



Hunan Foster Care Program

Families Thru International Adoption

Fall 2010

Winter Festival

Officially known as *Dongzhi Festival*, the Winter Festival, sometimes called the Winter Solstice Festival or the Mid-Winter Festival, usually falls around December 22nd each year. This is a time when families traditionally come together to celebrate their good fortune over the past year.

In the south of China, families traditionally prepare and serve tangyuan, which is a gelatinous rice ball, said to represent unity.

Families in the north often prepare and serve dumplings for this holiday. The dumpling tradition is said to have been started by Zhang Zhongqing during the Han Dynasty. It is said that he noticed that the poor people were cold and suffered from frostbite at this time of year, so he ordered his chef to prepare dumplings for them so they could warm themselves with the hot food.

This festival is often used to mark the end of the farming activities for the year. After the crops from the previous year have been gathered and stored, and the harvest is complete, families have the time to relax and enjoy life. This is usually done through music and dancing, and spending time with family members.

Other activities during the Winter Festival include honoring ancestors who are in the after life and rewarding the family's livestock for their hard work during the past year. Families also give thanks for the good fortune of the past year and offer prayers for another good year.



Tangyuan



Dumplings

Information for this article courtesy of childbook.com and wikipedia.com



From Hunan

Guo Wei

Guo Wei is a cute boy who is very attached to his foster mother. His favorite activity is to sit on his mother's lap and listen to his foster mother "talk" to him. He likes his mother to make some funny sounds. He laughs loudly whenever he hears it. He is never tired of this game. One day, he broke wind and it made big noise. He was really entertained by that sound and laughed long time. Then he tightened all his muscles up to push another one, but it didn't work. It made him pretty upset.





From Hunan Continued

Sheng Quan

Sheng Quan, #538, is a little boy who likes food very much. Recently he falls in love with the fast food served in KFC and McDonald. He loves hamburgers, French fries, fried chicken wings and so on. His foster mother told him, “These foods are junk food. They are not good to your body”. With a mouthful of beef hamburger, he shouted, “Yum, I like junk food. They are really good to my mouth”.





Musical Instruments

As in most cultures around the world, music plays an important part in the Chinese culture. Historical records show that there used to be around 1,000 different Chinese musical instruments, with some of them dating back over 8,000 years.



Xun, a clay flute

In ancient times, there were thought to be eight different types or sounds of music. These sounds were often derived from the natural world, and the music they produced was often used to gauge the level of productivity among the workers.

These eight sound categories include metal, such as gongs or bronze instruments; string instruments, often played with the fingers or a bow; bamboo, including those instruments made from the bamboo stalk, such as flutes; gourd instruments, such as a sheng or yu; clay instruments, often used as wind or percussion instruments; leather, using animal skins to create drums or other percussion sounds; and wood instruments, such as the xylophone.



Sheng



Guqin, a stringed instrument



Xiao, a bamboo flute

Information taken from “Things Chinese” by Du Feibao. China Travel & Tourism Press, 2002.

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