help in crises – much as the Monkey King would swiftly come to the aid of Tripitaka.

**Symbolism and role:** In the context of Chee Tong Temple, Chai Tin Dai Sing symbolizes **courage, mischief tempered by righteousness, and spiritual conquest of evil**. He embodies the Buddhist concept of the “*Empty Gate*” (空門) among the Three Teachings – a poetic term referring to Buddhism, perhaps hinting at Sun Wukong’s journey toward emptiness (enlightenment) [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). Devotees pray to the Monkey God for protection against evil influences, for success in endeavors that require bravery, and for relief from misfortunes. Many see him as a patron for children (for his playful nature) and those who work in risky professions. In the temple’s iconography, the Monkey God is depicted wearing imperial golden armor and holding his famous **Ruyi Jingu Bang**, the magical staff that can expand or shrink at his command. He may also carry a banner or wear a phoenix-feather cap, as described in lore [mythopedia.com](http://mythopedia.com). His statue at Chee Tong Temple, seated alongside the other two deities, often draws the eye because of its dynamic posture – Sun Wukong is sometimes shown with a slightly more animated pose or a fierce facial expression, reflecting his energetic character. Worshippers might offer him bananas and peanuts (playfully acknowledging his monkey form) in addition to the usual incense and candles. The **Monkey God’s birthday** is an important occasion at the temple each year, celebrated with special prayers and possibly lion dance performances; in many Chinese communities this falls on the 16th day of the eighth lunar month (around September) [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org), though some observe it on the 15th/16th of the first lunar month [facebook.com](http://facebook.com) – devotees of Chee Tong Temple often mark the day with enthusiasm, thanking the Great Sage for past blessings.

### **Tai Siong Lou Guan (Taishang Laojun) – The Grand Supreme Elder Lord**

**Tai Siong Lou Guan** (often spelled *Tai Shang Lao Jun*, 太上老君) is the Taoist deity of the “**Grand Supreme Elderly Lord**,” identified with **Laozi (Lao-Tzu)**. Laozi, a 6th-century BCE philosopher traditionally credited with writing the *Tao Te Ching*, was later deified in religious Taoism as one of the highest gods. In fact, Taishang Laojun is revered as an incarnation of the **Dao** itself – one of the Three Pure Ones (Sanqing) in the Taoist celestial pantheon. At Chee Tong Temple, Tai Siong Lou Guan represents the **Taoist** stream of the Three-in-One faith, referred to as the “*Mysterious Gate*” (玄門) of Taoism [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). His presence completes the triad, symbolizing cosmic order, alchemy, and the wisdom of Daoist teachings integrated into the temple’s practice.

**Legends and story:** Laozi's life is semi-mythical. According to legend, he was born already an old man with white hair – hence the name “Old Master.” After imparting his wisdom in the Tao Te Ching, Laozi is said to have ridden off to the West on a water buffalo, transcending the mortal world. In Taoist religion, this human sage was apotheosized into Taishang Laojun, regarded as a divine embodiment of the Tao. Myths abound of Laojun's magical powers: he is depicted as an **ancient alchemist** who concocted the elixir of immortality and forged magical pills. In one popular tale (also referenced in Journey to the West), Lao Jun maintains the **Eight Trigram Furnace** – a cosmic oven used to refine pills of longevity; Sun Wukong was thrown into this furnace at one point and gained his fiery golden eyes as a result. Taishang Laojun is also credited with transmitting secret talismanic knowledge and saving the world from calamities by imparting Taoist rituals. Essentially, he is the wise old patriarch of the Taoist universe, often intervening in legends to restore balance.

