

The tale about Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year is also called Lunar New Year or Spring Festival. It is the most important holiday in China and in some other Asian countries. Chinese New Year falls on the first day of the lunar year. Since the lunar calendar is based on the phases of the moon-- which has a shorter cycle than the sun--Chinese New Year is never on the same day each year, but typically falls somewhere between January 21st and February 20th. People celebrate this holiday with big family gatherings and big feasts. They also give kids red envelopes with money inside, shoot fire crackers and fireworks and put up bright red festive decorations. All of these celebrations are focused on bringing good luck for the new year and celebrating the coming of Spring.

Below is a tale about Chinese New Year.

A long, long time ago, in China, there was a very powerful monster called "Nian" (meaning "Year" in Chinese). It lived in the deep sea. Every Chinese New Year's Eve it would come out and hunt for people and animals.

Thus, on each Chinese New Year's Eve, villagers would run away and hide in the forest or caves. In one year on the Chinese New Year's eve, a white-haired old man came to the village. He told the villagers that he knew a way to defeat Nian for good. But nobody believed him. They all escaped and hid.

That night, Nian came again. But as soon as he came to the first house, he realized something was different from past years. Four big lanterns lit the house as bright as in daytime. Shining golden characters on the bright red paper flanked the front door. The strong light and shining golden and red colors stung his eyes and made his brain dizzy. Just when he was still hesitating what to do, a loud cracking sound started. Accompanying the sound, there were also fire and lightning. He waited for the scary noise, the fire and lightning to subside, but they never stopped. Soon, it was almost daybreak. He had to go back to the sea before the sun rose. But just when he turned back towards the sea, a tall figure dressed all in bright red jumped in front of him. Scared and frustrated, Nian fled as fast as he could and never came to bother people again.

Next day, the villagers returned. They were very happy that their houses were intact and their animals were untouched. The old man explained to them he could scare away monster Nian because Nian was scared of loud noise, fire, lightning and red color. That is why from then on, Chinese people always decorate their front door with doublets made of golden characters on red paper, light fire crackers on the New Year's eve and dress in red during the holiday.

年的传说

中国新年又叫阴历(农历)年或春节，俗称“过年”。是中国和一些亚洲国家隆重、最热闹的一个传统节日。节前各家大扫除，办年货，贴春联。节日期间，合家团圆，欢聚畅饮。新年的钟声敲过，街上鞭炮齐鸣，长辈给儿童压岁钱，亲朋好友互相拜年。节后半月又是元宵节，其时花灯满城，游人满街，盛况空前，元宵节过后，春节才算结束了。

那么过年的习俗是怎么来的呢？

传说中国古时候有一种叫“年”的怪兽，凶猛异常，“年”兽长年深居海底，每到除夕，爬上岸来吞食牲畜伤害人命，因此每到除夕，村村寨寨的人们扶老携幼，逃往深山，以躲避“年”的伤害。

又到了一年的除夕，乡亲们象往年一样都忙着收拾东西准备逃往深山，这时候村里来了一个白发老人，白发老人对村民说他定能将“年”兽驱赶走。众人不信，仍纷纷上山躲避去了。

当“年”兽象往年一样准备闯进村肆虐的时候，突然传来爆竹声，“年”兽浑身颤栗，再也不敢向前凑了，原来“年”兽最怕红色，火光和炸响。这时大门大开，只见院内一位身披红袍的老人哈哈大笑，“年”兽大惊失色，仓惶而逃。

第二天，当人们从深山回到村里时，发现村里安然无恙，这才恍然大悟，原来白发老人是帮助大家驱逐“年”兽的神仙，人们同时还发现了白发老人驱逐“年”兽的三件法宝。从此，每年的除夕，家家都贴红对联，燃放爆竹，户户灯火通明，守更待岁。这风俗越传越广，就成了中国民间最隆重的传统节日“过年”。