

Year of the Boar marked by Chinese students

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Dragon and lion dancers weave through the colourful streets as people cheer and set off firecrackers by scores. This is the scene one can see in China or any Chinese community around the world on a New Year's Day. It is the biggest, loudest, liveliest and most colourful festival of all celebrations. The old year is over and the spring, the season of new life and new hope is about to blossom. No wonder New Year is the favorite festival of all Chinese.

In addition to these, New Year is also a birthday of every Chinese, because regardless of the actual date on which a Chinese child is born, he is considered to be one year of age on New Year's Day.

The New Year commences on the new moon nearest to 15° of Aquarius, which is usually in the month of February. The holiday which almost everyone celebrates lasts from the first to the 15th day of the first lunar month. This year the big day fell on February 13th. During these days everyone devotes himself to pleasure. Preparations for the festival begin at the beginning of the twelfth month of the lunar calendar, and reach a climax in the last ten days.

To most people, the New Year Festival is a time of great gaiety, but to the isolated person it is a time of heart-break. This is not due to a lack of hospitality in Chinese homes, but is because the New Year Festival is a great family occasion.

It is also the occasion for paying respect to ancestors. The celebration is an occasion for the ceremonies relating to the family's origins, development, and future. That is why this custom makes all who are away from their families feel that returning home on the New Year Festival is a necessity.

The kitchen God - the deity who has spent the last twelve months in the kitchen watching over household happenings is also sent out of the family

home, to return to heaven. To insure that his report is favourable concerning the conduct of the various family members, a special meal is prepared for him on the night before his departure. Sweet sticky rice balls are molded, then smeared over the mouth of the god's image. This is to encourage him to say sweet words about the family when he reports to the Jade Emperor, or at least to keep his mouth glued shut so that he will say nothing at all. After all these, a farewell sacrifice is prepared for him.

Ch'u-hsi (Year-end House Cleaning):

A few days before New Year, there is a great house cleaning in each family. Everything in the house is cleaned, rearranged or decorated, so that the whole house is renewed. The old couplets, are taken down to be replaced by fresh ones. These are usually written by calligraphers. For example a motto may express: "Sincerity and honesty make the family long lasting; poetry and classics assure generations"; or "Diligence and thrift are the principal virtue in managing a household; filial piety and brotherhood are important measures for training children". In general, these mottoes reflect the ideals of the family.

Pictures, firecrackers, incense sticks, papers, and sweets are bought to decorate the house. The pictures generally represent flowers and birds, historical dramas, cheerful children, and fairy tales.

On the last day of the passing year, the final stages of preparation take place. Since it is a market day, everyone does their final shopping and cooking for the days ahead. The Narcissus and plum blossoms are favourite flowers for the home, and can be purchased in all flower shops. Oranges, apples and grapefruits are also set on the family table. The word for orange and grapefruit is a

Surplus - no effect on fees

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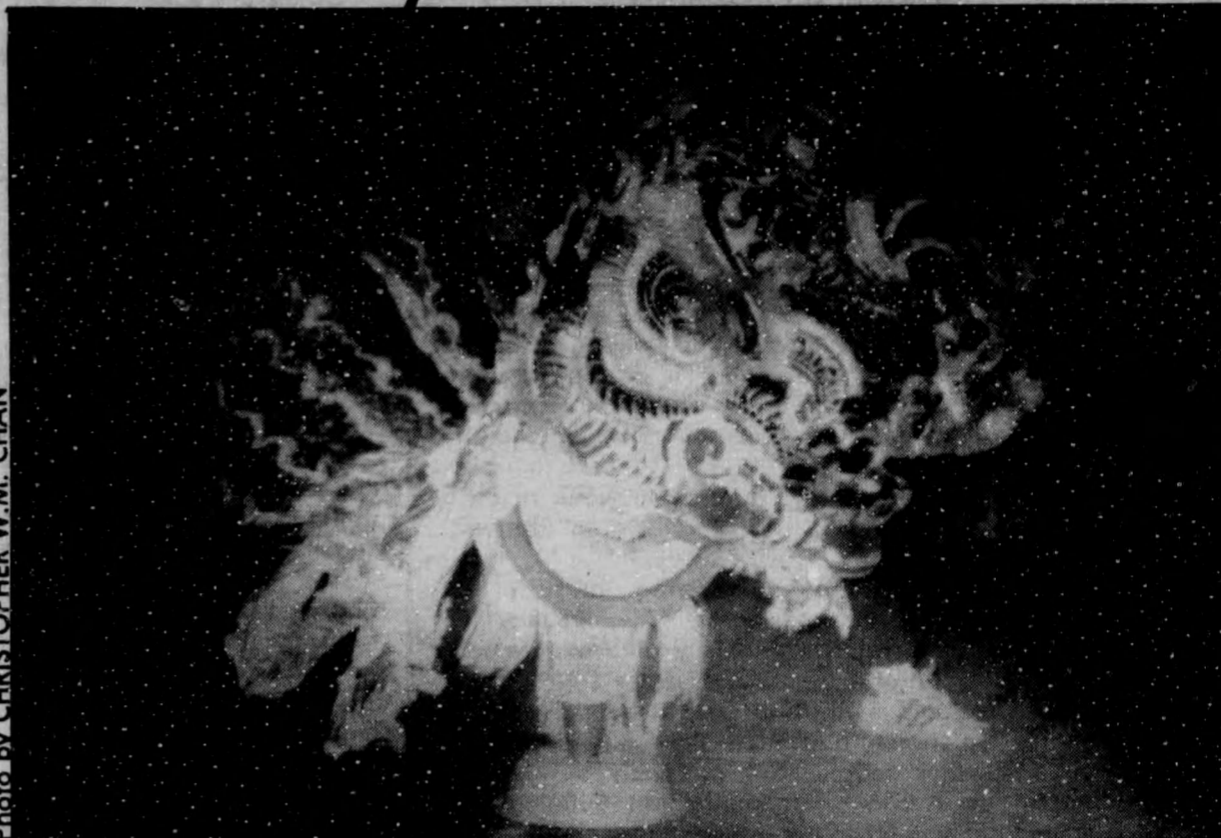
surplus, "have given the university a bit of a breather," but feels the surplus is an insignificant amount because a decrease could have occurred.

