



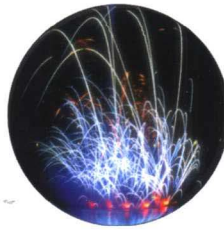
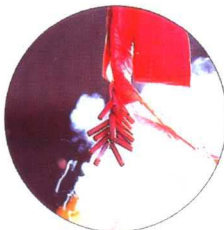
中西方 主要节日文化渊源

张彩霞 孙瑞梅 主编

CULTURAL ORIGIN OF THE MAIN FESTIVALS IN CHINA AND WESTERN COUNTRIES



山东科学技术出版社
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前言

FORWORD

语言是文化的一种载体，语言交流除传递日常活动信息外，往往是文化之间的交流。不同文化的国家，有着不同的传统节日，这些节日的来历反映了一个国家的历史与文化。节日习俗是各民族文化史上的重要内容之一，也是地方民间传统文化的宝贵遗产。中西方节日习俗是中西方民族传统文化、习惯、道德的一座无比丰富的宝库。《中西方主要节日文化渊源》一书内容全面、趣味新颖，把中西方主要节日的来历和庆祝方式以其独具民族特色的风姿、风貌展现在读者的面前。

在该书的编写过程中，我们查阅了大量的中外文资料，既注意保留原稿的风格，又进行了必要的补充和删改，以增强文章的可读性、知识性和趣味性。为了使读者学到地道的英语，我们请美籍教师 E.A. Wilson 对该书的编写提出了宝贵的建议并对英语部分进行了校对。Wilson 说：“I have lived in China for many years, but have never found a good, comprehensive book that explains the Chinese holidays to my western mind...until now. Although the authors wrote the book with a Chinese audience in mind, I believe foreigners who read this book will get a grasp on the Chinese holidays and the Chi-

nese way of looking at their history, traditions, and treasured customs.”

对于英、汉学习者来说，了解他国的节日习俗，尊重他国的风俗习惯，有利于建立友好的民族关系。相信本书能使读者在轻松、愉快的阅读中，丰富中西文化知识，增强跨文化交际的语言能力，充分领略英、汉两种语言的魅力。

编 者



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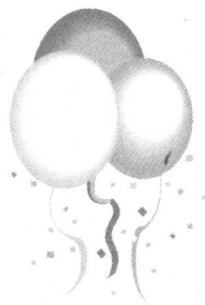
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Chinese Main Festivals

中国主要节日



New Year's Day

(Jan.1)

New Year's Day is also called "Yuan Dan" in China. It falls on the first day of the first month of the Gregorian calendar.

How did *Yuan Dan* come into existence? It is said that it was Zhuan Xu who began to observe the festival. Zhuan Xu was one of the legendary rulers (the Three August Ones and the Five Lords). The Three August Ones were Fu Xi, Shen Nong, and Sui Ren or Zhu Rong and the Five Lords were Huang Di, Zhuan Xu, Di Ku, Di Yao, and Di Shun. Zhuan Xu stipulated that the first month of the lunar year was called *Yuan*, *Yuan* means the beginning or the first, and day is called *Dan*. So the first day of the first month in a lunar year was called *Yuan Dan*. But later on, the date of *Yuan Dan* was different in each dynasty—Xia(2100 ~ 1600B.C.), Shang(1600 ~ 1100B.C.), Zhou(1100 ~ 221B.C.), Qin (221 ~ 206B.C.) or Han(206B.C. ~ 220A.D.) respectively. According to the book, *The Records of the Historians* written by Sima Qian in the Han Dynasty, the Xia Dynasty took the lunar New Year's Day as *Yuan Dan* or *Yuan Day*; the Yin Dynasty(1400 ~ 1100B.C.) took the first day of the twelfth month of the lunar year as *Yuan Dan*; the Zhou Dynasty took the first day of the eleventh month of the lunar year as *Yuan Dan*. After the First Emperor of Qin unified China in 221 B.C., a unified calendar was issued, thus, the first day of the tenth month of the lunar year was taken as *Yuan Dan*. Up to the time of Han Wudi (an emperor of the Han Dynasty, Liu Che, 140 ~ 87B.C.), the lunar New Year's Day was called *Yuan Dan*. As it was on the same day as that in the Xia Dynasty, this calendar was also called "the traditional Chinese calendar or the lunar calendar". After the Revolution of October 10, 1911(the Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution led by Mr Sun Yat-sen which overthrew the Qing Dynasty), the Gregorian calendar(or the solar calendar) commonly used in the world was adopted. Since then, January 1st of the solar year has been called *Yuan Dan* or New Year's Day.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, people in all walks of life have a day off for New Year's day. The Chinese people of all nationalities celebrate their great victory and achievements of the year. Some schools, factories, mines and other enterprises have a get-together, a dance or a dinner party on New Year's Day. They gather together happily, review the past year, and look forward to a new year. The Chinese Central and local television stations of the whole country broadcast TV programs on a special topic to celebrate New Year's Day. Thus, New Year's Day is not only a festival for our Chinese people of all nationalities to enjoy ourselves, but also a new start for us to constantly urge ourselves to make progress. So the day is worth celebrating.

