

## CHINESE NEW YEAR KEY STAGE 1 & 2 ARTEFACTS

### LION HEAD MASK

Lions are animals regarded as guardians in Chinese culture. Asiatic Lions, which are native to nearby India, are the inspiration for the costume used in the Chinese Lion Dance. Although originating in China, the dance itself is performed in many countries and has numerous variations and incarnations.

In China Lion dances are generally performed by 2 people and can be further categorized into the Northern Chinese Lion dance and the Southern Chinese Lion dance. The Northern Lion dance has its origins in Imperial China as a form of entertainment. The Lion is usually red, orange or yellow in hue and the dance itself is quite acrobatic and occasionally features high risk stunts.

Southern Chinese Lion dance is more allegorical dance. The dance is usually performed as a way to ward off evil spirits and bring good fortune. The costume is more ornate and colourful and the dance is often



### Lion Head Puppet

The Chinese Lion Puppet is a mini version of the large ones that are used in the famous and traditional Lion dances where people perform under the large lions head or tail.



### Chinese Drum

Used in the Lion Head dance. It is believed that the loud beats of the drum and the cymbals together with the face of the Lion or Dragon dancing aggressively can evict bad or evil spirits.



### **New Year Blessings Knot**

The Chinese knot, not only the model is beautiful, but also the implied meaning is deep, meaningful, reflect China's old culture, reflect the good hope that people seek the true, good and beauty. The symbolic meaning of the Chinese knot is very extensive. The Chinese knot symbolizes luck, harmoniously, solidarity, intimate, warm, longevity, wealth, health, etc..

Long history and long culture enable that "Chinese knot" contain Chinese nation's elite of culture. It is not only a beautiful and skillful structure, but also is the showing of a kind of natural intelligence and humane spirit.

The Chinese knot is a kind of old weave art, many coloured silk thread hang around the room. Lucky and beautiful Chinese knots express the hope that people pray for blessings.



### **Chinese New Year and Zodiac Cards**

Cards as sent to friends and family to wish them a happy and prosperous New Year. They are usually red and gold in colour as red symbolises luck and gold symbolises wealth..

The Chinese zodiac follows a twelve year cycle, each of the years being named after an animal. The Chinese believe that people born in a particular year take on the characteristics of the animal associated with that year. The twelve animals are Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Boar.



### **FU New Year Sign**

Around the Chinese New Year people put up a poster (upside down) with the word 'FU' on which means 'Luck', it is the only time when a Chinese word is posted upside down intentionally. In Chinese, saying *Fu dao le* means "luck or fortune has arrived". But the word "dao" can also imply to fall down or turn upside-down. So, literally turning the character 福, *fu*, upside-down is a play on



### **Paper Lanterns**

The 15th and last day of the Chinese New Year is the Lantern Festival. It begins with a traditional dinner with family. As it gets dark, families walk through the streets with beautiful, elaborate paper lanterns. Traditionally, most people used simple, red lanterns and only nobles could afford elaborate ones. Nowadays, however, elaborate ones with beautiful, animal motifs are common.



### **Plastic Concertina Lanterns**

Another type of Lantern that would be used as decoration throughout Chinese new year.



### **Wood and Fabric Lanterns**

Lantern Day festivities, traditionally, these include music, dancing, acrobats, and of course, the sight of brightly decorated lanterns everywhere. People play the Lantern Riddle game, trying to guess the answers to the mysterious riddles stuck on the lanterns. The Lantern Festival marks the last day of the Chinese New Year season. Traditionally, the Lantern Festival is a day for lovers.



### **Fortune Cookies**

The origins of the Fortune Cookie as we know it today were laid down by the Chinese 49ers who worked on the building of the great American railways through the Sierra Nevada into California. Work was very hard and pleasures were few in isolated camps, those hard workers had only biscuits with happy messages inside, to exchange at the Moon Festival instead of traditional cakes with happy messages inside and thus the Fortune Cookie was born.

Today it is almost impossible to have a Chinese meal in America or Canada without finishing with a Fortune Cookie.



### **New Year Red Packets**

Traditionally red packets are given out on New Year's Day to children by their parents, Grandparents and other relatives and friends. The packets contain 'lucky money' inside them, the packets are mostly red which represents blessings and prosperity in the Chinese culture.



### **Red Fabric Display Cloth**

This pretty red fabric can be used as either a table cloth or used to display items on it throughout Chinese New Year.



### **Lucky Drum, Chopsticks and Fan**

Chopsticks can be classified into five groups based on the materials used to make them i.e., Metal, wood, bone, stone and compound chopsticks. Bamboo and wood chopsticks are the most popular ones used in Chinese homes. There are a few things to avoid when using chopsticks. Chinese people usually don't beat their bowls while eating since the behaviour used to be practised by beggars. Also don't insert your chopsticks in a bowl upright because it is a custom exclusively used in sacrifice. It is also thought to be bad luck to drop your chopsticks whilst you are eating.

Fans were used in China many thousands of years ago and made out of many different materials such as silk, paper, feathers and palm leaves.

The drum beating is thought to ward off evil spirits.



### **Happy New Year Inflatable Decoration**

This would be used in Chinese homes to decorate for Chinese New Year. The decorations are all mainly red in colour as this symbolises luck and prosperity.



## **CHINESE NEW YEAR KEY STAGE 1 & 2 RESOURCE BOX 1 CONTENTS**

### **BOOKS:**

First Steps to Rights  
*Unicef*

The Dragon Kite  
*Kenneth Steven*

The Great Race, (The Story of the Chinese Zodiac)  
*Dawn Casey & Anne Wilson*

Chinese New Year, (A World of Festivals)  
*Catherine Chambers*

Culture In China  
*Melanie Guile*

Chinese New Year, (We Love)  
*Saviour Pirotta*

Dat's New Year, (Celebrations)  
*Linda Smith*