



COLORADO SPRINGS
CHINESE CULTURAL INSTITUTE
科泉市中華文化協會

茶葉香談

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TEA LEAVES

Winter 2017

Colorado Springs Chinese Cultural Institute

www.cscii.org



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Chinese Proverb

"A friend to everybody is a friend to nobody."

广交友，无深友。

CSCCI 2016

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CHINESE NEW YEAR

By Debra Bellas-Dow

Mythology

As with many cultures, there comes many mythical tales. One of many tales regarding the beginning of the Chinese New Year begins with a mythical beast called the Nian. It was believed, Nian would eat villagers, especially children. One year, all the villagers decided to go hide from the beast. Before the villagers went into hiding an old man appeared before them and said that he was going to stay the night to get revenge on the Nian. All the villagers thought he was insane. The old man put red papers up and set off firecrackers. The day after, the villagers came back to their town to see that nothing was destroyed. They assumed that the old man was a deity who came to save them. The villagers then understood that the Nian was afraid of the color red and loud noises. When the New Year was about to come, the villagers would wear red clothes, hang red lanterns, and red spring scrolls on windows and doors. People also used firecrackers to frighten away the Nian. From then on, Nian never came to the village again. It was told, Nian was eventually captured by Hongjun Laozu's an ancient Taoist monk. It was thought Nian became Hongjun Laozu's mount.

Red is the predominant color used in New Year celebrations. Red is the emblem of joy, and this color also symbolizes virtue, truth and sincerity. Candies, cakes, decorations and many things associated with the New Year and its ceremonies are colored red.

The Chinese New Year, or Spring Festival as it's been called since the 20th century, remains the most important social and economic holiday in China. Originally tied to the lunar-solar Chinese calendar, the holiday is a time to honor household and heavenly deities as well as ancestors. It is also a time to bring family together for feasting. With the popular adoption in China of the Western calendar in 1912, the Chinese joined in celebrating January 1 as New Year's Day. China, however, continues to celebrate the traditional Chinese New Year, although in a shorter version with a new name—the Spring Festival.



Chinese New Year traditions incorporate elements that are symbolic of deeper meaning. One common example of Chinese New Year symbolism is the red diamond-shaped fu characters which translates ("blessings, happiness").

Chinese New Year (continued)

By Debra Bellas-Dow

THE ANCIENT CHINESE CALENDAR

The calendar on which the Chinese New Year is based, functioned as a religious, dynastic and social guide. Oracle bones inscribed with astronomical records indicate that it existed at least as early as 14th century B.C., when the Shang Dynasty was in power. The calendar's structure wasn't static: It was reset according to which emperor held power and varied in use according to region.

The Chinese calendar is a complex timepiece. Its parameters were set according to the lunar phases as well as the solar solstices and equinoxes. Yin and yang, the opposing but complementary principles that make up a harmonious world, also ruled the calendar, as did the Chinese zodiac, the cycle of twelve stations or "signs" along the apparent path of the sun through the cosmos. Each new year was marked by the characteristics of one of the 12 zodiacal animals: the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig.

Traditionally for the Chinese, New Year is the most important festival on the calendar. The entire attention of the household is fixed on the celebration. During this time, business life comes nearly to a stop. Home and family are the principal focuses. In preparation for the holiday, homes are thoroughly cleaned to rid them of "huiqi," or inauspicious breaths, which might have collected during the old year. Cleaning is also meant to appease the gods who would be coming down from heaven to make inspections. Ritual sacrifices of food and paper icons are offered to gods and ancestors. People post scrolls printed with lucky messages on household gates and set off firecrackers to frighten evil spirits. Elders give money to children. In fact, many of the rites carried out during this period are meant to bring good luck to households and long to the family.

EVOLUTION OF SPRING FESTIVAL

The Western-style Gregorian calendar arrived in China along with Jesuit missionaries in 1582. It began to be used by the general population by 1912, and New Year's Day was officially recognized as occurring on January 1. Beginning in 1949, under the rule of Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong (1893-1976), the government forbade celebration of the traditional Chinese New Year and followed the Gregorian calendar in its dealings with the West. At the end of the 20th century, Chinese leaders were more willing to accept the Chinese tradition.

In 1996, China instituted a weeklong vacation during the holiday—now called Spring Festival—giving people the opportunity to travel home and to celebrate the new year.

In the early 21st century, many Chinese families spend a significant amount of their discretionary income celebrating the Spring Festival with traditional symbols and food. They also spent time watching the televised Spring Festival Gala: an annual variety show featuring traditional and contemporary singers, dancers and magic demonstrations. Although the rites of the holiday may no longer hold religious value for some, people remain sensitive to the Chinese zodiacal animals to the extent that they considered what, for example, a year of the Rooster might mean for their personal fortunes or for a child born at that time.

TRADITIONAL FOOD

Most important is the feasting. On New Year's Eve, the extended family will join around the table for a meal that included as the last course a fish that is symbolic of abundance and therefore not meant to be eaten. In the first five days of the New Year, people usually eat long noodles to symbolize long life. On the 15th and final day of the New Year, round dumplings shaped like the full moon were shared as a sign of the family unit.



