

节日庆典：贴春联到元宵灯谜的年味记忆

每逢春节，我的家乡便进入一种热闹而期待的状态。从腊月二十三的小年开始，街巷里挂起了红灯笼，门楣贴上了春联，空气中弥漫着甜香的年味。

贴春联是一项传统却被每个人珍视的仪式。大年三十前，家家户户在门外贴上红色对联。上联通常写“迎春纳福”，下联写“富贵安康”；横批则是“福满人间”或“喜迎八方”。贴春联并不是一句简单的文字游戏，而是将对新一年美好生活的期盼贴在家门口，一家人一起参与，表达对幸福生活的共同祝愿。

除夕夜，家人围坐餐桌前，品味年夜饭——一道道传统佳肴从厨房搬上桌：红烧鱼象征年年有余，饺子象征团圆。饭后，全家一同守岁，聊天、看春晚、偶尔出门放鞭炮。漫天的烟火为夜色增色，也象征新的开始。

到了正月十五，便是元宵节。傍晚时分，村里的广场会点起花灯，彩绸绕灯杆，灯谜卡片挂满灯笼。大家挑灯笼、提灯笼，孩子们奔跑嬉闹，长辈们微笑聊天。一边猜谜一边喝元宵——那种甜糯的口感配上清冷的夜风，带来一种温润的乡情。

灯谜有趣又富含文化：谜底往往与历史典故、诗词歌赋、乡音俚语相关。有时候是“天上七星一条龙”，有时是“前山后水两相望”。解开谜底的人获得一小红包，喜悦在灯光中散开。灯谜其实是文化传承的一种形式，它让年轻一代在游戏中接触传统，在欢笑中理解意义。

另外值得一提的还有清明扫墓习俗。虽说不属于春节庆典，却是我们家乡在节日序列中不可或缺的一环。到清明那日，家人一同前往祖坟，修整墓碑、献上鲜花、焚香并朗读先人的名字。这个简单的仪式，承载的是对根与源的敬意，也是家乡人对时间流逝和生命延续的深思。

在城市化、现代化的背景下，这些节日礼仪当然也有改变：贴春联也许变成打印好的电子对联；元宵猜灯谜可能在社区活动室开幕。但核心不变：贴起红联、点起花灯、围坐元宵、扫墓祭祖，这些仪式让我们记住自己来自何处，也提醒我们要珍视传统与亲情。

节日是家乡文化的一面镜子，让人折射出乡愁与温暖。在那个贴春联、猜灯谜的夜晚，我似乎又回到了儿时的身影，听见爷爷的话语，看见炉边的暖光。那份年味，正是在这些传统礼仪中缓缓燃起，照亮我们对家乡的热爱与思考。

Festival Celebrations: From Spring Couplets to Lantern Riddles, the Memories of the New Year

Whenever the Spring Festival approaches, my hometown enters a state of bustle and expectation. From Xiaonian on the 23rd day of the twelfth lunar month, red lanterns hang in the alleys, couplets are pasted on door frames, and the air fills with the sweet fragrance of the new year.

Putting up spring couplets is a tradition cherished by everyone. Before Lunar New Year's Eve, every household pastes red couplets outside the door. The upper couplet

often reads “Welcoming Spring and Receiving Good Fortune,” the lower reads “Wealth and Health,” and the horizontal inscription may say “Fortune fills the world” or “Joy welcomes all directions.” Pasting the couplets isn’t merely about words—it places our hope for a better year at the threshold of the house, a family-wide act of shared blessing.

On New Year’s Eve, the family gathers round the table for the reunion dinner—dishes laden with symbolism: braised fish stands for “surplus every year,” dumplings stand for reunion. After dinner, the family may stay up together: chatting, watching the Spring Festival Gala, perhaps stepping out to set off firecrackers. The fireworks across the sky brighten the night and symbolize a fresh start.

When the fifteenth of the first lunar month arrives, it’s the Lantern Festival. At dusk, the village plaza lights up with lanterns, ribbons swirling around lamp poles, cards with riddles hung from lanterns. People pick lanterns, hold lanterns, children run and laugh, elders chat with gentle smiles. While guessing riddles, everyone basks in the warm glow—and eats yuanxiao sweet dumplings. The chewy sweetness and the cool night breeze bring a gentle hometown feeling.

The riddle-games are fun yet cultural: the answers often link to historical tales, classical poetry, or local dialect phrases. Sometimes a riddle says “Seven stars in heaven draw a dragon,” other times “Front hill and back water gaze at each other.” If you solve a riddle, you might get a small red envelope; that moment of joy spreads in the lantern-glow. The riddles are a form of cultural inheritance—they let the young engage tradition through play, laugh while learning meaning.

Another ceremony worth mentioning is the Qingming tomb-sweeping. Though it doesn’t belong to the Spring Festival cycle, in our hometown it’s still an indispensable ritual. On Qingming Day, family members jointly visit ancestral graves: clean the tombstone, offer fresh flowers, burn incense, and recite names of ancestors. The simple act carries respect for roots and origins, and reflects our contemplations on time passing and lives continuing.

In the backdrop of urbanization and modernization, of course these festival rituals have changed: spring couplets may be printed electronically; lantern riddle clubs may happen in community centers. But the core remains: affixing red couplets, lighting lanterns, gathering for yuanxiao, sweeping the tombs—these rituals help us remember where we come from and remind us to cherish tradition and family.

Festivals are like a mirror of hometown culture, reflecting homesickness and warmth. On those nights when we pasted couplets and guessed lantern riddles, I seemed to re-visit my childhood figure, heard my grandfather’s voice, saw the glow by the stove. That flavor of the year—rising gently in those traditional ceremonies—lights up our love and reflection for our hometown.