

新年快樂 HAPPY NEW YEAR

Two campus groups rang in the Year of the Rooster with celebrations this weekend

BY ROBERT X. FOGARTY
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

Li Tsui remembers waking with money underneath her pillow. It wasn't the tooth fairy, but something equally delightful; the Chinese New Year had finally arrived.

Until she was about 10, Tsui, now 56 and the manager of China Blue Restaurant, said that on the first day of the new year, older relatives filled a red envelope with money and placed it underneath her pillow. The good-luck tradition is called hong buo, and the envelopes' contents are often called "lucky money." Tsui's son, Todd, "got \$200 for Chinese New Year," but nothing under his pillow, she said with a grin.

The Chinese Students and Scholars Association and the Chinese Student Association hosted Chinese New Year events and cultural celebrations for University students and Eugene residents this weekend. More than 300 attended the CSA's Sunday night presentation of China Night in the EMU Ballroom.

Each event included Chinese food prepared by members of the respective organizations, and Chinese lion dancing, a typical New Year's dance. Members of the CSA performed a play about the struggles of 1930s Chinese immigrants to San Francisco. The CSSA event's Tai Chi performance, solo songs, group songs, group dancing and instrumental music all garnered applause from the 250 people in attendance at the Emerald Baptist Church on Saturday.

The Chinese New Year, also called the "Chinese Spring Celebration," runs according to the Chinese lunar calendar, and its popularity rivals Christmas in Western culture. This year is the Year of the Rooster.

CSSA Activity Coordinator Yan Guo, born in 1981, another year of the rooster, said the rooster symbolizes intelligence — but he quickly cautioned people in his lunar year to act carefully.

"When you are in your own year,



NICOLE BARKER | PHOTOGRAPHER

The Chinese-American Benevolent Association Chinese Lion Dance Troop performs the traditional Chinese New Year lion's dance at China Night on Sunday in the EMU Ballroom.

you should do all your actions with caution, because it's very dangerous, and it's very easy for you to screw everything up," Guo said.

Guo said the Chinese New Year is a time when families unite and celebrate; for Chinese students in the United States, it means a big phone bill.

"The most important thing is that we talk to our family by phone or Internet," Guo said. "We talk a lot, because it is very important to report your status to your parents or to your original family." Guo spoke to his family for an average of three hours a day last week, he said.

CSA Program Coordinator Alex Wang highlighted China Night's usefulness for Asian students at the University.

"It's just a chance to spread the Chinese culture. It lets the Eugene community have an experience of how we celebrate in Asia, and also to bring together the Asian students and give them a feeling of home," he said.

The acting, dancing, singing and eating at CSA's China Night and CSSA's Spring Celebration disposed of some longing, if only for two nights.

"It brought me a lot of memories about my country. I feel very close to home," Eugene resident Shu Ramos-Weng said. Ramos-Weng, originally from Thailand, has lived in the United States for about 12 years, and her four-year-old daughter, Mia, performed in the CSSA's finale.

"This is a traditional spring festival," graduate student Yupeng Kong said. Kong's solo during the CSSA show drew cheers. As he clutched the microphone, his forehead creased slightly with concentration.

"It's my responsibility to add to the festive atmosphere," he said, adding that he practiced with a compact disc and in the shower, although he confessed his anxiety did not disappear.

"My major is not singing; my major is physics," he said.

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