



Media Communiqué of 25 August 2011

Basel Lunar Festival 2011

In conjunction with the city partnership between Basel and Shanghai, the traditional Chinese Lunar Festival is being celebrated in Basel. On 12 September 2011, Münsterplatz will be transformed into a Chinese public park. Visitors to the Basel Lunar Festival 2011 can look forward to a variety of musical and dance performances from China.

As is well known, Basel and Shanghai entered into a close city partnership in the year 2007. This pursues economic as well as scientific interests. A further aspect is the promotion of intercultural exchanges. On 12 September 2011 Münsterplatz will be transformed into a Chinese public park for the Basel Lunar Festival 2011. In addition to culinary specialities, visitors may look forward to musical and dance performances from China. Visitors will also have the opportunity to actively encounter traditions from the Middle Empire by engaging in Tai Chi, playing Chinese instruments or realising calligraphy on asphalt or paper.

The programme also includes addresses by Guy Morin, President of the Government of the Canton of Basel-Stadt, by WU Ken, Swiss Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, and by Anna Schmid, Director of the Museum of Cultures. The traditional cutting of the moon cake is another essential aspect of the Lunar Festival.

Exchange with Chinese in Basel

The Basel Lunar Festival 2011 is being organised by the Department of Presidential Affairs of the Canton of Basel-Stadt in cooperation with Basel's Museum of Cultures. By celebrating the Chinese Lunar Festival, the Canton of Basel-Stadt wishes to present the variety and cultural wealth of its city partner Shanghai, while at the same time promoting exchanges with the Chinese living in the Basel region. The Chinese population living in Basel contribute towards Basel's advancement as a place of knowledge and research, making an important contribution towards its economic prosperity and cultural variety, and transporting Basel's positive image out into the world. The Lunar Festival is a tangible manifestation of the city partnership with Shanghai, which has been in existence since 2007, and the many links between Basel and China.

Asian tradition comes to Basel

The Lunar or Mid Autumn Festival (Zhongqiu Jie) is the most important traditional festival in China, after the Spring Festival. It is also celebrated in Vietnam, on the Philippines, in Singapore, South Korea and Malaysia in various different forms. It falls on the 15th day of the eight month according to the Chinese lunar calendar. The autumn full moon shines particularly brightly and impressively at this time, and simultaneously symbolises the strength of the family.

In 2010 the Department of Presidential Affairs invited representatives of the Chinese community, that is to say Chinese living in Basel as well as businesspersons and Basel

citizens with an interest in China, to celebrate the traditional Lunar Festival. On the first occasion, the festival was celebrated within the framework of a reception held at Basel's City Hall. The event was universally warmly received, and for this reason the decision was taken to celebrate the Lunar Festival in Basel once again this year. In short, a new tradition has been established. All interested persons are warmly invited to Basel's Lunar Festival 2011. Entrance is free.

Further information:

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The Basel Lunar Festival 2011 programme can be downloaded under www.basel.ch.

Further information about the Museum of Culture's special programme week: www.mkb.ch