

# [Traditional bc) (china internet information centre, 2017) spring](https://assignbuster.com/traditional-bc-china-internet-information-centre-2017-spring/)

TRADITIONAL CHINESEFESTIVALSHabibe Gök168297103Translation and Cultural StudiesInstitute of Social SciencesGazi University        Chinese Culture Submitted To: Assoc. Prof.

Dr. Giray Fidan         January, 10, 2018   CHINESE TRADITIONAL FESTIVALSChina was founded on a vastland has a long history dates back to centuries Before Christ. From the past topresent, a lot of festivals have accumulated in China. Chinese festivalsconstitute an essential part of Chinese culture and they are rich in historyand activities to do during celebrations of them. Chinese festivals have begunto be formed during the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC). They were mostly related toreligious beliefs and legends at that time.

However, after Qin Dynasty and HanDynasty (206 BC-AD 220), when the most of the festivals evolvedand time and the way of celebrations were determined, traditional festivalsstarted to be independent from most of religious beliefs and myths or legends duringTang Dynasty (AD 618-907) exceptfor the rituals which are left behind as remains of religious beliefs and areobserved by people as part of Chinese culture. Chinese festivals are oftencelebrated according to lunar calendar which is divided into 24 seasonalpoints. This calendar is the main determiner in deciding when the accurate timeof the festivals to celebrate them. Moreover, lunar calendar indicate seasonsand guide farmers for agricultural activities. This calendar was invented in Warring States Period (475 BC-221BC) (China Internet Information Centre, 2017)SPRINGFESTIVAL (Chunjie)The history of this nationwide celebrated festivalgoes back to the Reign of Han Wudi (141–87 BC). It is accepted as the beginningof the New Year and celebrated by especially the Han and other ethnicities.

Theimportance of Chunjie is appreciated by all people from children to elders bydoing activities before the eve and during 16 days when the festival hascelebrated. The time changes every year, but it generally occurs betweenJanuary 21 and February 19 which coincides with the first day of the firstmonth in the lunar year. In Chinese zodiac, each year is connected with ananimal sign.

Chinese acknowledge that a year begin and end with this festivalinstead of January 1, so the year is called as Chinese New Year (Fang, H., 2015, p. 1). Before the festival, people do some activities toprepare themselves for the atmosphere of the festival and all members of aChinese family get involved in these activities. Each activity carries aspecial meaning according to traditional Chinese beliefs. These activitiesconsist of spring cleaning of buildings and homes, shopping, cookingtraditional foods which are unique to the spring festival, decorating thehouses, buildings and streets with special posters and red items such as redlanterns and couplets.

Since the colour of red is thought as lucky colour inChinese culture, everywhere is decorated by hanging red lanterns and otheritems, even children carry red lanterns while walking on streets before and duringthe Spring Festival. People clean everywhere to get rid of the remains and sadmemories of the past year and welcome the New Year with a fresh beginning. Thecontents of posters comprises of good wishes and fortune or blessings againstevils and some heroic characters from Chinese legends to protect themselves andtheir beloved ones. Huawen Fang gave example of “ a child carrying gold ingotsor riding on the back of a big carp” for the poster wishing fortune (2015, p. 1).

For the reason that all shops are closed during the festival, as their ownersand workers go to their hometowns to reunite with their family to celebrate thefestival, people have to storage food before the festival to cook traditionalfood on the first day. This “ reunion dinner” is eaten around round tables andall generations of a family gather and enjoy it. There are some foods such asdumplings, fish and spring rolls which mean lucky in Chinese language mustexist in dinner.

People do not sleep until the first lights of the first dayand watch the traditional New Year show on television, which is a custom.  In some cities, people can enjoy traditionalChinese performances such as lion and dragon dances. Furthermore, Chineseexchange gifts are packaged by red papers, but it is commonly accepted thatelder people give the red envelopes including money to children and onlyemployers can deliver these red envelopes to their workers among adults (Fang, H., 2015, p. 2).  LANTERN FESTIVAL On the 15th day of the firstmonth in Chinese lunar calendar, the Lantern Festival is celebrated by Chinese, which is usually between February 5 and March 7 in Gregorian calendar. At thesame time, it is the last day of Chunjie (Spring Festival).

The other name ofit is “ the small new year”. Besides being the 15th day of the firstmonth, this day is the first full moon day and symbolizes wholeness of family. Although the festival isfull of activities, lanterns have the greatest part of it. Red lanterns arehanged around buildings and streets, while people carry lanterns in variousshapes and designs called by traditional names like “ Nezha on the Sea”, “ TheMonkey King”, “ The Pig”, and “ The Friar” (Fang, H., 2015, p.

