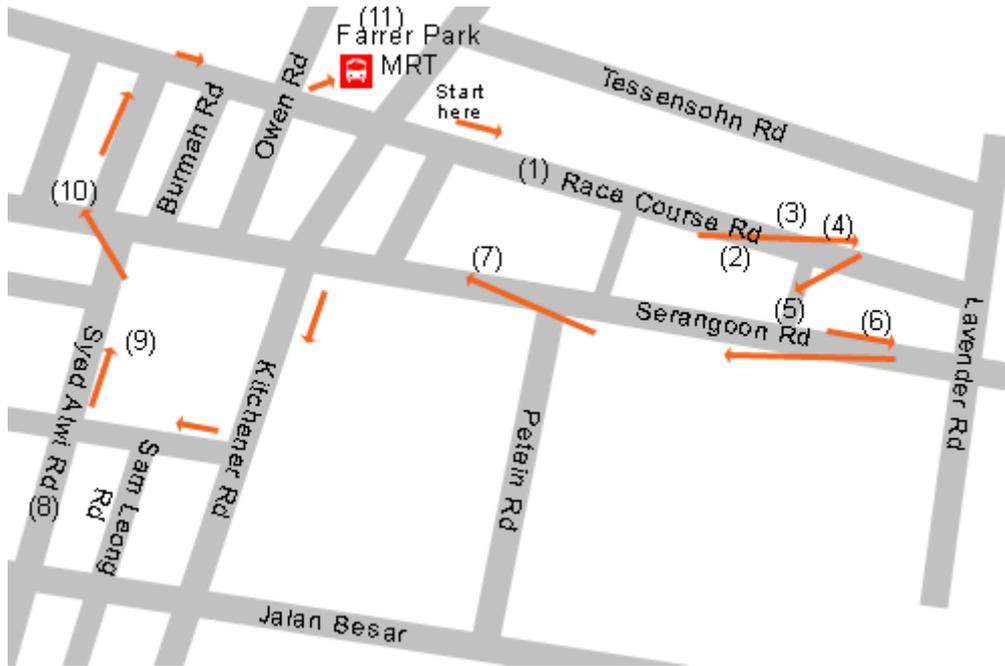


# Little India Walkabout 2

(by [www.myonlinetour.com](http://www.myonlinetour.com))



Exit out at Exit B of Farrer Park MRT station and you will come to **Race Course Road (1)**. It was named after the former race course where Farrer Park is now situated.

Down the road, you will be greeted by a pair of huge lions at the door of the **Sakya Muni Buddha Gaya Temple (2)**. The lions guarding the entrance of the Temple to ward away evil. Vutthisasara, a monk from Thailand, founded the temple in 1927. One of the most magnificent structures within is a giant Buddha statue standing at a height of 15 metres and weighing 300 tons, surrounded by 989 lightbulbs are switched on every time a donation is made. Look out for information cards at the premise which provide more details on the temple. At the base of the statue, you will find the diorama of the life of Buddha. A chamber at the back of the statue, you will find a relining Buddha. Also in the main hall is a 'Wheel of Fortune', visitors are welcome to take a spin and get their fortunes read for less than a dollar. Venerale Vutthisasara added a variety of interesting relics and artifacts to the temple. They included a piece of bark from the original Bodhi tree under which Buddha gained Enlightenment. The temple is open daily from 8am to 4.45pm.

[ The temple is popularly known as "The Temple of \_\_\_\_\_" ]

**Leong San Buddhist Temple (3)** or Dragon Mountain Temple is dedicated to Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy. In 1913, a Reverend Chuan Wu came to Singapore with a mission. Bearing only a statue of Kwan Yin and an urn, he set about establishing a lodge for treating the sick. By 1926, the humble lodge that consisted of only a few huts had grown into an elaborate temple, known to locals as Leong San See. You can also find an alter with the image of Confucius to which many parents bring their children to pray for intelligence and filial piety. Walking through the side doors of the prayer hall, you will be led to the ancestral hall at the back where you see, all the way to the ceiling, the ancestral tablets. On religious days, free vegetarian food is served to devotees in this hall. The compound of the temple was used as a school, providing free tuition for the children living in the surrounding attap houses. In 1954, Venerable Sek Kong Hiap, who was overseeing the administration of the temple, raised funds to build Mee Toh School, on the adjacent site. Look out for information cards at the premise which provide more details on the temple.

[ Who started the Leong San School within the temple grounds to provide education to the children living around the neighbourhood? ]

After Leong San School is started within the grounds of Leong San Buddhist Temple, classes proved popular and soon became overcrowded. The plot of land adjacent to Leong San Buddhist Temple was to have been the site of a new temple, Mee Toh Temple. But, convinced of the importance of education in a child's social and moral development, Venerable Sek Kong Hiap decided that a new school be built to replace the Leong San School. The school was renamed **Mee Toh School (4)**. The temple managed the school until 1957, when it became a government-aided school. The school remains closely linked to the temple today; a side gate connects both compounds, the school children are often seen sneaking into the temple to say a little prayer before class.

