

Ho Dao College (Sponsored by Sik Sik Yuen)

LUNAR NEW YEAR

BUZZWORD



TV Program
Review

SPRING FESTIVAL GALA - A FEAST FOR THE EYES

by Olivia (3D)

Spring Festival Gala is not a mere variety show aired on television every year on Chinese New Year's Eve. This TV show celebrates Chinese culture and its arts with an ever-growing viewership. The Spring Festival Gala stages a variety of programs such as songs and dances, recitals, interviews, Chinese opera gigs, and performances by renowned martial artists, magicians and acrobats, presenting a wonderful and exquisite cultural feast to the TV audience.

What sets this year's Spring Festival Gala apart is its reflection on the social issue of the COVID 19 pandemic. Through various performances, the masters of the ceremony and performers pay homage to medical workers and ordinary people fighting against the epidemic on the front lines. Each staged act conveys society's sentiments of confidence, determination and unity in the face of difficulties. Viewers still find watching Spring Festival Gala meaningful because they can participate in a shared activity with their families, get entertained, and discuss current topics while building strong familial bonds.

But more importantly, Spring Festival Gala serves as a connection between individuals performing in the show to millions watching them on TV in their homes. Watching the Spring Festival Gala means that you will not be alone on Chinese New Year's Eve, and you can celebrate the New Year with other citizens in the country.

It is broadcast in Chinese (Mandarin) and runs for 4 hours, making it shine among ordinary viewers. Viewers can also watch it on the program's website. I highly recommend watching it next year because it will blow your mind.

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CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

by Kenson (3D)

Do you know that people who celebrate Chinese New Year (CNY) are not just from China? People in other countries also celebrate CNY. Chinese New Year is celebrated on the first day of the lunar calendar and is also known as the Lunar New Year. It is a festival where people reunite with their family members and friends.

China

The Lunar New Year is one of the most important festivals in China. For Chinese people, CNY symbolizes a new start. According to the Lunar calendar, each year is ascribed to one of the animals of the Chinese zodiac signs, and this year it is the Tiger. The colour red symbolizes luck, so people wear red clothes when visiting relatives. Parents give the children red packets and inside these red packets is the 'lucky' money. People usually eat auspicious food such as turnip cakes and brown sugar cakes (Figure 1).

Korea

Koreans usually travel back to their hometowns to have dinner with their families on New Year's Eve, and they usually eat *tteokguk* soup made with rice cake (Figure 2). There are many new year games, such as the shuttlecock kicking game called *jegichagi* (Figure 3) and pitch-pot games that Koreans play during the New Year celebration (Figure 4).

Singapore

In Singapore, people follow Chinese folklore too. They light firecrackers to ward off the mythical beast 'Nian'. According to a legend, the monster attacked villagers every spring, but it was scared of the red colour and loud noise, so this tradition is still observed. Therefore, every year, Singaporeans light firecrackers during the Chinese New Year. Like the Koreans and the Chinese, Singaporeans also have a reunion dinner with their family on the eve of Chinese New Year.

Many themes are shared among the three countries, such as the use of the colour red for lanterns, household decorations and traditional clothes. Even with different auspicious food or games, the importance of family behind the reunion dinner during Chinese New Year remains the same.



FIGURE 1: BROWN SUGAR CAKES (LEFT) AND TURNIP CAKES (RIGHT)



FIGURE 2: KOREAN TRADITIONAL FOOD TTEOKGUK



FIGURE 3: PEOPLE KICKING THE SHUTTLECOCK



FIGURE 4: PEOPLE PLAYING PITCH-POT GAME

Debate Speech

MOTION: PEOPLE SHOULD USE E-LAI SEE INSTEAD OF A TRADITIONAL LAI SEE

by Justin (2D)

Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour to present my views on the motion "People should use an **e-lai see** instead of the traditional red envelope ". By **e-lai see** here, I mean the use of electronic bank transfers to convey good wishes to your family and friends. I strongly agree with this motion.

Let me tell you a fact; a 2022 survey conducted by local banks shows that more people have used **electronic lai sees** in the past two years. On the 6th day of the CNY holiday last year, 500 million Chinese people received more than 32 billion electronic red packets in China. At the same time, experts expect approximately 100 billion **electronic lai sees** to be sent and accepted worldwide this year. The popularity of electronic red packets also shows the development of technology and its convenience in communicating wishes. People now send money to each other as quickly as by email or text messages.

