

chinese Lanterns

Symbolism

Chinese lanterns are more than just decorations, and are symbolic of events such as births, deaths and even approaching danger. The Chinese Lantern Festival has been celebrated since the beginning of the Han Dynasty (206 BC - 221 AD). The origins for this festival have been dated back as far as 250 BC.

Structure

The lanterns used today have remained virtually unchanged in design. A frame that surrounds the candle is assembled from pliable bamboo, sturdy redwood or inexpensive wire. Thin or oiled paper, gauze or silk fabric, are used to cover the frame and soften the harsh light of a naked flame.

The Uses of Lanterns

The colour and shape of the lantern determines its use. Special red lanterns are used for weddings and plain white lanterns for used at funerals. Children in China also make lanterns at school and hang riddles and poems on them. Today they have their place as honoured guests at ceremonies and functions.

Simple lanterns were used in everyday life to light the way home at night and to hang on boats or outside shops and homes. The lanterns for Mid-autumn Festival, or Moon Festival, come in fanciful shapes such as animals, fruits, and flowers.

The lanterns for the Lantern Festival often depicting historic or patriotic scenes painted on silk to mark the conclusion of the Chinese New Year when farmers begin preparing for spring planting.

Decorative Lanterns

While the origins of many lantern designs are highly symbolic or ritualistic, lanterns were also used in daily life as decorative protective shields for candles and lights. The lanterns in our range have been selected because of their highly decorative nature.

Our Lantern Range

The long red silk lanterns bear the Chinese character for each of the twelve birth signs. The colourful 8" silk tassel lanterns make great decorations.

The paper lanterns would make ideal hangings in children's bedrooms, particularly the hot air balloons and Halloween lanterns.

The delicate nature of the materials used to make these lanterns means that they are easily damaged if mishandled or placed in positions where they can come into contact with other items. They should never be hung in windy locations where they can easily be blown from their hanging position.

While originally used in China as lantern covers for candles and lights, the highly flammable nature of both paper and silk poses a real fire risk. The lanterns in our range are sold as decorative items only and should not be used with candles or heat generating lighting.

It's Your Choice

Which Lantern do you like?

*Check our Chinese Birth calendar
to see what sign you were born under!*