[ What is the meaning of Mee Toh? ]



Leong San Temple/Mee Toh School

# Little India Walkabout 2

(by [www.myonlinetour.com](http://www.myonlinetour.com))

Next you will find an arch with the Chinese characters “Leong San See”, the Chinese name of the temple. Erected about 84 years ago together with the temple, the arch is known as “**Mountain Gate**” (5) – common feature of Chinese temples, situated in the mountains of China.

[ Take a photo of Mountain Gate. ]

**Sri Vadapathira Kaliamman Temple** (6) is attributed to the Hindu goddess *Kali*.



First established in 1870 in a small hut by Hindus living in the around Potong Pasir and led by some *chettians* (Indian money lenders). This temple is also a stop for the annual Silver Chariot Procession from Chinatown to Little India, held on the day of the Fire Walking Festival/Thimithi Festival. Look for the *vimanas*, which house the deities of the temple. This temple was known to possess “great powers” as it was popularly believed to grant the wishes of worshippers.

**Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple** (7) was built in 1855 and has been gazetted as National Monument. This Temple is attributed to the Hindu deity Sri Srinivasa Perumal. An impressive Rajagopuram or tower covered in figurative sculptures is visible from afar to allow worshippers to pray without having to travel to the Temple. The entrance gopurum was added in the 1960s. At the temple door, devotees ask the gods to grant their request by ringing the bells. On the left of the prayer courtyard is the chariot that ceremoniously carries the deities, and on the right is a *thulasi* plant, an auspicious symbol of faith and womanhood, which women encircle and pray to. A special feature of this Temple is the marriage hall constructed in the 1960s. The hall has since been a favourite setting for elaborate Hindu weddings.

The main festival celebrated at this Temple is Thaipusam held in the Hindu month of Thai in late January each year. It is open from 6.30 am to noon and again from 6 pm to 9 pm daily. Note that women who are undergoing the monthly cycle must not enter the temple.

**Syed Alwi Road** (8), Syed Sharif Omar Aljunied, a young prince and descendant of Prophet Mohammed, uprooted his family in Palembang and move to Temasek (Singapore) in 1819. He was welcomed by Thomas Stamford Raffles because the Arab had established himself as a businessman as well as an important leader of the Arab community in the East. His trading business in Singapore was a success. Just as his business flourished, the charitable side of Mr Syed Omar also became known and much appreciated. After Mr Syed Omar's death, Mr Syed Abdullah, one of his sons, and Mr Syed Ali, a cousin, carried on the family's work of accumulating and sharing wealth.

One of Mr Syed Ali's earliest contributions was the building of four community wells at his own expense. He also donated land in Victoria Street and Arab Street for the Tan Tock Seng Hospital, which was later resited to Moulmein Rd. Mr Syed Alwi Ali Aljunied, was also a philanthropist. He is best known for filling in a swamp purchased by his father Mr Ali Mohammed Aljunied – land that would become Weld Road and Jalan Besar. Three bridges in the area were also built at his expense.

**Mustafa Centre** (9) is city's only 24-hour shopping complex and is a must-visit for any bargain-hunter. There are computer games, clothing, jewellery, cameras, etc. The first shop was established in 1971 in Campbell Lane in Little India, selling ready made garments. Today, customers can get almost anything from over 75,000 items displayed on four levels covering an area of 70,000 sq. ft. within the six story building which houses a hotel with 130 furnished rooms.

**Angullia Mosque** (10) is an Indian Muslim mosque. Records show that in 1890, the land on which the mosque stands was conveyed to Mohammed Salleh Eussoof Angullia, a Gujerati Sunni Muslim trader from Rander, north of Bombay (now known as Mumbai), and that the mosque itself was constructed before 1898. However, it is also thought that a mosque belonging to the Bombay Muslim community, akin to the Gujerati Sunni Muslims, existed here before the Angullias arrived.

Eussoof came to Singapore to help extend his family's trading network, which would eventually cover Southeast Asia, Mauritius and South Africa. Armed with goods and spices, Eussoof quickly became a prominent figure in the North Indian community and remained so until his death in 1904. The Angullia family continues to be the trustee of Angullia Mosque, acting as custodian of the mosque for the Indian Muslim community.

[ In which year did Eussoof came to Singapore? ]

Back at **Farrer Park MRT** (11), look out for artworks by Poh Siew Wah. Rhythmic Exuberance artwork juxtaposes the figurative and abstract forms to convey the grade of movement and the thrill of sporting action. Farrer park's former role as a sporting centre is depicted through images of various sports from dance to athletics and from soccer to swimming.

Others:- Witness Hindu devotees breaking coconuts at the temple entrance, a ritual signifying the breaking of one's ego before entering temple grounds. You may come across the following words: *Pottu* is a mark worn on the forehead by Indian women, a symbol of Hinduism and marriage; *Kurta* is a long-sleeved embroidered shirt; *Shiva* is the Destroyer in the Hindu Trinity; *Vada* is a savoury lentil doughnut; *Teh-tarik* is a hand-pulled tea so as to aerate for flavour; *Teh-halia* is ginger tea; *Samosa* is a triangular snack filled with potatoes.