**Symbolism and role:** Taishang Laojun symbolizes **wisdom of the Tao, immortality, and harmony with the cosmos**. In the temple's trio, he stands for the profound metaphysical teachings of Taoism – the pursuit of balance (*yin-yang*), longevity, and spiritual insight. Devotees may pray to Tai Siong Lou Guan for health (since Taoist tradition focuses on longevity and healing), for guidance in spiritual cultivation, or for help in resolving situations that require a bit of heavenly intervention or luck. As the **Grand Supreme Lord**, he is often considered the most **transcendent** of the three deities, and the temple priests might invoke him during complex rituals or the blessing of talismans. The statue of Taishang Laojun at Chee Tong Temple portrays him as a venerable, bearded old man, often holding a fan (a symbol of gentle authority) or the **philosopher's stone/elixir** pill. He may also carry a staff or be seated on a throne with a reclining deer at his feet (deer symbolize longevity). His expression is typically calm and benevolent. Lao Jun's birthday (traditionally observed on the 15th day of the second lunar month) is honored at the temple with Taoist ceremonies, where priests might chant scriptures from the Tao Te Ching and offer special incense in his name [www2.kenyon.edu](http://www2.kenyon.edu). Through Tai Siong Lou Guan, the temple and its followers connect to the ancient **Taoist heritage** and the pursuit of living in accordance with the Tao (道).

In summary, the three main deities of Chee Tong Temple each bring a rich tapestry of narrative and meaning: Wong Loo Sen See provides the moral foundation and compassionate guidance, the Monkey God adds dynamism, protection, and a reminder of spiritual journey, and Taishang Laojun offers wisdom and a link to the cosmic Dao. Together, they reflect the temple's philosophy of “**different paths, one unity**” – the idea that Confucian ethics, Buddhist devotion, and Taoist practices ultimately complement one another. This is vividly exemplified by the temple's



practice of enshrining all three in one altar, a physical testament to the unity of the Three Teachings in daily worship [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my).

## Role in the Local Community and Religious Practices

Chee Tong Temple is not just a site of worship; it is deeply embedded in the local community and plays a multifaceted role in the religious and social life of Kuala Lumpur's residents. From its early days, the temple has functioned as a **community center for moral education, mutual aid, and cultural continuity** for the Chinese Malaysian community (especially those of Hakka and Cantonese heritage who were among the early followers). Over the decades, its influence and services have extended beyond its founding community to benefit Malaysians of all backgrounds.

One of the most remarkable community services provided by the temple is its **voluntary medical clinic**. Housed in a modest wing of the temple complex, this clinic offers **traditional Chinese medicine (TCM)** treatments to the public at minimal cost. It has been in operation since the late 1990s, having been initiated by the temple's president (himself a practitioner of Chinese medicine) as a charitable endeavor [b.cari.com.my](http://b.cari.com.my). Every day, people of **all races and religions** can be seen queuing at the temple – not necessarily to pray, but to consult the Chinese *sinsehs* (physicians) and **acupuncturists** who volunteer there [b.cari.com.my](http://b.cari.com.my). The clinic is open daily in two sessions (morning and early afternoon) and treats around **30 patients per day** on average [b.cari.com.my](http://b.cari.com.my). Initially, all treatments were provided **free of charge** (supported by temple funds and donations); only in recent years has a nominal fee of RM5 been introduced to cover rising costs of herbs and medical supplies [b.cari.com.my](http://b.cari.com.my). This nearly-free clinic has become “*a norm to see people of different races*” coming to a Chinese temple for healing [b.cari.com.my](http://b.cari.com.my) – a beautiful example of interethnic unity. The practitioners not only heal bodies but also “spread the spirit of unity and inclusiveness” exemplified by leaders like Tun Razak, who himself supported the temple's founding [b.cari.com.my](http://b.cari.com.my). This service has greatly enhanced the temple's standing in the community, as many non-Chinese residents now associate the temple with compassionate healthcare and a welcoming spirit, rather than seeing it as an exclusive religious site.

Beyond medicine, Chee Tong Temple serves as a venue for **educational and cultural activities**. The temple committee regularly organizes talks, workshops, and classes to impart the values of Confucianism and Chinese culture to the younger generation. For instance, during the annual gathering of Wong Loo Sen See temple committees, guest speakers might give seminars on the *Analects* or discuss how to live by Wong Loo Sen See's Ten Principles in modern society [cj.mycj.my](http://cj.mycj.my). Locally, the temple has hosted Chinese calligraphy contests, moral storytelling sessions, and youth camps

focusing on ethics and leadership, drawing participation from families in the Cheras area. By functioning as a moral anchor, the temple helps reinforce community norms like filial piety and charity, which contributes to social cohesion in a rapidly urbanizing city.

