

THE United Sabah Chinese Communities Association of Kota Kinabalu invites the public to view the Chinese Lunar New Year Annual Cultural gathering for dragons, unicorns and Lion dance at the Likas Sports Complex here this Saturday.

This is a culture that has been maintain and perpetuated by the Chinese since time immemorial. It is believed that the Dragon, Unicorn and Lion Dances depict unity, harmony and prosperity.

The cultural extravaganza will start at 2.30pm and end at about 8.30 in the evening.

During the event, Chinese Wushu Shaolin performances will also be presented to the general public besides the traditional dances.

Seventy teams will be taking part. The teams comprise of ten Dragon teams, 10 Unicorn teams and 45 Lion teams

According to the organising Chairman Steven Liaw, the performers are especially flown in from Xuchang, China by the Federation of Chinese Community Association in Sabah to perform here in conjunction with the Chinese New Year celebration in February.

"The arrangement for the troupe to fly in was graciously made by the Consul General of China Xie Fu Gen with cooperation from the city Vice Mayor, Shen Wuzhuang," he says.

Liaw who is also the Association's Youth chief says the Shaolin Wushu troupe comprises of 30 performers who have been especially chosen to carry out the performances in this part of the world.

The vibrant and colourful event is expected to be attended by the Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Haji Aman.

"I think this event should not be missed by city dwellers and all who live around here. We expect to play host to about 3000 to 5000 people. I know the spectacular performances will mesmerize the audience."

Liaw says the event not only hopes to entertain the people here but also to showcase authentic Chinese cultural dances and moves.

"It also intends to promote friendship, rapport and understanding between Malaysians and Chinese," he stresses.

According to him, the event on that day will showcase just two performances but the troupe will be in the State for one week.

Cultural extravaganza!



During the seven days period, the group will go to Chinese schools to show the students dance moves and their skills.

So if you are in Kota Kinabalu on Jan 26, which is a Saturday, visit the Sports Complex. Be there at the Badminton court at 2pm as the event starts a few minutes later, it will end at about 8.30 in the evening.

GREEN FARE

MANY years ago most of us have not heard of asparagus much less tasted it. Even when this vegetable was first introduced in the market, most of us hardly looked at it. This was because it was so expensive. And they are nothing to look at too.

And to my knowledge you still don't get asparagus at RM1 'se-ikat' (a bundle)!

Asparagus is actually European, which explains the fact that it grows better in Kundasang, Ranau being an area where the weather is cool. It is a member of the lily family and believed to have been cultivated since ancient times.

Usually the Europeans will serve this vegetable with sauce but in Malaysia, and especially Sabah it is boiled with chicken stock and dunked in ice water. You leave the asparagus in the iced water to retain colour and texture. You can then mixed it with other concoction such as minced chicken, chicken stock, oyster sauce with a pinch of salt and cornstarch. Actually there are so many ways to cook asparagus.

In Thailand, it is cooked with the usual pounded chilli and garlic, or Chinese style in a sauce delicate enough



to allow the asparagus flavour shine through.

Spring onion or daun bawang is another food ingredient that is widely used in Malaysian kitchen. It is found in most market in this country. In Sabah it is commonly sold in Tamu or local market.

Spring onion has a bulbous white base and is actually common onions that are harvested young. They are also found without the bulb. We use both the white and green portions of the plant.

Usually spring onion is used to flavour soups, but it can also be eaten with other vegetables, fried with meat. It is especially nice when cooked with preserved fish like the local 'nonsom' or 'bosou'.

Mango is a fruit that is eaten both ripe and unripe.

Most people, if they want to eat mango young will peel it, chop it into bite size pieces and eat it with salt and chilli. Very nice.

But there Mango can be eaten with raw fish; hinava. The mango is chopped lengthwise finely and then mixed with raw fish. The mango complements ingredients for hinava like chilli and ginger,

The fish to use for hinava can be anything including Tenggiri.

The mango is a true native of Malaysia.

Mango when ripe has bright orange flesh and a fragrance which carries through to a superb flavour. There are many varieties of delicious mango but there are also some that are very sour even though it is already ripe.

This type of mango is good when cooked with fish and other savoury ingredients.

When buying mango, don't go by the colour but by the smell. If it smells good, it should taste good.