4). Huawen Fang (2015) stated that “‘ Lantern play’ on the Lantern Festival is acustom passed down from the Tang Dynasty. On this day, people will take to thestreets as soon as it is dark, with all lanterns coming together to make a Milky Way on land.” (p. 4).

Sinceanother activity of this festival, solving lantern riddles can be enjoyed byChinese (Huawen, F., 2015, p. 5). The major food item for the Lantern Festival is yuanxiao, or tangyuan. Itis made of sticky rice, in the form of balls containing fillings. Yuanxiao hasfew variations in the north and south, usually containing such fillings asblack sesame, sugar, haw, etc. But in the south people are also fond of meatfillings.

Nowadays the contents of yuanxiao are getting richer, with a greatervariety of fillings to cater for different tastes (Huawen, 2015, p. 5)      QINGMING FESTIVAL         Qingming festival, or inother names as “ Tomb Sweeping Day” and “ Pure Brightness” generally celebratedon 4th or 5th April. The celebration time of it coincideswith the second point of 24 seasonal points in Chinese calendar. It is timeboth to commemorate the ancients of people by visiting and cleaning their tomband to go outside to appreciate the coming of spring by flying kites.

Thus, itis thought as harmony of sadness and happiness.        People visit graves of theirancestors and relatives to show their respect to them, serve cold food, andclean their tombs to honour their souls. Because of the reason that burning fireon this day and following three days, they have to cook their meals beforethese days or prepare cold foods to eat and serve to their ancestors. Thesefollowing days are named as Hanshi (Cold Food) Festival. Flying kites is notunique to this festival, but the difference is flying them all day and nightduring the festival. During this festival, Chinese hang willow branches ondoors to protect themselves from ghosts and bad souls (Huawen, 2015, p.

6). DRAGONBOAT FESTIVAL (DUANWU) Dragon Boat Festival also calledas Duanwu which means double fifth, since it is   celebrated on the fifth day of fifth monthof Chinese lunar calendar. Hence, a lot of activities are related to “ five” aredone during this festival such as wowing five threads and hanging them onchildren’s neck to protect them from evil, and five kinds of plants are placedon doors or kept in rooms against bad souls.

Additionally, five foods anddrinks related with “ yellow” in Chinese name like cucumber, yellow croakers, yellow wine and yolks of salted duck eggs are consumed by people (Huawen, 2015, p. 7). The history of this festival is based on a legend. Itis believed that this day is celebrated in honour of Qu Yuan (about 340BC–about 278 BC), a patriotic poet of the ancient Chu State, present-day Hunanand Hubei provinces.

Qu drowned himself in the Miluo River for being helplessin saving his state from corrupt officials. On hearing the news, the local peopletried their best to find his body, but failed. The fleeting boats on the waterin the search were believed to have started what later came to be known as thecustom of dragon-boat races (Huawen, 2015, p. 7). Dragon head shaped with abeard and open mouth boats are used in these races during this festival. Another act which is done during this festival is placing mugwort leaves ondoors to protect themselves from evils.

The traditional food of thisfestival is Zongzi which is wrapped in triangle or rectangular shapes in bambooor reed leaves and contains rice. It is believed that zongzi was thrown away bypeople into the river to protect the corpse of Qu from fish which might eat hisbody (Huawen, 2015, p. 7). MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL (MOON FESTIVAL)In ancient times of China, people were used to worship moon.

During Tang Dynasty, moon worship began acustom and people started to enjoy this day which is held on the 15thday of eight month according to Chinese lunar calendar. When the moon becomesfull and bright in the sky, families come together and eat moon cakes, fruitsand other offerings and watch the moon (Huawen, 2015, p. 9). Taste of moon cake might be sweet, spicy and salty changing according to a variety of ingredients that itcontains, such as bean paste, fruits, sugar, vegetables, milk products andseafood (Huawen, 2015, p. 9). Moon cake has a longhistory. At the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), ZhangShicheng (1321–1367), a rebel leader who attempted to gather forces tooverthrow the ruling Mongolians, had moon cakes sent to the common people, witheach cake containing a slip of paper on which was written: “ Let’s kill theMongols on the 15th day of the 8th month”. Then, on that day, all the people rose in revolt andsuccessfully overthrew the Mongolian rulers.

And it is since then that thiscustom has been passed down (Huawen, 2015, p. 10). REFERENCESHuawen, F. (2015). Traditional Chinese Folk Customs. (Weihua Zhang andZhengming Du, Trans.). Lady Stephenson Library, Festival Customs (pp.

1-10). Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Traditional ChineseFestivals (2017). Retrieved from http://www. china. org. cn/english/features/Festivals/78131. htm