The Girl With the Ghost Eyes

by M. H. Boroson

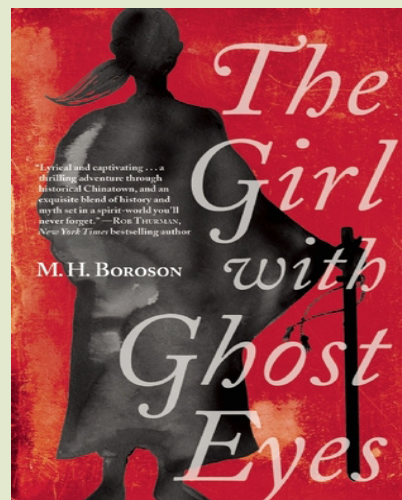
The Girl with Ghost Eyes is a fiction novel with Martial arts and Asian magic set in Old San Francisco being a period in the late 1800's. It is a fun read of history, Daoism martial arts and myth set in a spirit-world. It was Library Journal's Debut of the Month, Goodreads newsletter's Best Book of the Month, and Fantasy Book Critic's #1 Debut of the Year. Barnes & Noble's official blog said the novel is "a joy to read."

Proudly, The Girl with Ghost Eyes is authored by debut author M. H. Boroson from Colorado Springs in our very own community.

M. H. Boroson is a Colorado Springs resident and a longtime member of the Colorado Springs Chinese Cultural Institute. His novel The Girl with Ghost Eyes was published in 2015. In a starred review, Publishers Weekly called it "a brilliant tale of magic, monsters, and kung fu in the San Francisco Chinatown of 1898... This fantastic tale smoothly mixes Hong Kong cinema with urban fantasy."

In the world of The Girl with Ghost Eyes, men marry ghosts, household objects come to life after a hundred years, corpse-walkers lead dead men on journeys, and burnt paper offerings become real objects in the afterlife. A young Daoist priestess named Li-lin stands alone against the ghosts and demons that threaten her immigrant community. Carrying a peachwood sword, with a sarcastic talking eyeball as her companion, Li-lin must investigate supernatural crimes, undergo unearthly journeys, make friends with monsters, and learn forbidden forms of magic; but she must also unravel her own family's darkest secrets, encounter love, endure heartbreak, and make a place for herself as a Chinese and American woman at the dawn of a new century.

The Girl with Ghost Eyes received critical acclaim, was a bestseller on Amazon.com, and it's being adapted for television. A sequel will be published in October of 2017.



Mission Statement

The CSCCI is committed to fostering understanding of Chinese culture by promoting opportunities for events, networking, travel, education and services available to the people of Colorado Springs.

Become a Member

Colorado Springs Chinese Cultural Institute

To become a member, please complete the information below and send the form with your check or money order to:

Colorado Springs Chinese Cultural
Institute
PO Box 2625
Colorado Springs, CO 80901-2625

Membership Benefits:

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科泉市中華文化協會
 Colorado Springs Chinese Cultural Institute
Celebration of Chinese Lantern Festival
Traditional Chinese Hot Pot Dinner
 慶祝元宵節火鍋晚宴

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2017
 6:00PM

MANITOU ART CENTER
 513 MANITOU AVE,
 MANITOU SPRINGS, CO 80829

The Chinese hot pot has a history of more than 1,000 years and originated in Mongolia and the Jin Dynasty where the main ingredient was meat, usually beef, pork. It then spread to southern China during the Song Dynasty and was further established during the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty. In time, regional variations developed with different ingredients such as seafood. By the Qing Dynasty (ad 1644 to 1912), the hot pot became popular throughout most of China. Today in many modern homes, particularly in larger cities, the traditional coal-heated steamboat or hot pot has been replaced by electric, propane, butane gas, or induction cooker versions.



Cost: \$12.00 per Person \$10.00 for CSCCI Members

This is a special event with limited seating. Please RSVP by sending payment to CSCCI, P.O. Box 2625 Colorado Springs, CO 80901. Or, register online at www.csccl.org. Payment must receive by Feb. 8, 2017. Any questions please call 719-287-7624.

Lantern Festival

By Jiaying Peng

The first two months are busy times for the Chinese. Almost immediately following the almost-week long celebrations of the Chinese New Year comes another traditional holiday known as the Lantern Festival. This year, the date falls on February 11th, nine days after the celebration of Chinese New Year ends on February 2nd. Traditionally, the Lantern Festival marks the last day of the Spring Festival, celebrating the new year. After the Lantern Festival, all decorations celebrating the new year are taken down and stowed away until next year.

The Lantern Festival is almost as important to Chinese culture as the Chinese New Year. This holiday is celebrated with ancient traditions, such as eating sweet glutinous rice balls after a sumptuous dinner. The roundness of the sweet dessert represents the unity of family, which is one of the pillars of Chinese culture.

Another tradition of the Lantern Festival is the hanging of decorated, brightly-lit lanterns. The Chinese believe that the light emitting from these lanterns will guide them safely to a good future. These adorned lanterns can be seen hanging from almost everywhere during the Lantern Festival. In many places, it is tradition to pray under a lantern for a lucky year.



Newsletter Design by: Jiaying Peng
 Editor: Jiaying Peng

Upcoming Asian Holidays

Chinese New Year
 January 28, 2017

Lantern Festival
 February 11, 2017

Upcoming Asian Cultural Events

16th Annual CSCCI Chinese New Year Festival
 January 21, 2017
 City Auditorium, 221 East Kiowa St.

Lantern Festival Dinner*
 February 11, 2017
 Jade Dragon Chinese Restaurant, 3958 N Academy Blvd

*Register online at www.csccl.org

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