

Bedtime Stories

When I was a little girl, my grandfather used to tell me bedtime stories

“Grandpa, what kind of story you’re going to tell tonight?”

“Oh, my girl, I’m going to tell you a story about the Lunar New Year...”

Lunar New Year

Long, long time ago, there were some people living on the Mountain Tin. Most of the time, the people there lived happily and peacefully together. But at the beginning of each year, a wild animal named “Year” would come out from the cave and eat some villagers. It had horns. Its eyes were red and as big as bowls. Besides, it had a big mouth with sharp teeth. The people on Mountain Tin were scared; however, they didn’t know how to stop that. One year, it was the time “Year” appeared again. This time, “Year” chose to attack a little girl in the village. However, when “Year” saw the little girl dressed in red, it seemed to be afraid. At this moment, the little girl burst out into crying. “Year” was scared and ran away immediately. “oh, maybe “Year” was afraid of red and loud noise.” one villager stated. “Then maybe if we dress in red and light the fire crackers, the “Year” will be scared away.” The other villager suggested. “Yeah...” Most of the villagers agreed. Next day, the villagers dressed in red and were separated into several places in the village. “Here it comes!” A villager pointed at “Year” and shouted. Bang! Bang! Bang! The fire crackers were then lit up. “Year” was scared. It jumped several feet high and ran away immediately. “We’ve made it! Wa...” The villagers came out and shouted and laughed. After that, “Year” never showed up. Nevertheless, the villagers still dressed in red and lit the fire crackers every first week of the year cause they were afraid that “Year” would come back one day.

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In the first week of every new Chinese calendar year, we call it Lunar New Year. On that week, we don’t have to work or study. We just play and play to celebrate it. Usually, a few days before that week, we will have to clean up the house to prepare for the New Year. I can still remember that during the Lunar New Year, my grandmother would cook many dishes: chicken, duck, fish, shrimp, crab and vegetable. In addition, on that week, we had new clothes; of course, they’re not only red in color now. However, I think the happiest among all is people who have married have to give pocket money

to children. Usually, people will put the money into a red pocket and give it to children. So, this money is called Red Pocket. Most of the time, I would save this money until the last day of the week and then use them to buy whatever I wanted liked toys, candies and comics books. I could say that it was the wealthiest time of me among the whole year.

As I grow older and older, it seems that Lunar New Year is not so important to me than before. Nowadays, I can buy new clothes whenever I want. Besides, since my grandmother has died, my mom no longer cooks many dishes during the New Year. Most of the time, we will go to restaurant and eat there. In addition, playing with fire crackers and fireworks became illegal in Hong Kong. Suddenly, it seems that life is different in New Year time. Now, the only thing I do during the Lunar New year is going to theatres to see movies. Usually, within a week's time, I will see more than ten movies. Usually I am bored.

“Grandpa, what kind of story you’re going to tell tonight?”

8 “Oh, my girl, I’m going to tell the story about Dragon Boat Festival...”

Dragon Boat Festival

During the Chow Dynasty, there was a famous poet and critic named Ch’u Yuan. In his life, Ch’u Yuan had written many, many poems and people at that time respected him much. However, some of the critical poems of Ch’u made the Chow Emperor very angry. He then had Ch’u exiled. Ch’u was very depressed and sad. Finally, he drowned himself into the lake. As many people respected Ch’u at that time, they were afraid that the fishes in the lake would eat Ch’u’s body. Hence, they had used some lotus leaves to wrap the rice and threw the dumplings into the lake, hoping that the fishes would eat the dumplings and not eat Ch’u’s dead body. As to remember Ch’u Yuan, people eat rice dumplings on the day of his death.

Apart from eating rice dumplings, the dragon boat competition is another important event in the dragon boat festival. Although people no longer throw rice dumplings into the lake, instead, this action has been developed into dragon boat competition. Nowadays, there is even an international dragon boat competition.

During the dragon boat festival, my mom will make some rice dumplings to celebrate. She will put dried mushroom, meat and sausages into the dumplings and steamed to eat. In addition, besides salty rice dumplings, my mom will even make the sweet ones. Indeed, there is nothing inside the rice dumplings; but we eat them with sugar. Apart from the rice dumplings, during this festival, our family goes to the swimming pool to have a dragon boat day swim.

“Grandpa, what kind of story you’re going to tell tonight?”

“Oh, my girl, I’m going to tell the story about Mid-Autumn Festival...”

Mid-Autumn Festival

Long, long time ago, there were ten suns in the sky. The land was dried to crack and nothing could grow. People were living in a harsh environment. A strong man then appeared. He was so strong that he used his bow and arrows to shoot nine suns down. People on the earth were so happy that they took the man as their hero. Nevertheless, as time passed, the man became rude and bad. He even thought that he was so strong that he should live forever. Hence, he went to the fairy mountain and asked the fairies there to give him some medicine and he could live forever. The man’s wife knew this in some instances and rushed to the fairy mountain also. “oh, you can’t take that...” The man shouted at his wife when she grabbed his medicine and swallowed it. “Hmm...what happened to my body?” After taking the medicine, the man’s wife became so light that she flew to the sky. At last, she landed on the moon and lived there forever.

On Mid-Autumn Festival, adults will gather together and talk and eat. Children will play with candles and paper lanterns. I can still remember the lotus paste mooncakes as my favorite. However my parents would not let me eat more than one as they think that it will be too much. Besides mooncakes, we have variety of fruits to taste: persimmon, pomelo, sweet carambola, much and many others. One year, I was so sad that I burned my paper bunny lantern. My uncle then even used the pomelo to make me a lantern. My friends were so envious that I thought it may have been a good thing to burn the bunny lantern after all.

Now, the mooncakes I have tasted are much different. In the old times, we only have the lotus paste mooncakes; however, nowadays, I can try the chocolate mooncakes, ice cream mooncakes and different fruit mooncakes. In addition, the paper lantern is now a plastic lantern. Besides, we no longer need to light the candle inside the lantern. We can use batteries to operate the lantern. Well, since I am old enough to play with the lantern, I usually use a candle instead.

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