

My New Year Experience in Taiwan
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Xīn nián kuàilè to all readers



February 14, 2010 marks the start of the Year of the Tiger on the Chinese Lunar Calendar this year. Chinese New Year, I have been informed is a holiday that celebrates the beginning of a new year according to the lunar calendar. It is considered to be one of the most important holidays for Chinese families.

The holiday is celebrated according to my source with big family gatherings, gift giving, the eating of symbolic & delicious foods and display of festive decorations--all focused on bringing good luck for the New Year and celebrating the coming of spring.

However it is different with what expected and know; to me, New Year generally is a moment of joy and change of lives for the better. It is the time when people recollect their past deeds and evaluate them to know what has been achieved and what is not, also to know what progress has been made in one's life and what is expected of him/her for the New Year, therefore many set resolutions as to what to do during the year ahead, which goes with varieties of social activities.

Anyway this is my second year in Taiwan but it happens to be my first experience of the Lunar New Year. During the period, I travelled to the South of Taiwan on an invitation of my Taiwanese roommate to Jihben her home town, close to Taitung. I was very excited and I feel honored because she told me that this festive period is very special and it is a time when family members get together from far and wide to celebrate and enjoy and also pray for a more prosperous year ahead. My friend and her mother; a wonderful and very kind Taiwanese Lady

took me for a three days site seeing tour of their locality and that did not make any difference in her full time preparations of welcoming the New Year.

I later regret not having a map with me to mark all the places we visited, however I recalled going to an Island called San-shan Tai, also viewed the Green Island at a close range and we visited mountain areas one specific place I remember is called Dulan San meaning Dulan mountain where I was told has the mine of Blue Jewels, and I have smuggled some of the blue gem with me.

My New Year experience was wonderful and memorable and I cannot forget hot-spring baths I do every day while in that part of the world (Taitung-Jihben), am informed this area is very famous for hot-spring in Taiwan --- am already missing it as I write this essay.

Apart from site seeing trips with the family; I helped with cleaning the home of my host and shopping in the local vegetable and fruit market. Before the big day we went to the fish market and my friend's mother bought a very big fish to my surprised. Lot of delicious food was prepared all for one day and later a lot of talking and eating as so many different dishes was prepared ranging from fish, chicken, meat, vegetables and other seafood.

After the official New Year eve and day with my friend and her family; exchange of gifts and praying for good year and cementing ties stronger between Taiwan and Gambia for I was representing my country and being an ambassador of my country, I thank them and left for Pintung for another three days before heading back to Taipei.