Announcer: The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap: On February 16, 2018, Asian communities worldwide will welcome the Year of the Dog. Based on the lunar calendar, the Lunar New Year celebration also known as Chinese New Year or Spring Festival, falls on a different date each year, normally between January 21st and February 20th. Lasting for 15 days, it's a time to gather with family and wish each other happiness and prosperity. In Springfield, Missouri State University will host a lineup of events on campus February 17th to 24th to mark the holiday.

I'm Emily Yeap. With me today are Dr. Weirong Yan-Schaefer, senior instructor of modern and classical languages at MSU and Peng Zhang, China operations specialist at MSU's Office of China Programs. They're here to explain about the holiday and the celebration on campus. Zhang.

Peng Zhang: Chinese New Year is like the Christmas here. It's the most important festival in China. It's all about family. It's a time for family reunion so all the family members will come back home from near or far for the family gatherings. I would say the Chinese New Year is all about family, friends, food fireworks and also some tradition and customs.

Emily Yeap: Dr. Yan-Schaefer shares some of those traditions and customs.

Weirong Yan: Before the New Year day we clean the house, decorate the rooms and usually we decorate it with some paper cuts, we hang up paintings, which symbolize happiness and also good luck, bring the wealth to family and also we eat some special food. You have to eat fish and fish in Chinese means leftover that means you have abundance for next year and dumplings and dumpling actually lots of story behind of it. You put lots of stuff, wrap it up and symbolize family stay together and also people eat orange. Orange means gold and the gold symbolize the wealth. And people also eat some sticky rice and sticky means sweet, happy life.

Emily Yeap: Two other important traditions involve money and visitations. Zhang explains.

Peng Zhang: For the younger generation, they always show respect to the living elders. They always kneel down to their living elders and in reward, they will receive the lucky money wrapped in a red envelope. We call it hongbao. Throughout the 15 days, another tradition of the family is to exchange visits to their relatives, family members and friends. So there will be a lot of partying going on.

Emily Yeap: Each new year on the lunar calendar is represented by one of 12 zodiac animals the reflect traditional Chinese culture.

Peng Zhang: For a lot of the dog lovers, I think this will be a nice year for you to celebrate. So for the Year of Dog there are some lucky numbers and lucky colors and lucky flowers. Lucky numbers are three, four and nine and lucky colors are red, green and purple. Your lucky flowers will be rose and orchids. The personality or traits of the person born in the Year of Dog usually they are very sincere, reliable, considerate, intelligence, honest and humble.

Emily Yeap: One of the signature events taking place during the 2018 Chinese New Year Celebration Week on campus is the Chinese New Year Banquet and Show at 5:30 p.m. February 17th. Tickets are $15.

Peng Zhang: The Office of China Programs partner with Chinese Students and Scholars Association so the students will put together a show. Before that, there is New Year dinner. We'll eat some traditional Chinese food. Following that, we'll have the show. All the programs are put together by Missouri State students.

Emily Yeap: Events on February 21st, 22nd and 23rd are focused on Chinese New Year traditions, Chinese arts and Chinese cuisines, respectively. February 24th has been set aside as a day for the community.

Peng Zhang: We host a traditional Chinese dance, traditional Chinese music, instruments and Tai chi performance, paper cutting, pretty much all the traditional activities, we put all together on Saturday for the community. So hopefully we will get a lot of community people come to experience Chinese New Year.

Emily Yeap: According to Dr. Schaefer, this week-long celebration is a showcase of the rich Chinese and Asian culture at Missouri State.

Weirong Yan: We try to involve not only Chinese students, but also involve the faculty and also students who study Chinese and Asian cultures. From music to painting and from food to martial arts we try to promote Asian culture.

Emily Yeap: For more information, contact Zhang at 417 836-5486. I'm Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Announcer: For more information, contact the Office of University Communications at 417 836-6397. The Missouri State Journal is available online at ksmu.org.