

Blog 22 – Happy Chinese New Year! Feb 10th, 2013



It's early February, In America, all of the holiday spirit left over from Christmas is beginning to meet its end by now. But in China, it has just reached the highest point. Chinese New Year is the most important holiday in China. It's the first day of the Chinese Lunar Calendar. People get together with their families, prepare lots and lots of food, burst firecrackers, and decorate their houses with red decorations. And, the children long for packed red envelopes.



On the last day of my school before the holiday (Feb 8th), the teachers and students dressed up in traditional Chinese clothing. The

Dragon and lion dancers came to perform. The main entrance was decorated with large red lanterns and bright red window grilles. When students entered the main entrance in the morning, a red envelope greeted them with 2 Dove chocolates inside. The whole school was packed with Chinese New Year spirit!



In China, food is always the major part of holiday celebrations, especially for Chinese New Year. Every family has their own traditional dishes that are “must haves” on the dinner table. It’s like we eat turkey on Thanksgiving. Every year, my grandma makes a steamed date bread a couple of day’s prior of New Year’ Eve. She learned it from her mother and now the recipe has been passed down to me. Whenever my mom smells the scent of dates, she says it “smells” like Chinese New Year. Fish is also a “must have” dish for each family. Its pronunciation is the same as “surplus” in Chinese. That night, my grandma cooked a gigantic whole fish. In order to “maximize” the surplus, my grandma put a stern look on her face and declared that no one could touch the fish, we’re eating it tomorrow... It sure was a lot of “surplus.”



The Firecrackers have been part of the Chinese New Year tradition for hundreds of years. Their deafening explosions are thought to scare away evil spirits. At 12:00 midnight, the whole city seems like it has been exploded with colorful dynamite. You have to scream at the top of your lungs to talk to the person next to you. Last year in Beijing was my first time to witness this scene. I remember my mom and I jumped up and squeezed each other. I was startled by the explosions and thought it was the start of a whole new war! Although the burning of firecrackers represents a joyful time of year, it has led an unfortunate outcome --- the pollution. Being suggested by the government, people cut their firework expense almost in half this year! But still the PM2.5 reading on the very next day was 400 in many big cities... a very severe level. ☹ This joy comes with guilt. Now that the I.T companies are so successful, they should come up with an electronic firecracker to make the Chinese New Years greener.

