

According to this legend, the world had ten suns that destroyed the crops of the Earth and made people suffer. A Chinese hero known as Hou Yi crafted a bow and shot down all of the suns except one with his arrows.

For saving mankind, the Queen of Heaven rewarded Hou Yi with a potion immortality. Hou Yi did not drink the potion because he wanted to stay with his wife, Chang'e. Hou Yi gave the immortality to his wife for safe keeping, but she drank it one day when she was attacked. This caused her to become immortal and fly to the moon. People honor Chang'e with moon cakes and offerings of food for good fortune. Other popular Moon Festival legends include the "Jade Rabbit" and "Wu Gang and the Cherry Bay".

* The Han Chinese is an East Asian ethnic group and nation native to China. They constitute the world's largest ethnic group, making up about 18% of the global population. 92% of the Chinese population and more than 97% of the Taiwanese population are Han.



HAPPY MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL!

中秋节快乐
[Zhongqiujiè kuàilè]



HISTORY

The Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as the Chinese Moon Festival, brings families together to celebrate the harvest under a full moon. It takes place every year with the full moon that falls on the 15th day of the 8th month on the lunar calendar. Mid-Autumn Festival traditions focus on thanksgiving and reunion. It began as early as 3000 years ago during the Shang Dynasty. There are many cases of the Mid-Autumn Festival appearing in Chinese poems and literature. One of the most popular poems centered around this happy time is the "Water Tone Song", a work by Su Shi. The festival is also evident in family traditions and various works of art. It was traditionally celebrated by the Han Chinese*. Outside of China, the Mid-Autumn Festival is celebrated by the Japanese, Vietnamese, Koreans, Filipinos, and many others.

This handout was developed by the West Vancouver Memorial Library, North Vancouver City Library, and North Vancouver District Library in collaboration with the North Shore Immigrant Inclusion Partnership.



FOOD

One of the most sought after treats during the Mid-Autumn Festival is the mooncake, or yuebing (月饼). Traditional mooncakes are round or square palm-sized pastries filled with sweet lotus seed paste and salted egg yolks. They're eaten during the Mid-Autumn Festival to symbolize family unity, longevity and good health.

CELEBRATIONS

Throughout China and East Asia, the Mid-Autumn Festival is celebrated in a variety of ways. As with many other Chinese holidays, many families and companies set out lanterns to make the surroundings appear more festive. The traditional lanterns are designed with the lucky color red, but there are also many other homemade and commercial variations that make viewing lanterns interesting.

Some people write riddles on their lanterns, so that people can enjoy solving them with friends or family. These lanterns are often displayed in parks, so many families have traditions of taking a



tour during the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival to enjoy the bright colors and friendly surroundings.

GREETINGS

There are many ways to wish friends and family good fortune and a happy Mid-Autumn Festival. While there are a large variety of traditional greetings, one of the simplest and commonly used ones is 'zhongqiujiè kuàilè' (中秋节快乐!), or "happy Mid-Autumn Festival!"

LEGENDS

The Mid-Autumn Festival in China has various legends and lore surrounding its traditions. One of the most popular legends is that of Chang'e and Hou Yi.

