

Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year plays an important role in Chinese culture. No matter if people's lives were good or bad in the previous year, Chinese New Year is meaningful to them. Not only does the holiday bring family members together, it also represents a new and better beginning.

When Chinese New Year is near, you can feel the busy and happy atmosphere on the streets. People decorate their walls and doors with red spring couplets. For Chinese people, red is the color of good luck and happiness. People also decorate with flower blossoms during this season. People love to buy plum blossoms; the tiny buds mean a new start. Also, people have haircuts and buy new clothes to represent a new and fresh start.

To honor their ancestors and prepare their New Year's Eve banquet, people buy a lot of food like fish, chicken, vegetables, sticky cake, tangerines, melon seeds, and candy. People crowd the market to buy the things they will need.

People clean their houses thoroughly before the lunar New Year comes; sweeping away the bad luck and welcoming good luck in for the coming New Year. Be careful when you sweep because if you sweep during the New Year, you'll chase away the God of Wealth. When one sweeps, start from the outside to the inside of the house. It means you are bringing wealth in.

New Year's Eve is a very precious moment for a family. Family

members get together to share the feast on this day. They sit at a round table. They have radish soup, fish, chicken, steamed sponge cake and leaf mustard, and so on. Every kind of dish is meaningful. Radish means a good start. Fish means surplus. Steamed sponge cake means progress year after year. Leaf mustard means longevity. In addition, apples stand for peace and tangerines mean good luck. There is a stove under the table. The stove keeps everyone warm. After the feast, the elders give children money in red envelopes. This will bring them more good luck.

People stay up late on New Year's Eve to greet the New Year. It is a tradition that staying up all night on New Year's Eve may increase their parents' life. Also, in an old legend, lighting up houses all night can frighten the monster, Year. Year was a monster that ate fowl and even humans. This monster scared people to death. A wise man told them the way to chase the monster, Year, away. Year hated firecrackers and a dancing lion. Year was also afraid of the color red. People chased it away with firecrackers, red paper, and a dancing lion. People were happy to be alive and they said, "Congratulations!" to each other the next day.

When Chinese New Year's Day comes, people set off firecrackers to welcome the New Year. They say "Happy New Year!" or "Gong Xi!" (Congratulations) to each other. Most people go to the temple to worship on the first day of the Chinese New Year. They pray that the gods will bless them. On the second day of Chinese New Year, married women go to their parents' houses with their husbands and children. Lantern Festival ends the Chinese New Year season.