Religiously, the temple is a hub for various **devotional practices and spiritual consultations**. Devotees come to perform typical Chinese folk religious practices such as drawing divination sticks (求籤) for guidance, casting oracle blocks (擲筊) to seek yes/no answers from the deities, and offering incense for blessings in business, exams, or personal matters. A unique aspect of the Wong Loo Sen See sect is the use of **spirit-writing and talismans** for consultation (detailed more in the next section). At Chee Tong Temple, experienced **spirit mediums** (known as *dangkior fa shi*) may enter trance during special sessions to let the deities write out answers or prescribe cures. The temple thus offers an avenue for those facing spiritual disturbances or health problems to seek divine counsel. Historically, as noted, early followers were attracted by the ability of Wong Loo Sen See's mediums to **“write charms to cure illnesses”** and perform martial feats under trance [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). That tradition continues in a tempered form – today, one might request a blessed **talismanic paper** (符) from the temple, which a priest will write and empower through prayer, to take home for protection or healing.

Community outreach and charity are also part of the temple's role. Aside from the clinic, the temple occasionally organizes **donation drives and welfare activities**. During times of need (for example, flood relief or helping the underprivileged), the temple committee and devotees raise funds and distribute aid, seeing this as living out Wong Loo Sen See's compassionate teachings. The temple's openness to all has been praised in media; even local Muslim and Indian residents feel comfortable visiting during public events or to accompany friends to the clinic [b.cari.com.my](http://b.cari.com.my). This interfaith goodwill is an important aspect of Malaysian society, and Chee Tong Temple contributes by being a model of tolerance and service.

Importantly, the temple maintains a close-knit **fellowship with sister temples** in the region. As part of the Wong Loo Sen See network, it regularly engages in inter-temple visits and joint celebrations. This creates a broader community of believers that extends beyond Kuala Lumpur. The annual **“reunion”** of temple officials mentioned earlier is hosted by Chee Tong Temple every Chinese New Year, reinforcing bonds with temples from other states and Singapore [cj.my](http://cj.my). Such events also allow the exchange of ideas to improve community services and religious knowledge across the board. Locally, the temple is a member of the Kuala Lumpur Chinese Religious Federation and participates in citywide religious events, ensuring





that the voice of traditional Chinese faith is represented in dialogues about cultural heritage preservation.

In summary, Chee Tong Temple's role in the community is **multidimensional**: it is a place of worship and spiritual solace, a charitable clinic, a cultural school, and a social glue for the neighborhood. It stands as a testament to how a religious institution can adapt to contemporary needs – providing not just for the soul, but also for the body and the society – all while staying true to its founding spirit of “*moral life and fellowship*” [cj.my](http://cj.my). By upholding the *Ten Virtues* in daily operations and welcoming all who seek help, the temple has made itself an indispensable part of local life in Kuala Lumpur

## Annual Festivals and Special Rituals

The ritual calendar at Chee Tong Temple is filled with **vibrant festivals and ceremonies** that reflect its triple religious heritage. Throughout the year, the temple hosts celebrations for major Chinese festivals as well as observances specific to its patron deities. These events not only reinforce the faith of devotees but also attract visitors and tourists, adding to the cultural tapestry of Kuala Lumpur. Below are some of the key annual festivals and special rituals held at the temple:

