

Traditional Festival in China

The new year eve and Spring Festival

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2017.01.29



除夕 - the new year eve



Summary

- The Chinese new year eve is the last day of Chinese calendar.
- At that day people would go back home to spend time with their family, eating a big meal, staying up late.

The meaning of “除夕”

- “除” means “remove”, “夕” means “night”. So “除夕” means “remove the night”. Nevertheless, Chinese cultures are broad and profound, sometimes one word has many meanings.
- What's the origin of “除夕”? No one knows, so “除夕” has some legends, here is one that I heard when I was young.

Legend

- Once upon a time, there was a monster, "夕", which would eat people at the end of the year. No one knew how to do. Soon an old man told others: "Paste some red cloth on the door and throw some explosives into the fire when the monster comes, then he would die." People followed him half in doubt. But at night, when the monster saw the red, hearing the explosion sound, he felt so afraid that he ran away, never coming. After that, people realised that old man is a god. And since then, it evolved into paste couplet and play fireworks.
- (PS. in Chinese culture, most monsters are scared of red things)

Traditional custom on the new year eve/How people celebrate the new year eve

- A. Do cleaning before the new year. (don't tell me it needs to be explained (๑•ω•๑))
- B. 年夜饭/Eat dinner on New Year's Eve
- C. Paste Spring Festival couplets and “福”, Paper-cuts for window decoration
- D. Set off firecrackers
- E. Ancestor worship
- F. Stay up late
- G. Give lucky money

B. 年夜饭/Eat dinner

- At this night, most people will go back home to spend time with their family no matter how far they are. It is a great time for the old to see how many kids and grandchildren they are, feeling happy. And it is also a time that the young express gratitude to the old for bringing them up.
- And it is the most grand, delicious meal of one year. With many delicious foods on the table, people eat with great happiness! And fish is always essential. Because in Chinese, “鱼” has the same pronunciation with “余”, which means you have the rest things. That is to say, you have a rich life. Eating fish at the end of year, in Chinese means “年年有鱼”, “年年有余”. (in English means every year you have a rich life to enjoy)

**WARNING:WATCH IT AFTER EATING!YOU WILL
FELL HUNGRY!!!**



C. Paste Spring Festival couplet ,paper-cuts for window decoration and “福”

- Hmmmm,couplet is a unique form of literature in China.I dont know how to say it clearly,because you to know Chinese at first.It has two lines,the number of words don't have limilt,but the number of words in two lines must be the same.
- Paper-cuts are always pasted on the window,in order to add the happiness of the festival .
- “福”is another paper-cut,but it is always pasted on the door.
“福”means happiness,health,wealth.(Acually “福”should be pasted upside down,because in Chinese, “福 is upside down” is “福倒了” , and “倒”and “到”,which means come,have the same pronounciation.So “福'is upside down” means “the luck is coming!”)



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paste the couplet

paper-cut for window and “福”
(upside down)

D.Set off firecrackers

- At the first time of the new year,the first thing people would do is to set off firecrackers.Set off firecrackers not only can make a cheerful scene,but also can bring luck (allegedly).But most kids play them just for fun (㊄㊄㊄)
- Here is a video about the fireworks in my home at the beginning for the new year.(Living in the countryside,it is not as beautiful as fireworks in town and city)



E. Ancestor worship

- It was very grand in the past, for example, on the 除夕's afternoon, some people will visit the graves of their deceased relatives and ancestors, bringing the dinner food to them. Let them “enjoy” the food.
- But now it is simplified, as for me, we just do it at home. Taking some food into the bowl, pouring some drinks, my dad says like this “the dead relatives, today is the last day of the year, come back to enjoy this dinner”. After they “eat”, (After saying these words at waiting for several minutes) we start eating.

F. Stay up late

- It is always for kids. This night, kids will all stay up late, to wait for the new year. It includes the nostalgia of the past time and the expectation of the new year.

福

G. Give the 压岁钱/lucky money

- Most time it is the given the young by the old.(Now i still am given by my elder family,but it won't be long beause i will be an adult ,which means I shouldn't accept the kindness from the old.And when I work,I will also give lucky money to the young)
- And also there is a legend about it.Mant years ago,there is a monster, “崇”, who would went to kid's bed,using his hand to touch the forehead at the last night of the year.Then the kid would become crazy and silly.To protect the kids,parents put some copper(in ancient China,copper is a kind of money)into the red pocket,then put it under their kid's pillow.When the “崇”came,he ran away quickly,seeing the red thing and golden light.So the money is “压崇钱” (“压”-suppress, “崇”-the monster,“钱”-money).And gradually it beame “压岁钱”(still the same pronounciation). “Lucky money” means people who receive this money feel so lucky.
- But also there is another “Lucky money”that the young give the old.There “岁”means “age”,wishing the old longevity.

Taboos

There are also many taboos on new year eve, but now it is not paid much attention with the progress of the times. So I choose some representative taboos.

A. Don't say unlucky words like "dead", "monster", "ghost"

B. Before eating the dinner, you must do ancestor worship. And during the eating, we don't expect others go to visit us. Because they interrupt us.

C. During staying up late, we shouldn't talk loudly, because it will wake the ghost up.

春节 Spring Festival



Summary

- Spring Festival is the new year of Chinese calendar, which has the history about 4000 years. Now it is the most important day for every Chinese, most people would go back home to spend time with their family.

Traditional customs on Spring Festival

Acually most of us think of the new year eve and Spring Festival as the same thing,so the customs are nearly same.

A.Before Spring Festival,we will 买年货 (buy many necessary things like food,clothes)because during the festuval many shops don't open .

B.拜年/Visit friends',relatives' home.....HmMMM,just visit their house and the host will enthusiastically treat even give the kids lucky money!

Thank you!!

• If anyone who like it,you can share with him/her(๑•ω•๑)