

Happy Chinese new year 新年快樂

My imagine of Chinese new year when I was back home was dragon customs, fireworks, red and yellow everywhere, nevertheless, Chinese new year is something full of tradition and family union.



We had the opportunity to apply for a program in which, foreigners from my university could go to a Taiwanese family to experience the Chinese New Year here in Taiwan. I didn't apply because at the beginning I wanted to have my own space to experience this in the streets, but it was not what I thought.

In Taipei everything was closed since two or three days before the mere day, Taipei Main Station was crazy, without tickets to everywhere in Taiwan. At the end I was regretting for not having apply to the Taiwanese Family, it was difficult to find places to eat.

Fortunately, one or two days before Chinese new year's eve I met a Taiwanese friend whom invited me to his place, to have dinner with his family.

He advertised me before; that there were suppose to be around 40 members of his family, so I thought it was going to be nice, because it was really a gathering of all the members of that family. It was in Taipei County, he invited to me and two more other friends.

At the beginning we didn't know what to bring to the family, but we read on internet that it is tradition that you can bring a gift, with a red and golden envelop.

Once we get to the house, around 6:00 P.M. all the family was already there, chilling out, and cooking, it was a wonderful experience, because it reminds me the gatherings in mine family but with a different tradition and culture.



The house decorated with fishes and red everywhere, even the people wearing red cloth.

By the time of the dinner, there was no space in the dinning room, so old people was seat there, the rest of us, everywhere in the house, but everyone sharing the same food from the table, eating *jiaozi*,

salad, fish, and different kinds of taiwanese food.

After dinner, they started giving red envelopes, the *hóng bào* to kids and for us, it was a little bit embarrassing for us, as master students with twenty something years old, but it was nice at the same time to feel like a little boy receiving a gift from his parents on christmas or in the birthday.

After that, we start playing cards and chips, *ma Jong*, at least they were trying to teach us how to play it, but I think that we need to play it more often to understand it completely and start gambling with the family as part of the tradition.

At the end of the night, at midnight, we were participating with the fireworks with the family, with young members of the family mostly, and there was neighbors in the street playing with the fireworks as well.

But, there was something I didn't see and I really wanted to, and it was the Dragon Dance, maybe I didn't look for that in the accurate places.

After all, we noticed that this celebration is full of tradition and color, me and my friends from latin America started to compare the chinese new year and the common new year we celebrate, and it was great to have the experience to be with a family, even when it is not ours, but we knew they made an effort to make us feel ourselves at home.

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