- **Chinese New Year (Spring Festival):** As with most Chinese temples, Lunar New Year is the biggest occasion of the year. The temple is thoroughly cleaned and decorated with red lanterns, auspicious couplets, and floral displays in the

weeks leading up to the New Year. On New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, devotees flock to Chee Tong Temple to offer incense and prayers for a prosperous year ahead. The air is thick with the smoke of incense coils hung high, and the sound of firecrackers (where allowed) and drum beats from **lion dance** troupes fill the compound. It is believed to be especially auspicious to be the first to offer incense at the stroke of midnight on New Year's, so some devotees queue hours in advance. The temple's **Confucian influence** is seen on New Year's morning when many families come to pay respects as a unit, emphasizing family harmony and filial piety in their prayers. The leadership of the temple often holds an **open house**, distributing mandarin oranges and sweet rice cakes to visitors as blessings. Chinese New Year is also when the **annual reunion of Wong Loo Sen See temples' committees** takes place at the KL temple (usually on a designated day of the New Year period), turning the event into both a religious celebration and a fraternal gathering with special banquets and exchange of New Year greetings among representative [scj.my](http://scj.my).

- **Wong Loo Sen See's Anniversary:** Although Wong Loo Sen See is not a historical figure with a recorded birthday like Confucius (who is celebrated on the 27th of the 8th lunar month in Confucian circles [chinatownology.com](http://chinatownology.com)), the temple commemorates key dates related to this deity. One such date is the **temple foundation day**, celebrated around early September to mark the **consecration of the temple on 2 September 1968**. Each year around this time, a **thanksgiving ceremony** is held where disciples express gratitude to the Immortal Master for his guidance. There may be special chanting of the *Jade Emperor scripture* and the *Huang Lao Xian Shi Dao Li Shu* (the "Book of Reasons" attributed to Wong Loo Sen See). Devotees offer **longevity noodles and buns** to the deity, symbolically wishing for the enduring presence of his teachings. Another important ritual is the **"descending of the Immortal Masters" ceremony** (众仙师下凡膜拜仪式), occasionally held at the temple: in this event, usually on a spiritually significant date, spirit mediums simultaneously channel messages from Wong Loo Sen See and possibly allied deities, while devotees kneel in respect. Such ceremonies, noted in recent years, draw large crowds and are meant to reinforce the faithful's connection with the deity's wisdom in a direct, experiential way (often leaving participants feeling blessed or healed).
- **Monkey God Festival:** The **Birthday of the Monkey God** is enthusiastically celebrated at Chee Tong Temple. As noted, different communities fix this on different dates – commonly **the 16th day of the 8th lunar month**(which often falls in September) [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org), while some observe it on the **16th of the First Lunar Month**(just after Chinese New Year) [facebook.com](http://facebook.com). The temple

sometimes acknowledges **both** dates with some observance, but the bigger event tends to be the one in the eighth month, aligning with the wider practice in Hong Kong and certain Malaysian Chinese communities. On Monkey God Festival day, the temple might organize **theatrical performances or puppet shows** retelling episodes of Sun Wukong’s story (especially popular with children). Devotees offer bananas, peaches, and sweets – the Monkey King’s favorite treats – at his altar. A unique sight is devotees who engage in **Heng Tai** rituals, where some medium devotees mimic the Monkey God’s behavior (such as performing acrobatics or playful antics) under trance to entertain and bless the crowd. In some years, lion dance troupes perform the “Monkey God blessing” act, where a performer dressed as Sun Wukong interacts humorously with the lions and the audience. These festivities highlight the joyful and mischievous aspect of worship, reminding everyone that spirituality can be filled with laughter and liveliness.