Downey also stated that a severe message of restraint is coming from both levels of government and this could have an effect on things for next year. Downey is optimistic, nevertheless, because UNB does not have any outstanding debts like many other Maritime universities, but everything is contingent

upon the level of funding granted by the government.

Tuition fees are also dependent upon government grants and Downey does not expect the surplus to have any effect on tuition at all. Downey stated that tuition fees account for 14% of the operating revenue, while government grants account for 75-78%.

Downey expects the surplus to be used to help write off the universities accumulated deficit of \$700,000 and if anything is left over, it will be carried forward to next year.



The feast of Lanterns: the dragon, the Chinese symbol of all things good, leads the celebration.

homonym for the character of luck. The first character of the word for apples means peace and is meant to bring peace to the children in the family.

Finally, it is New Year's Eve. All the family members gather around to stay up until midnight to pay a solemn goodbye to the old year. At the approach of midnight, all shops are closed and streets are quiet. Everyone stays at home and all the doors are locked to keep luck inside, and no one is permitted to come in or to go out until the next morning.

Hsin-Nien (New Year):

Just after midnight on New Year's Eve, there is a feeling in which joy, mystery, and dignity are mingled. The family members wash and put on their new clothes (for it is bad luck to wear old clothes and old shoes in the New Year).

Junior members of the family pay ceremonial respects and exchange greetings to those senior to them, and the latter show their benevolence to the former through gifts of money in little red envelopes as symbols of luck. On this day everyone tends to talk about prosperity and happiness in life. It is considered to be bad luck to raise one's voice or to use indecent language.

On the second day of the New Year, the streets become alive. It is the beginning of visits and exchange of greetings. Neighbours and friends bow when they meet and say "King-hsi" - "I wish you joy!" or "Kung-hsi Fa-Tsai" - "May joy and wealth be yours."

Teng-Chiech (Feast of Lanterns)

The last night of the New Year falls on the First full Moon of the first lunar month, or namely the Lantern Festival and it is the conclusion of the New Year celebration. The interesting feature of the

Lantern Festival is the distribution of lamps. Lanterns of different shapes, colours and sizes with poetic paintings on them appear everywhere around the city. From the surrounding heights they are like an immense bonfire.

In addition to this, a lantern parade is led by a huge dragon, the Chinese symbol of wisdom, justice, dignity, courage, harmony, righteousness, benevolence and all things good. This breathtaking dragon dance is executed by teams of nimble dancers who weave, twirl, and manipulate an awesome hundred-foot-long dragon in dazzling patterns.

The lantern parade led by the huge dragon makes its way through the streets; the wat-

ching crowds set off strings of firecrackers. Everyone is overwhelmed by the sound of pipes and drums. It marks the end of the long drawn-out New Year's festivities with great gaiety and excitement.

China created a brilliant culture and art, contributing previous spiritual wealth to mankind. It is difficult for a person to include all the celebrations in this short description and the outline is just like "Looking at flowers from horseback."

On behalf of the Chinese students at UNB and STU the author would like to take the opportunity to extend the warmest wishes to all the readers "Kung-hsi Fa-Tsai" - a Happy Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

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For further information please contact:

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