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NEWS RELEASE

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Photos available at: <http://asiancelebration.org/media/>

For Immediate Release

**31st Annual Oregon Asian Celebration
to feature a festival of Asian cultural heritage**

Lane Events Center Fairgrounds, Eugene, OR

February 20 & 21, 2016

10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday

Eugene, OR – You don't have to travel very far to experience Asian culture. Travel by car, bus, bike, or walk to the Lane Events Center (796 W. 13th Ave) near downtown Eugene to experience two days of Asian cultural heritage on February 20th and 21st.

Hear the roar of Japanese taiko drums, see a gallery of Asian inspired artwork, smell the aroma of exotic cuisine, and engage in a unique experience presented by a diversity of Asian cultural groups in Oregon.

Doors open at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 20 & 21 with the Chinese Lion Dance to scare away evil spirits and usher in a day of good fortune; and close at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday and 6:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Share the fun, we're 31! is this year's festival theme and takes place in the Year of the Monkey, said David Tam, director of the event. "Monkeys can be fun-loving and entertaining, and that's what this year's festival will be all about," Tam said.

As part of the fun, Tam invites children to pick up an event **passport** at the entrance and follow clues to destination booths to get their passport stamped and learn about Asian culture. Once the passport is completed, children can turn it in at the Asian American Foundation of Oregon booth for a prize, said Tam.

Activities are nonstop throughout the Lane Events Center on both days. On the **Main Stage**, festival visitors can enjoy graceful performances of Chinese and Korean fan dancers, beautifully adorned Balinese dancers, Hawaiian hula, Minahasa Indonesian cultural dances, and more.

"Musical performances are also very popular," Tam said. Visitors will be treated to the thunderous roar of taiko drumming, Hawaiian ukulele, Japanese Koto, and more. "Our featured musical performer this year is **Pius Cheung**, a master percussionist and composer," Tam said. Cheung is following his Eugene Symphony *Fire and Water* concert on February 18th with a

special performance of percussion with an Asian flair at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday on the Main Stage.

Cheung is a widely known master on marimba and other percussion instruments, a reputation he established with a CD of Bach's Goldberg Variations played entirely on marimba. He is known as a neo-Romantic composer and has toured around the world. The Chinese-Canadian is currently a music professor at the University of Oregon.

Other highlights this year include a display of Asian fighter kites in the **Asian Heritage Exhibit** area, designed and made by Ken Nagao, a local architect and one of the founding members of the festival. Nagao's kites resemble popular fighter kites in Japan, and his most recent creation is a 5' x 11' kite depicting the castle built by the Nagao Clan on Kasugayama (Spring Day Mountain) in Joetsu, Niigata Prefecture, Japan. "The castle was destroyed when the Meiji took over, but the moat is still intact – now called Nagao Castle Park," Nagao said.

New on the **Martial Arts Stage** this year, is the addition of other types of performances beside numerous forms of martial arts. Opening the stage on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. will be ukulele ensembles from the Ridgeline Montessori School and Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School. Both schools are the recipients of ukuleles donated by the "Ukes for Kids" program, sponsored by Mele Ohana, a local group of musicians that hold monthly music jams and potlucks. Mele Ohana also has a performing group, Iron Mango Orchestra, which is scheduled to perform on the Martial Arts Stage on Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and then again at 1:00 pm on the Main Stage.

In addition to the Main Stage and Martial Arts Stage, entertainment is planned for the **Atrium Stage**. Among the line-up of performances is the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art puppeteers, who will perform, *The Dragon of the Phoenix*," several times both Saturday and Sunday.

Not to be missed by foodies, the Cooking Demonstration area will be featuring a lineup of guest chefs from area restaurants such as Mame (Japanese), Sabai (Pan Asian), DaNang Vietnamese food cart, Downtown Noodle Bowl, and the Taste of India. To honor Chinese New Year and the Year of the Monkey, chef Kennedy Fung will be demonstrating wonton noodle soup, a traditional soup served during the Chinese New Year.

Noodle lovers will not want to miss the **Canoodle Noodle Eating contest** during a break in the **cooking demonstrations**. Two people take a pair of extra long chopsticks and feed their partner a bowl of ramen noodles as fast he or she can; and the pair that finishes first wins a prize. Enter at the cooking demonstration table. "It promises to bring lots of laughter. It was so popular last year; we brought it back this year," Tam said.

A display of **fine arts** such as Chinese brush painting, fiber art, and more will be featured in the Atrium located between the Exhibit and Performance halls. Demonstration of **Asian crafts** and more than a dozen **martial art** forms will be ongoing throughout the event. The **Youth Room** will be a place where children can enjoy Taiwanese Theatre *Eight Generals* mask-making sponsored by the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, making cat ears by Kumoricon, manga coloring by Imagination International, Tibetan woodblock printing and various activities sponsored by the International School of Modern Technology. A Japanese carnival is also featured and presented by the Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School.

If youth are into anime or gaming, they can head over to the **Kumoricon Room** to get a little taste of an anime convention experience, video gaming, karaoke, and more. Cosplay is encouraged and will meet up on Saturday at 3:00 p.m. in the Kumoricon room.

Tempting aromas of Asian cuisine is a highlight for many visitors. Asian cuisine in the **Asian Food Court** includes foods of Japan, Viet Nam, China, the Philippines, India, and Korea.

Before departing the festival, peruse more than 70 **Marketplace** booths or pick up a souvenir to remember this year's event.

According to Tam, the Oregon Asian Celebration has expanded to include **partner events** scheduled throughout the community. This year's partner events include, the Jordon Schnitzer Museum of Art Lunar New Year Celebration on February 6, the Eugene Symphony's *Fire and Water* concert on February 18, Aloha Friday on February 19 and March 18, the White House Initiative on Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders Roundtable on March 3, the Pacific Martial Arts Conference on January 30 and April 3, and the DisOrient Film Festival on April 29, 30, & May 1.

Admission is \$6 for one day or \$10 for a 2-day ticket; free for ages 12 & under, and free for ages 13 and older (including college students) when presenting a valid student ID card and student admission ticket obtained at any Oregon Community Credit Union branch beginning January 27. Advance tickets can also be purchased at any Oregon Community Credit Union branch. Show your advance ticket at the Hult Center box office and receive a 10% discount on the Eugene Symphony's *Fire and Water* concert on February 18.

A complete schedule of activities and performances will be available at the door or at AsianCelebration.org.

The event is supported by the following sponsors: Oregon Community Credit Union, Kaiser Permanente, Kikkoman USA, Imagination International, McDonalds, University of Oregon, City of Eugene, and KVAL-TV.

The event is produced by the [Eugene/Springfield Asian Council](http://Eugene/SpringfieldAsianCouncil) whose mission is to create opportunities that foster greater understanding of Asian and Asian American cultures by presenting special events and activities to promote friendship and harmonious relationships.

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