- **Taishang Laojun’s Birthday:** Falling on the **15th day of the 2nd lunar month**, the birthday of **Tai Siong Lou Guan (Laozi)** is observed with more solemn Taoist rituals [www2.kenyon.edu](http://www2.kenyon.edu). On this day, the temple invites Taoist priests (Daoshi) or uses its own ritual specialists to conduct a **Laojun ceremony**, which may include the chanting of the **Daodejing (Tao Te Ching)** and the offering of three cups of tea and fruits to the deity. Devotees often burn incense and pray for longevity and wisdom. A special item used could be the **Eight Immortals offering** – eight symbolic fruits or delicacies – presented to honor Laojun’s status among the divine immortals. The atmosphere is quieter compared to the Monkey God festival; one might hear the rhythmic clanging of a bell and the wooden fish *mokugyo* as priests recite liturgies. Some followers observe a partial fast or eat vegetarian on this day in line with Taoist purification practices.
- **Vesak Day and Other Buddhist Observances:** Although Chee Tong Temple is not a mainstream Buddhist temple, its inclusion of a Buddhist-aligned deity (the Monkey God, who attained buddhahood) means it sometimes joins in broader Buddhist celebrations. On **Wesak Day** (the full moon of May, celebrating Buddha’s birth, enlightenment, and passing), representatives from the temple may participate in citywide events like candlelight processions or offerings at Buddhist temples. Within Chee Tong Temple, they might set up a small image of the Buddha on Wesak and allow devotees to perform “**bathing the Buddha**” rite, as a sign of respect to the Buddhist tradition. Likewise, during the **Hungry Ghost Month** (7th lunar month), the temple holds a **ghost-cleansing prayer** – chanting sutras to soothe roaming spirits and offering



paper money for their benefit, which aligns with general Chinese folk religious practice.

- **Confucius' Birthday/Teachers' Day:** Given the Confucian underpinnings of Wong Loo Sen See's teachings, the temple may commemorate **Confucius's birthday** (27th of 8th lunar month) in a modest way [chinatownology.com](http://chinatownology.com). This could involve the temple's educational arm holding a ceremony where teachers and students (from any cultural classes the temple runs) pay homage to Confucius and to Wong Loo Sen See as a great teacher. Incense is offered in front of a Confucius plaque or portrait if available, and there may be recitals of the *Dizigui* (Standards for Students) or Confucian classics by youth, reaffirming the temple's role in moral education.

Apart from annual festivals, **special rituals** are held for devotees on request or during significant life events. One such practice is the **thanksgiving rite** (還願) when a devotee who had a prayer answered comes to fulfill a vow – they might offer a roasted pig or organize a small lion dance performance in the courtyard to express gratitude to the deities. The temple also performs **cleansing rituals** for new homes or businesses: priests can be dispatched to carry the incense of Wong Loo Sen See to bless a premise. Another notable event is the periodic **Renewal of the Deities' golden bodies** – as mentioned in temple news, before Lunar New Year the statues of the Three Great Deities are carefully refurbished with fresh gold foil by dedicated craftsmen (often volunteers), in a pious act to refresh and honor the divine images [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/cheetongtemple). This ritual involves chanting and is supported by devotees' donations of gold leaf, showing communal reverence in maintaining the temple icons.

Every ritual and festival at Chee Tong Temple is suffused with meaning and community participation. The temple's calendar thus not only marks time spiritually but also reinforces the bonds between devotees. Importantly, many of these events incorporate the **ritual of writing and burning petitions or talismans**, which is a distinctive practice of the temple – we turn to an explanation of that ritual next.



## The Ritual of Writing and Burning

One of the hallmark practices in Chinese folk religion, and particularly at Chee Tong Temple, is the **ritual of writing and burning** certain papers as a form of spiritual communication or healing. This practice can take several forms – from writing petitions to the deities and burning them as an offering, to inscribing talismans (符紙) that are burned to activate their power. The ritual is rooted in the belief that **paper** can serve as a vehicle for human intentions or divine power, and that **fire** and **smoke** carry these messages or energies into the spiritual realm. Here we explain the significance of this ritual, when it is typically performed, and how it is practiced at the temple.

**Significance:** In Chinese tradition, writing something down gives it form, and burning it **releases** it to the spiritual world. This is symbolically akin to sending a letter: the written words are “delivered” via the smoke rising to the heavens or the spirit world. At Chee Tong Temple, the act of writing and burning is often an expression of **sincerity and trust in the deities**. By putting one’s wishes, problems, or gratitude onto paper and consigning it to fire, devotees demonstrate that they entrust the outcome to higher powers. The ritual is also seen as a way to **transform** and **purify**. For example, burning a petition can mean transmuting worry or negativity on paper into hope and blessings via the flame. In cases of talismanic

healing, burning a charm and mixing the ashes in water for a sick person to drink is believed to transfer the deity's healing essence into the patient – a profound act of faith where physical paper becomes spiritual medicine.

