Chinese Lanterns

The History of *Chinese Lanterns:*

Photo Credit: flickr.com user noggin_nogged

Chinese lanterns have been an icon of Chinese culture since 230 B.C.E. These lanterns typically announce good news, or demonstrate wishes for good luck. Early lanterns were made out of a bamboo frame, with a thin, oiled paper wrapped around it. Since then, they have evolved into the modern equivalent, made with a thin metal frame and paper.

Since 230 B.C.E, the lanterns have been displayed at the Chinese Lantern Festival, which takes place on the 15th day of the New Year. During this festival, people gather in the streets and hang their lit lanterns high, in an attempt to 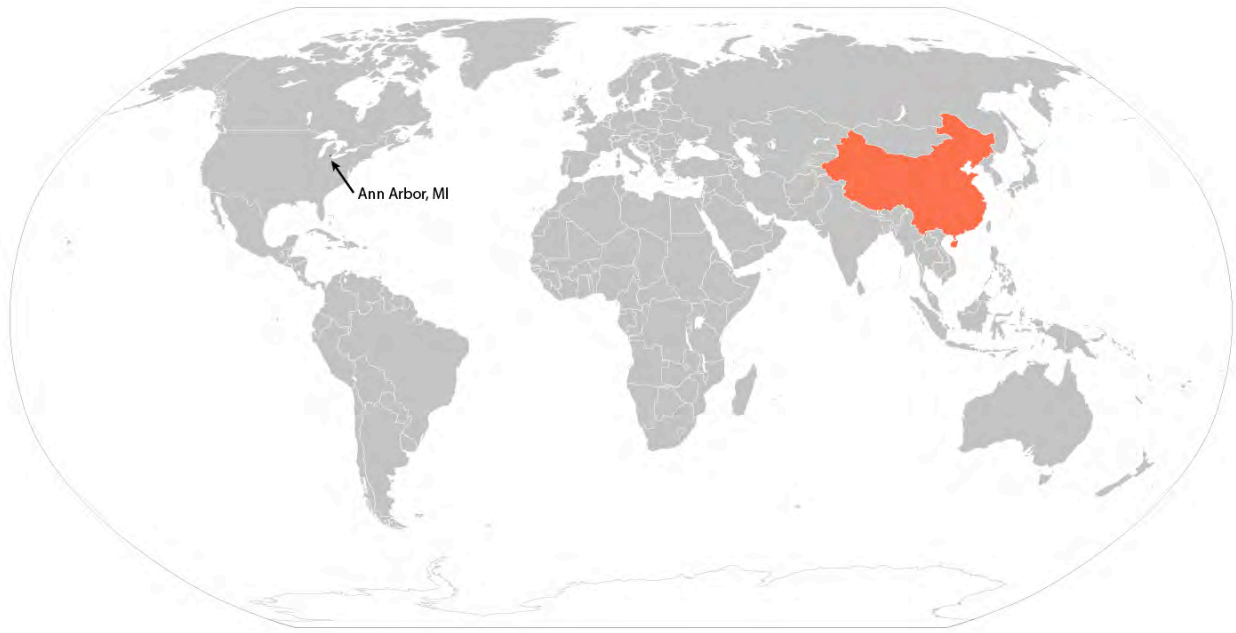communicate with their deceased relatives. People also string dozens of lanterns around their home to bring good luck for the New Year. During this festival lanterns create a beautiful tunnel of light, often surrounding entire streets. The lanterns are decorated with traditional Chinese characters, representing different phrases to celebrate the New Year.

Photo Credit: flickr.com user GlobalCitizen01

Where in the world is China?

China is the world's most populous country, with 1/5 of the world's people living there.

一	one		日	day
二	two		火	fire
三	three		山	mountain
四	four		女	woman
五	five		男	man
六	six		子	child
七	seven		本	book
八	eight		水	water
九	nine		月	moon
十	ten		母	mother
			父	father
			門	door, gate

*Please note that these are the Japanese Kanji version of the Chinese character set, and may differ slightly from traditional Chinese characters.

Make Your Own *Chinese Lantern*

You can make this lantern in: **1/2 hour**

What you will need:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Ruler
- Markers or paint (if using paint, additional drying time is needed)
- Decorations such as glitter, sequins, string (optional)
- Hole punch (if using string)

Photo Credit: flickr.com user camknows

How- To:

1. Position your paper with the long edge facing up, and draw a design with markers, or paint a design (let paint dry before moving on to step 2) Be creative! Try painting or drawing a Chinese character.

2. Fold your paper in half lengthwise. Along the folded edge, cut evenly spaced slits, one inch apart, leaving about an inch at the top of the paper.

3. Unfold your paper. Glue the short ends of the paper together using a glue stick.

4. Spread the slits out to create a lantern effect.

5. Attach a handle to your lantern using a paper strip, or, use string. Add any embellishments and tassels, and then hang your lantern up! Hang your lantern up for whatever you are celebrating.

Think about this:

1. What celebration will you use your Chinese lantern for?

2. Can you think of other holidays where people hang up lights to celebrate?

3. What New Year's traditions do you have?

4. How do you decorate for holidays and celebrations?