Some people may argue that using traditional red packets is a Chinese custom and one of the symbols representing the new year's celebration. However, this is not the case. Tradition red paper '**lai see**' makes much waste that few people reuse. The wasteful use of traditional **lai see**, in turn, hurts the environment and creates tons of pollution every year.

I firmly believe that we should use an **e-lai see** to replace the traditional red paper **lai see**. I sincerely hope you'll all stand with me to support a cleaner environment and a paperless future.

Thank you.



CHINESE IDIOMS

by Emily (2D)

The use of Chinese idioms is gaining ground in the English language nowadays. I want to introduce you to ten idioms that are popular during CNY. You might have heard a few, but do you know what they mean? If you don't know, come and have a read of this.

1. *The Dragon flies, and the Phoenix dances* (龍飛鳳舞)

Meaning: It describes a bold and magnificent or lively posture

2. *More than every year* (年年有餘)

Meaning: Life is rich, and there is surplus wealth and food every year

3. *Everything goes well.* (萬事如意)

Meaning: Hoping everything is going well

4. *The tiger produces power.* (虎虎生威)

Meaning: Like a tiger, something has an awe-inspiring momentum

5. *Horses to success* (馬到成功)

Meaning: Wishing someone success at what they are doing

6. *Be promoted step by step* (步步高升)

Meaning: Rise in someone's status or position

7. *Plain sailing* (一帆風順)

Meaning: Wishing things go very smoothly or without any obstacles

8. *Five blessings at the door* (五福臨門)

Meaning: Five blessings are bestowed upon a family at the same time

9. *Congratulations on getting rich.* (恭喜發財)

Meaning: Wishing someone become rich in future

10. *Bumper harvests* (五穀豐登)

Meaning: Wishing someone a good harvest

Now you know what they mean. You can congratulate others using these idioms when the Spring Festival comes around. But don't confuse the meaning, or it will sound like a joke!

Greetings

WAYS TO WISH SOMEONE

by Priya (3A)

During Chinese New Year, traditional wishes and greetings are an essential part of the customs to express your feelings toward someone. Every country celebrating Chinese New Year has a different way of wishing or greeting someone. Still, the most common one is *Gong Hei Fat Choy*, which translates to wishing everyone great happiness and prosperity in the new year. There isn't only one wish to offer, but many more to give your friends and family blessings.

We can wish for various things for our dear ones, like happiness, health, career, and peace. Here are some thoughtful wishes and greetings to say in English:

- *Health, wealth and endless joy are what I wish for you and your family this year.*
- *Thinking of you and your family and wish you a year that outshines the rest.*
- *Happy New Year! You make our family proud, and we wish you nothing but continued success and happiness.*
- *Wishing you lots of luck and happiness this year.*
- *It is the time of the year for feasting, celebrating and looking forward to a happy and prosperous year ahead. Enjoy every moment!*
- *I hope this year brings you good fortune, peace and prosperity.*
- *May this new year bring you good health and good luck.*

These are some of the wishes you can wish for your loved ones. So next time whenever you visit your relatives, family or friends, you can use these thoughtful wishes and greetings for them.





1st February 2022

Monday

Sunny

Today was the first day of the Chinese New Year, and I was very excited about getting many red packets. Before starting my day, however, I watched a TV programme for tips on earning more red envelopes. By the end of the programme, I was eager to put my newly learnt skills to work.

First, I saw my mum doing the housework in the morning, so I helped her. I wished my mother a happy Chinese Year New, and she gave me two red envelopes. Then, I went to my grandparent's bedroom to wish them the same and get more red packets. When they gave me a red envelope each, I thanked them and wished them 'The best of health in the new year', one of the most common Chinese New Year greetings we usually offer to our family members.

After that, my family and I went to my relative's house. I greeted them with my smiling face and praised them often. They were delighted with my warm attitude and gave me two red packets. When my whole family played *mah-jong*, I took care of my cousin. Later in the evening, we all had a barbecue party at my relative's terrace. I ate a lot of traditional meat dishes and famous Chinese New Year snacks. Although I thought the snacks were too sweet, I still praised them. My relatives gave me two more red envelopes for helping them out. I was amazed to get so many red packets by simply putting the tips to use!