元旦

(1月1日)

新年,在中国也叫“元旦”,就是公历的1月1日。

“元旦”这一名称是怎么来的呢?据说起自三皇五帝之一的颛顼。传说三皇五帝是远古时代的统治者,通常认为三皇是伏羲、神农和燧人或祝融,五帝是黄帝、颛顼、帝喾、帝尧和帝舜。颛顼以正月为元,初一为旦,所以农历的正月初一叫元旦。但后来,夏(公元前2100~前1600)、商(公元前1600~前1100)、周(公元前1100~前221)、秦(公元前221~前206)、汉(公元前206~公元220)各个朝代的元旦日期并不一致。据汉朝司马迁写的《史记》记载:夏代以正月初一为元旦或叫做元日;殷代(公元前1400~前1100)以十二月初一为元旦;周代以十一月初一为元旦。秦始皇于公元前221年统一中国后,颁布统一历法,以十月初一为元旦。直到汉武帝(汉朝皇帝刘彻,公元前140年至公元前87年在位)时,才规定以正月初一为元旦。由于它和夏代的规定一样,所以这样的历法又称“夏历”。1911年10月10日辛亥革命(孙中山先生领导的推翻清朝统治的中国资产阶级民主革命)以后,改用世界通用的公历。从那时起,以公历1月1日为元旦(或新年)。

新中国成立以后,每年元旦放假一天,全国各族人民在这一天庆祝一年来取得的伟大胜利和各条战线所取得的巨大成绩。有些厂矿、企业和学校举行元旦联欢会、舞会、宴会等。大家欢聚一堂,回顾、总结过去的一年,展望、计划新的一年。全国各电视台都播放元旦联欢会专题节目。因此,元旦不仅是各族人民欢乐的节日,而且也是鞭策我们不断进步的一个新起点,是值得珍视的日子。

Spring Festival

(the 1st day of the 1st lunar month)

The first day of the first lunar month is the Spring Festival, the Lunar New Year's Day.

The Spring Festival is the most important traditional festival in China. It is said that the Spring Festival evolved from an activity known as the Winter Sacrifice. It was a custom practiced by the people of the primitive society.

As the cold winter began to recede and the warm spring was about to begin, the people of an entire clan gathered together. They brought out their bounty from hunting, fishing and the field. They thanked the gods of nature for the blessings, including the mountains, rivers, the sun, the moon and stars. They thanked their ancestors, and then they shared and enjoyed the sumptuous bounty of the sea, air and fields as they ate, danced and sang heartily.

In the beginning, their activity had no fixed date. But usually it was held at the end of each winter. Gradually, through the years, it was celebrated at the end of the old year or the beginning of the new year. With the changes and disintegration of primitive society, the form and content of the Winter Sacrifice also changed. Ultimately, it became a festival to bid farewell to the old year and welcome in the new year. So it came to be called the Spring Festival, or the Lunar New Year's Day.

After the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, the Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen which overthrew the Qing Dynasty, China adopted the international calendar—the Gregorian calendar (the solar calendar). But the old folk still observed New Year's Day on the first day of the first lunar month, which marks the beginning of the Chinese Lunar New Year. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, our country has had a unified calendar which shows that the first day of the first solar month is New Year's Day, and the first day of the first lunar month is renamed the Spring Festival. The date of the Spring Festival is not fixed on the Gregorian calendar every year. It falls between January 21st and February 22nd. The earliest date is on January 21st and the latest date falls on February 22nd.

Of all our festivals, the Spring Festival is the most important to us Chinese.

Several days before the lunar New Year, we spring-clean our houses and decorate them. The old folk say that everything must be new and clean for the Spring Festival celebrations so that the New Year will bring happiness and good luck.