**Typical occasions:** The writing-and-burning ritual is performed in several contexts:

- **Petitioning Deities:** When devotees have a specific prayer – such as seeking recovery from illness, success in an examination, or harmony in the family – they may use **prayer papers** provided by the temple. These are often yellow or red sheets, sometimes with printed templates. The person writes down their name, date of birth, address, and their wishes or problems. Such petitions are especially common during major festivals (New Year, deity birthdays) or before big personal events (like starting a new job or a wedding). After writing, they bow in front of the altar and then burn the paper in a large **incense burner** or a designated urn, thus “submitting” their request to the deity's attention. It's believed that doing this on the deity's feast day or at an auspicious time yields a better chance that the prayer is heard. Temple volunteers often assist those unfamiliar with the process, ensuring the correct details are filled in (so the deities know who is asking!) [javewutaoismplace.blogspot.com](http://javewutaoismplace.blogspot.com). The burning of these petitions typically follows after devotees have made offerings and incanted their prayers, acting as the **final act of the worship ceremony** – much like how joss paper offerings are the last step in Chinese worship rites [nationsonline.org](http://nationsonline.org).
- **Release of Grievances or Sins:** Sometimes the writing is not a request but a release. A person troubled by guilt, bad luck, or emotional burdens may write down their misfortunes or wrongdoings on paper and burn it as a way of **letting go**. The temple, with its Confucian ethos of self-improvement and Buddhist influence of compassion, encourages people to repent misdeeds and symbolically burn away their past mistakes. This can be done during Hungry Ghost Month to burn away bad luck, or at year's end to “start fresh” for the new year (similar to a Western New Year resolution-burning ritual). The burnt paper in this case represents the removal of negative attachments, freeing the devotee's heart.
- **Healing and Exorcism Talismans:** A signature practice of Wong Loo Sen See's sect is the use of **written charms for healing** [metro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.my). In a healing ritual, a temple medium or priest, purportedly guided by the deity, will write a complex **talismanic diagram or script** (often in red or black ink on yellow paper). This is done while reciting prayers and in a meditative state. The content might be an abstract pattern said to carry divine power, along with



the patient's name and the specific wish (e.g. "cure of ailments" or "dispel evil spirit"). Once completed, the talisman paper is burned in a bowl. Sometimes the ashes are collected into a cup of water for the sick person to drink – this is believed to internalize the deity's blessing to cleanse the illness. In other cases, the paper might be burned over a stove and the smoke allowed to waft around the person or the space, as a form of **spiritual fumigation** driving away bad influences. Such rituals are done on occasions of serious illness, spirit possession, or after frightening incidents (for example, to help a child recover from a scare, known as 收惊, where a brief petition with the child's name might be burnt to call back their yang energy). These practices harken back to ancient Chinese shamanistic medicine and are part of the temple's living heritage. Many older devotees will recount stories of how a **burning of a divinely-written charm** cured them or protected their home in difficult times, reinforcing faith in the temple's deities.

**How it is practiced:** The mechanics of the ritual at Chee Tong Temple are quite structured yet accessible. The temple provides the necessary materials – typically stacks of **joss paper** or specially printed **petition forms** and pens/brushes. On any given day, one can see a small desk or writing area in a corner of the main hall where devotees can quietly compose their petitions. Often, a red urn or a large brazier stands nearby specifically for burning these papers (separate from the main incense burner). Devotees usually follow a sequence like this: first, they **pray and make offerings** at the altar, informing the deities of their intent. Next, they proceed to write their petition or request. **Personal data is filled in**– such as name, address, and date – because, symbolically, it acts like a spiritual memo addressed from the specific individual [javewutaoismplace.blogspot.com](http://javewutaoismplace.blogspot.com). The content of the request is written clearly and sincerely. In cases of templates, there might be blanks to fill; some papers even have phrases like "I, humble devotee [name], born on [date], now respectfully petition..." to guide the writer. This ensures uniformity and that important details are not missed.

