



Chinese New Year in the Eyes of a Foreigner

- Patricia Bjaaland Welch's *Chinese New Year*, Oxford University Press

Tangerine trees and plum blossoms. Strings of firecrackers and clusters of gold coins. Dinners with family and offerings to ancestors. All this reminds us of the festive days during the Lunar New Year. No date in the Chinese calendar is accorded greater importance than New Year's Day.

Patricia Bjaaland Welch's *Chinese New Year*, published by the Oxford University Press, is a colourful book which provides an introduction and a complete guide to the celebration of the Chinese New Year.

The author explores an array of age-old symbols and rituals of the holiday and traces their history and meanings. Also covered in the book are the differences in celebration among the Chinese communities in



Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Mainland China. Beginning with notable days in the month preceding the holiday and extending to the Lantern Festival fifteen days into the new year, the book guides the reader through the etiquette of gift-giving, the selection of special foods, holiday greetings, and popular decorations.

Directed at tourists and locals alike, *Chinese New Year* takes a panoramic view of customs both in China and in Chinese communities worldwide. Combining introductory

texts and extensive illustrations both in colour and monochrome, it serves as a map for one to acquire a deeper understanding and appreciation of the festival in its multiplicity and richness.

Net Guide

Bank of English

Can't find a way to enrich your vocabulary? Studying a dictionary may help, some ardent readers venture to suggest. But turning thousands of pages from A to Z on your own sounds too forbidding a mission. Here comes a solution. Collins Cobuild's website may be a perfect companion to help you through.

Based on the Bank of English, which is a corpus of modern English language both in written and spoken forms, this website should not be mistaken for an e-dictionary. It contains several features dedicated to helping learners with the meaning, usage and pragmatics of English words and idioms in an interesting way.

Operating daily, 'Idiom of the Day' picks a word at random and displays a few relevant idioms. Examples are there to illustrate the usage of each idiom and its possible variations. 'Wordwatch' features a weekly article written by a language expert to make comments on the usage and meaning of a word or phrase. Automatic delivery of the article by email allows the busiest of all to benefit from this column. To make learning more interesting and enjoyable, you may also try your hand at the 'Definition game' where the definition of a word is shown for you to guess what word is being defined.

This interactive website builds education into entertainment. Practice makes perfect. Just click <http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk> and start building up your word power today.