At last, our family went home by taxi. I was so excited and was about to open my red packets, but my mum stopped me from opening them just then. After a while, I saw her fall asleep, and I couldn't wait and opened my red envelopes right away! I felt ecstatic because I had got a lot of 'lucky' money, and the tips were handy.

Finally, when I got home, I was exhausted. But at the same time, I was elated as I did many things that I didn't do in life before, like taking care of my cousin and helping my family members. The first day of Chinese New Year was lucky for me, and tomorrow I plan to invest my earnings!

LION DANCE PERFORMANCES

by Wilson (3D)

Have you ever watched a *Lion Dance* performance before? A *Lion Dance* is a traditional form of performing arts in East Asia.

The *Lion Dance* performance is based on a famous myth in Chinese culture, not unlike the dragon. According to a Chinese legend, a ferocious beast inhabited the mountains in ancient China, and it often killed and ate the villagers living near the mountains. To overcome this problem, people started to learn the martial art of *Kung fu* and copy the beast's movements to scare it away. After that, people began to perform lion dances to bring good fortune and chase evil spirits, which has continued until now.

These dances are often part of Lunar New Year festivities, and performers dress up in brightly-coloured clothes to imitate a lion. The dancers perform simple acrobatics to the loud beating of drums and clanging cymbals. Usually, two '*dancers*' perform the lion dances in a lion costume. One of the dancers is in front and acts as the head and front limbs of the lion, and the dancer behind is the back and hind legs.

The lion's head is oversized and dragon-like. Artisans use rattan or bamboo covered with silk or gauze in bright yellow, golden, and red to frame a lion's head. The eyes, mouth and stripes on the lion's head are painted on the silk. In contrast, white or yellow fluff is added over loose flaps covering the eyes, mouth and ears for dancers to perform various natural actions of a lion-like blinking eye, eating, scratching, shaking the body, and licking fur.

The *Lion Dance* performance is highly entertaining and is an excellent example of Chinese folk culture.

CHINESE NEW YEAR RITUALS AND CUSTOMS

by Helen (3A)



CHINESE
DECOUPAGE OR
PAPER-CUTTING



CHINESE
CALLIGRAPHY



FAI CHUNS
OUTSIDE
HOMES



RED
ENVELOPES
WITH MONEY

People follow certain rituals and customs during Chinese New Year to celebrate the festival. These include displaying Chinese decoupage, writing Fai Chuns and giving red envelopes. But, do you know the meaning behind these rituals? Let's find out.

1. Chinese Decoupage or Paper-cutting

Chinese traditional paper-cutting art originated in ancient China. The technique uses negative-space cutting to make decorative handicrafts on materials like paper, silver foil, or even leather. The paper-cuttings are often stuck on windows, so the light illuminates the negative space in the cut-outs. These days it is mainly done on red paper to bring luck.

2. Chinese calligraphy

The history of Chinese calligraphy is as old as the history of Chinese characters. Since the invention of oracle bone inscriptions, Chinese calligraphy has evolved from a seal script to a drafting script and into modern-day Chinese writing. Ancient calligraphers' brushstrokes have influenced the profound tradition of Chinese painting, especially landscape paintings. Chinese calligraphy was a mature art in ancient times. That is why exquisite Chinese calligraphy is often used as a form of art to write the new year's blessings on a Fai Chun.

3. Fai Chun

You might come across a rectangular or a square red paper called Huichun or Fai Chun pasted at the entrance of homes and doors during Chinese New Year. This tradition originated in the Ming Dynasty. Typically written in traditional Chinese calligraphy, a Fai Chun blessing brings good luck, peace, and prosperity. Therefore, people often put up Spring Festival couplets, door couplets and blessing stickers to ensure safety and prosperity for their families.

4. Red envelopes

In a traditional sense, red envelopes are also called Lunar New Year money. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, parents gave new year's money tied on a red string as gifts to children. In southern China, *li shi* (commonly known as *yi shi*) refers to a red paper envelope with some cash - given as a gift during festive occasions. As part of the custom, people give red packets to young children as blessings during the Chinese New Year.

The Best Writer Award



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Watch out for another issue of BUZZWORD in June!