According to the Chinese tradition, every year Chinese people observe the Spring

Festival, every family hangs up(or sticks up) Spring Festival couplets, which are pasted on gateposts or door panels conveying one's best wishes for the year.

In ancient times, the Spring Festival couplets were called "peach wood charms against evil, hung on the gate on the lunar New Year's Eve" or called "door-god". They were often pasted on the front door of a house as talismans in old China. The ancient people before the Five Dynasties(907~960), regarded Shen Tu and Yu Lei as the gods and wrote their names on two pieces of peach wood and put them up on both sides of the gate. The Five Dynasties were the Later Liang Dynasty(907~923), the Later Tang Dynasty(923~936), the Later Jin Dynasty(936~946), the Later Han Dynasty(947~950), and the Later Zhou Dynasty(951~960).

According to legend, Shen Tu and Yu Lei were brothers and they were both spiritual beings. They lived under a big peach tree on Du Shuo Mountains. The big peach tree was coiling and winding for 3,000 *li* (equal to 1,500 kilometers). The northeast gate of hell through which thousands of ghosts came and went, was guarded by Shen Tu and Yu Lei, who would catch the vicious ghosts with reed ropes and let the tigers eat them up. Thus, from ancient times, people had often erected human figures made of peach wood on New Year's Eve, hung up binding ropes and drew Shen Tu, Yu Lei and tigers on them to drive out vicious ghosts and evils. Up to the time of the Five Dynasties, Meng Chang in the Later Shu(934~965) began to write Spring Festival couplets on pieces of peach wood. For example, once he wrote, "The New Year's Day offers more happiness, the good festival marks a long spring." These were the earliest Spring Festival couplets of our country. During the Song Dynasty(960~1279), Spring Festival couplets were already in vogue. So Wang Anshi in the Song Dynasty specially wrote a poem, *The Lunar New Year's Day*, which says:

Amid the din of crackers,
Goes the parting year.
The winds of spring,
Bring warmth to help the wine mature.
To millions and millions of households,
The sun imparts its brighter rays.
Old peach wood charms,
Renewed, against evil shall insure.

After the founding of the Ming Dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang, the first emperor, once gave an order that every family, no matter if it was one of the high ranking officials or one of the common people, must put up Spring Festival couplets on either side of the gates after he founded his capital in Nanjing. Up to that time, Spring Festival couplets had already been written on pieces of red paper. At first, only the local authorities and families with high social status put up the couplets. So did ordinary people later. From then on, it became a

custom for common people to put up Spring Festival couplets on Lunar New Year's Eve, which has been handed down from ancient times.

Now, on the eve of Lunar New Year's Day, every family puts up red Spring Festival couplets on the doorframe and on door panels are written words like "Chun" meaning "spring" or "Fu" meaning "happiness". When the family happily gathers together under the same roof for dinner, the celebration begins. No matter how far away from home a person is, he will always try to get home in time for this big dinner, which lasts a couple of hours.

Since the Spring Festival marks the first day of a brand new year, the first meal is rather important. People from the north and south have different sayings about the food they eat on this special day.

In Northern China, people usually eat *Jiaozi* or dumplings shaped like a crescent moon. It is said that dumplings were first known in China some 1,600 years ago. The Chinese pronunciation of *Jiaozi* means "midnight" or "the end and the beginning of time". According to historical records, people in both the north and south parts of China ate dumplings on Chinese New Year's Day. Perhaps because southern China produced more rice than any other areas, gradually, the southern people had many other choices on the Spring Festival.

In addition to *Jiaozi*, the most common foods for the first meal of the Spring Festival are noodles, New Year cakes and *Tangyuan*, a kind of round sweet dumplings. Both the cakes and dumplings are made of glutinous rice flour.

In China, noodle symbolizes longevity. The New Year cake also called *Nian Gao* in Chinese conveys the hope that life will be improved year by year. The round sweet dumpling is a symbol of family reunion.

After the family reunion dinner, the whole family sits around, watching the live evening programs for celebrating the Spring Festival from the Chinese central or local television stations. Parents or grandparents offer the children money as a lunar New Year gift and encourage them to do better in the coming year. Some parents put the money gifts under the children's pillows when they are asleep. Money given to children as a lunar New Year gift symbolizes two things: first, parents or grandparents hope that children will grow safe and sound in the new year; second, they can help to intensify the festive atmosphere.

On the first day of the holiday, we usually stay at home. We get up fairly early and the first thing to do is to exchange New year greetings. Now in some administrative units people gather together to exchange New Year greetings on the Spring Festival morning and set off fireworks.

