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UN celebrates Chinese Language Day with art and exhibitions



20 April 2011 – The United Nations is today celebrating [Chinese Language Day](#) as part of the Organization’s continuing efforts to highlight the historical and cultural significance of each of its six official languages.

A series of activities, including workshops for writing Chinese calligraphy, a martial arts demonstration, performances of traditional music and folk dancing and a formal reception, will take place at UN Headquarters in New York to mark the Day.

Today’s date was chosen by the UN to pay tribute to Cang Jie, a mythical figure who is presumed to have invented Chinese characters about 5,000 years ago.

One of the oldest languages in the world, Chinese has archaeological records pointing back at least 4,000 years and is now spoken by more than a billion people. The language has several thousand dialects, but Mandarin is spoken by the majority of the people of China and understood by an estimated 95 per cent. The language has several thousand dialects, but Mandarin is spoken by the majority of the people of China

Last year the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) introduced Days to mark the six official languages – English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish – as part of wider efforts to promote multilingualism and cultural diversity at the world body.

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