

Anticipation and celebration of the New Year

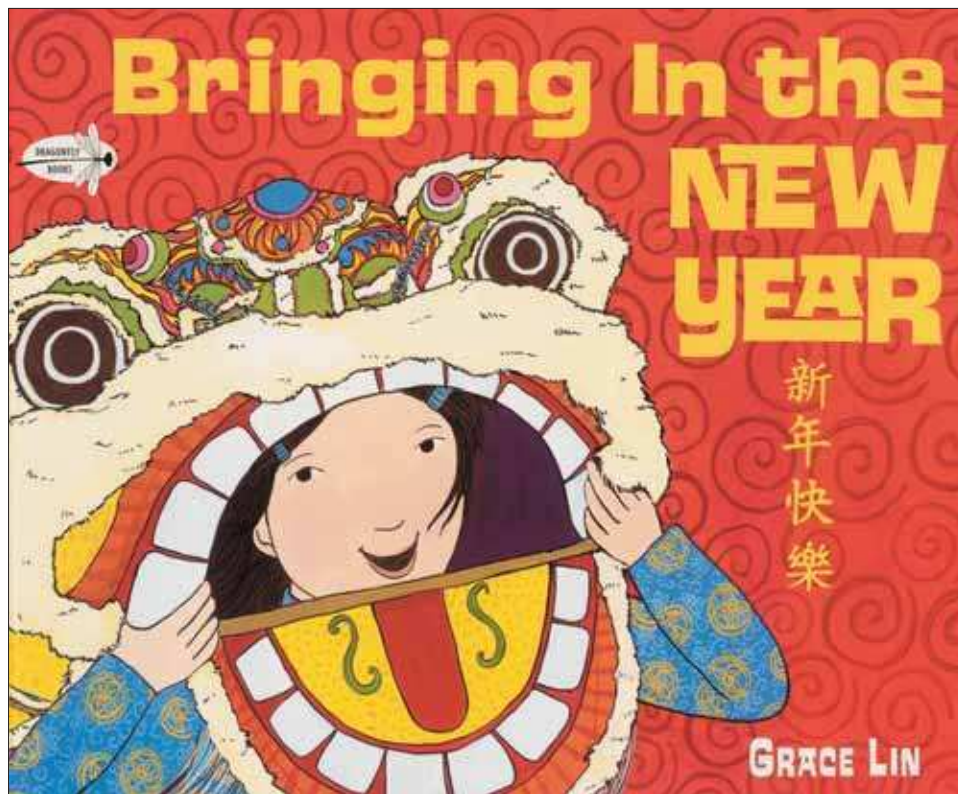
Bringing in the New Year
By Grace Lin
Dragonfly Books, 2008
Paperback, 34 pages, \$7.99

By Josephine Bridges
The Asian Reporter

“Is the New Year coming?” asks the young narrator on the very first page of Grace Lin’s *Bringing in the New Year*, a story of a Chinese-American family’s preparations for one of the most celebrated holidays in the world. In the accompanying illustration, she stands with her parents and sisters, looking out a window at flakes of snow swirling in the wind. Her excitement is infectious, and even those of us who have welcomed many New Years can’t help but get caught up in it.

There is a lot to do to welcome the New Year, and the family gets right to it: sweeping out the old year, hanging spring-happiness poems, making get-rich dumplings, getting a haircut, and dressing up for the New Year feast. “Now will the New Year come?”

Grace Lin increases the suspense with



firecrackers popping and shimmering outside a window. “Are they bringing in the New Year?” asks the narrator. Not

quite yet. The author has a few surprises in store, and you’ll discover them when you read *Bringing in the New Year*, preferably with a child.

Grace Lin’s vivid illustrations perfectly complement her few well-chosen words, some of which are Chinese (with contextual clues). Snowflakes, patterns of clothing — from Ba-Ba’s argyles to the

NEW YEAR PREPARATION. *Bringing in the New Year* follows a Chinese-American family as they prepare for the Lunar New Year. Each family member lends a hand as they sweep out the dust of the old year, hang decorations, make dumplings, and more.

narrator’s new spring-green *qi pao* — and background colors — wintry white, warm yellow, and a crescendo of red — evoke celebration alongside the narrator’s thrilled words of anticipation.

If you, like me, aren’t ready for *Bringing in the New Year* to end, you’ll be pleased to see the two-page author’s note on its background of green spirals. Here you’ll find in-depth explanations of the customs and traditions touched on briefly in the giddy narrative.

Here’s an example: “When a new dragon is used for a parade, it can be ‘woken up’ by an eye-opening ceremony. This simple ceremony paints in the eyes of the dragon so he can see the symbolic sun (the round shape carried by the parade leader). The dragon chases the sun around and around, ensuring that we will have many nights and days.”

Bringing in the New Year can be seen as both a celebration of a familiar festival and an introduction to that festival. Children — and adults — well-acquainted with the festivities of the Lunar New Year will find Grace Lin’s storybook a delightful reminder, and those who want to learn more can begin their exploration here.



***The staff at
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wish you and
your family a
safe and happy
Lunar New Year!***

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Chinese New Year

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