



Business Chinese Radio Classes— Lesson 6 Chinese New Year (culture session)

I Learning Goal

Getting to know the origin and traditions of Chinese New Year and the development of the New Year tradition

II Cultural Points

1. The origin of Chinese New Year
2. Red Envelope
3. Scrambling Hong Bao

III Question

What are the two meanings of Nian?

IV Scripts:

Tingting: Hi, welcome to the special culture session of *Everything about Business Chinese*. Today we are going to talk about Chinese New Year! I am your host Tingting.

Colin: I'm Colin.

Tingting: Colin, do you know that Chinese lunar new year is around the corner?

Colin: Yeah, I have already learnt how to give New Year blessings---给您拜年了 gěi nín bài nián le!

Tingting: 也给您拜年 yě gěi nín bài nián! I believe that you know the Chinese word "Nian" literally means "year". But, do you know, originally, it was a monster.

Colin: A monster?

Tingting: According to a Chinese folklore, "Nian" is a scary beast with an ox's body and a lion's head. On New Year's Eve, "Nian" comes out to harm people and rob their properties.

Colin: Then how did people fight Nian?

Tingting: People found out that "Nian" is afraid of red color and loud noise. Therefore, they post a kind of poem written on red paper, which we call Spring Couplets, and hang red lanterns on the front door on New Year's eve. Also, people set off firecrackers and fireworks to scare Nian away. Those traditions have been observed until now.

Colin: I see, that's interesting. A friend once told me that he receives red envelopes from his parents.

Tingting: Red envelope is called Hong Bao in Chinese. The red color of the envelope can dispel evil spirits and bring good luck. Originally, Hong Bao are usually given by parents and grandparents to the youngers.

Colin: Wow, I am not a kid anymore, can I still get one?

Tingting: Yes, you can. Nowadays, with the popularity of smartphones, the ways to give Hong Bao have changed a lot. It's popular for adults to give and receive Hong Bao from each other.

Colin: Really? Adults also give each other Hong Bao?

Tingting: Yes! Do you know Wechat?

Colin: I do. Wechat is the very popular social media app with instant payment. It originates in China.

Tingting: Indeed, Wechat enables people to send digital red envelopes to each other near and far as a token of greetings and gratitude. Besides sending Hong Bao to a specific receiver, you can also send one Hong Bao to several receivers who scramble for their own share. The total amount of Hong Bao sent and received on New Year's Eve last year was 8.08 billion Chinese Yuan, almost equal to 1.18 billion US dollars.

Colin: Are you serious? 1.18 billion US dollars?

Tingting: So be sure to join us in Scrambling Hong Bao this year.

Colin: Thank you for listening. This is the end of today's program. Today's question is what are the two meanings of Nian? You can email your answer or your comments to CIB@Chinamericaradio.com and we will post them on our twitter account @Confuciusbiz.

Xu: You can download today's transcript or listen to the program again for free at Chinamericaradio.com. Just go to the Partners page and click on the SUNY-CIB banner.

Tingting: You can also see a listing of the upcoming activities at SUNY-Confucius Institute for Business. See you next week! 下周见 xià zhōu jiàn!