Once written, the devotee double-checks it and then proceeds to the burner. In a respectful manner (often bowing three times), they light the paper with a candle or incense and let it **burn completely in the urn**. It is considered important not to crumple or carelessly toss the paper in; instead, one should allow it to catch fire and place it gently, as if sending off a valued letter [nationsonline.org](http://nationsonline.org). While the paper burns, many will clasp their palms and silently repeat their prayer, visualizing their words ascending with the smoke. This moment can be quite emotional, as the person is essentially **entrusting their hopes or troubles to the divine**. After it is burnt, a few more bows conclude the ritual, and the devotee should have faith that the gods have received their message.

The temple clergy or volunteers sometimes assist or perform the burning on behalf of others – for instance, during busy festival days, one might hand their written petition to an attendant monk/medium who chants over it and burns it amidst a larger ceremony. In communal rituals (like at year-end mass prayer), all petitions might be collected in a big urn and burnt together as priests chant, signifying collective offering of prayers to Heaven.

It's worth noting that **joss paper money** (spirit money) is also burnt at the temple, particularly during Ghost Festival or year-end rites, to send prosperity to ancestors or deities [nationsonline.org](http://nationsonline.org) [nationsonline.org](http://nationsonline.org). While this is a more general offering (not a written message, but symbolic currency), it follows the same principle of **fire as a bridge** between worlds. Devotees often combine both: burning a written prayer for themselves and some joss “currency” for the gods or spirits to thank them.

In essence, the ritual of writing and burning at Chee Tong Temple represents a profound **interaction between the human and spiritual**. It externalizes the devotee's innermost wishes onto paper and then uses the transformative power of fire to convey those wishes to the unseen realm. The **occasions** for this ritual range from joyous (making wishes during New Year, sending thanks after a success) to somber (pleading for healing, releasing grief at a funeral). In all cases, it is practiced with humility and earnestness. As a temple adviser once explained, one should not misuse these papers out of greed or frivolity – “*burn one set each time, sincerely paying your respects to Heaven and the Deities... not greedily making requests*” [javewutaoismplace.blogspot.com](http://javewutaoismplace.blogspot.com) [javewutaoismplace.blogspot.com](http://javewutaoismplace.blogspot.com). The efficacy of the ritual, believers hold, depends on the *sincerity* (诚) of the person's intent.

Through such practices, Chee Tong Temple keeps alive an ancient spiritual technology of China – one that turns **written words into prayers and flames into messengers**. Whether it is a small child drawing a picture for the Monkey God and watching it burn, or an old devotee writing the names of her family for Wong Loo Sen See's blessing, the ritual offers comfort that their concerns have been handed over to a higher power. It is a poignant reminder of the faith that links the seen and unseen worlds in the daily life of this Kuala Lumpur temple.

### Sources:

- Thomas Tan, *Citizens Journal Malaysia* – “Officials gathering at Wong Loo Sen See Chee Choong, KL” (Feb 2012) [cj.mycj.my](http://cj.mycj.my).
- *Sin Chew Daily* (星洲日報) – “隆黄老仙师慈忠庙香火盛” (June 2024) [metro.sinchew.com.mymetro.sinchew.com.my](http://metro.sinchew.com.mymetro.sinchew.com.my).

- Beh Yuen Hui, *The Star* – “Multi-ethnic patients seek Chinese traditional healing” (Sept 2016) [b.cari.com.my](http://b.cari.com.my/b.cari.com.my).
- *Ci Zhong Tan* (Chee Tong Temple SG) – Historical Background (weebly site) [cztemple.weebly.com](http://cztemple.weebly.com).
- Jave Wu, *Taoist Cultural Collegium Blog* – “Using of Gui Ren Paper (百解貴人紙)” (Aug 2008) [javewutaoismplace.blogspot.com](http://javewutaoismplace.blogspot.com).
- Nations Online – “Joss Paper – Chinese Customs” [nationsonline.org](http://nationsonline.org) (on burning paper in worship).