

Mainland Spouses Share Lunar New Year Customs from their Hometowns and Spread the Diversity of Traditional Culture

Date: February 15, 2018

MAC Press Release No. 15

In order to strengthen government care for cross-Strait families and publicize life assistance measures over the past year, the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) held a special activity for the parents and children of cross-Strait families to spend a warm time together before the Lunar New Year holiday. The participants were also invited to share the Lunar New Year customs in their hometowns to highlight the values of integrating new immigrants and spreading cultural diversity in Taiwan.

Guangdong native Ms. Chang said that the custom in her hometown is to cover the home's doorway with sesame stalks during the Lunar New Year holiday and then crush them underfoot on New Year's Day. In Chinese, the word for "step" homophonically suggests the word for "wealth," while "crush" (*sui*) represents the idiom "peace through the years" (*sui-sui-ping-an*). The custom also represents the hope for a bumper grain harvest. Since marrying and coming to Taiwan, Ms. Chang has followed the local customs here. During the Lunar New Year, she and her family go to Longshan Temple, Xingtian Temple, and other major temples to pray for the peace, health, and success in coming year.

Henan native Ms. Yan said that during the Lunar New Year, families are busy preparing New Year's Eve family dinner and meeting with friends and relatives. For example, she would visit her maternal grandmother's home in Hubei, rise early to prepare the dumpling filling, and then make the dumplings together with her family. In Henan, fried dough sticks, fish, meat and other delicacies would be prepared for the New Year's Eve dinner and then the New Year would be ushered in with family and friends.

Ms. Shen, also from Henan, recalled the Lunar New Year in her hometown. Steamed buns were prepared during the twelfth lunar month. The family would make dumplings together on the night of the Lunar New Year's Eve. On Lunar New Year's Day, the family rose early, cooked the dumplings, offered prayers, and then visited relatives to wish them a happy New Year. Ms. Shen, a mother of three lovely children, said that, while it was difficult to raise her three children in Taiwan after marriage, neighbors generously helped her and her sister-

in-law gave her spiritual support. She said that she is very grateful to her sister-in-law for her selfless giving, from which she could feel Taiwan's warmth.

The MAC said that there are currently about 340,000 cross-Strait couples who have formed families in Taiwan. When Mainland spouses come to Taiwan, they become a part of Taiwan. Therefore, the government believes that "substantive care is more important" in concern for Mainland spouses. The MAC will also jointly resolve issues with related agencies to address the urgent needs faced by Mainland spouses in integrating into Taiwanese society so they and their children can enjoy a more convenient life in Taiwan. Mainland spouses need a happy family in Taiwan if the next generation is to grow up healthy. This will also make Taiwan a more prosperous and strong society.