On the second and the third day we go visiting relatives and friends. We sit together chatting and eating candies, cakes and all kinds of delicacies. Every family prepares something special.

As for recreational activities during the Spring Festival, we can use two words to summarize them: rich and colorful. The Dragon Dance and Lion Dance are traditionally performed during the festival. The dances do not have to be performed by professionals. Sometimes the performers are farmers, street vendors or craftsmen. One kind of dance is called *Yangge*, a popular rural folk dance, which farmers like to dance during the Spring Festival.

Walking on stilts is another traditional performance event popular in China, especially in the northern part of the country. According to the archives, our Chinese ancestors began using stilts to help them gather fruits from trees. This practical use of stilts gradually developed into a kind of folk dance.

Today's skillful performers can perform truly amazing feats and extremely difficult movements on stilts. The professionals even perform dramas while walking about on stilts.

If you are not a stilt-walker yourself, or you do not do a dragon or lion dance, never mind! During the Spring Festival, you can go to temple fairs and enjoy superb performances of the dances, walking-on-stilt performances and amazing acrobatic shows. You can also try and enjoy the many varieties of local snack food.

Nowadays, most people in China's rural areas still hold to these traditional celebrations. However, as the pace of life continues to quicken in the cities, urban residents have taken up new ways to celebrate the traditional Spring Festival. They use the telephone or pagers to convey greetings to relatives and friends. To travel during the New Year holidays is fashion.

As the Spring Festival is one of the most important festivals in China, the celebration lasts 15 days. The fifteenth night of the first full moon is called the Lantern Festival, which pushes the Spring Festival recreational activities to another climax.

春 节

(农历正月初一)

农历的正月初一是春节,即农历的元旦。

春节是中国最重要的节日,据记载,春节由冬天祭拜活动发展而来。冬祭是原始社会人们的一种习俗。

当寒冷的冬天即将过去,温暖的春天即将来临之际,整个氏族的人们聚集在一起。他们拿出从打猎、钓鱼和田野中收获的丰盛的物品来感谢自然界众神(包括山川、河流、太阳、月亮和星星)的恩赐。他们载歌载舞感谢祖先,共同享用海洋中、大气中和土地中生长出的丰盛食物。

开始时,冬祭活动没有固定的日期,但一般是在每年冬天结束时进行。慢慢地,他们在新旧年交替的时候开展庆祝活动。随着时代的变化和原始社会的解体,冬祭的形式和内容也发生了变化。最终它变成了一个辞旧迎新的节日。所以,人们开始称它为春节,或叫农历的元旦。

1911年由孙中山先生领导的推翻清朝的资产阶级民主革命,即辛亥革命后,中国采用了世界通用的历法——公历(亦称阳历)。但是,民间仍习惯在农历的正月初一过新年,这天标志着中国农历新年的开始。中华人民共和国成立以后,全国统一以公历的1月1日为新年(即元旦),而把农历的正月初一改为春节。每年春节这一天公历的日期是不固定的,它在1月21日和2月22日之间变化。最早在1月21日,最迟在2月22日。

在所有的节日中,春节对于我们中国人来说是最重要的。

农历年到来的前几天,我们便把房子打扫得干干净净并装饰一新。老人们说必须干干净净过春节,这样来年才会幸福、交好运。

根据中国的传统,年年过春节,家家都要贴春联,把春联贴在门上来表达对新年的美好祝愿。

春联,古时称“桃符”或“门贴”。五代以前的人们过年时,多在两块桃木板上写上神荼、郁垒二神的名字,挂在门的两旁。五代指的是后梁(907~923),后唐(923~936),后晋(936~946),后汉(947~950)和后周(951~960)。

相传,神荼、郁垒为兄弟俩,都是神人,家住在度朔山上的一棵大桃树下。大桃树盘曲三千里(1500公里),万鬼出入的东北的鬼门,由神荼、郁垒把守。对于恶鬼,他俩就用苇索绑起来,让虎吃掉。于是,从远古起,人们常在除夕立桃人、悬绑索,并画上神荼、郁垒与虎,以示驱鬼压邪。到了五代,后蜀(934~965)的孟昶开始在桃梗上题写联语,他所写的“新年纳余庆,佳节号长春”便是我国最早的春联。到了宋朝(960~1279)春联已经很盛行了。宋代的王安石还特地写了一首题为《元日》的诗: