

Ningbo Welcomes the Year of the Tiger

By Dong Na
Shao Yiwen(intern)

The Spring Festival is around the corner, and the coming year will be the Year of the Tiger. A variety of celebrations were held throughout Ningbo to welcome the upcoming Chinese New Year, attracting many people to participate.

Special Cultural Tour for Expats

On January 18, in Zhao-baoshan Art Villa, Zhenhai District, 16 foreigners, together with vivacious local kids, got the chance to experience Ningbo's traditional way of celebrating the Spring Festival.

Lanterns and Chinese knots were hung on the roof, and the whole yard was decorated in festive mood. Embroidery, paper-cutting, lithograph, and Chinese calligraphy... local craftsmen had prepared all the tools and materials needed for the traditional activities and they combined the complex operation with simple but sincere wishes, creating masterpieces related to "虎", the Chinese character for tiger, and undoubtedly caught the attention of everyone.

If interested, guests could have a try on their own. Loko, a Canadian expat who lives in Ningbo, took the challenge and tried to make a tiger-head shoe after a local master. The tiger-head shoe is one of Ningbo's intangible cultural heritages and a common symbol of health and good luck. "Although difficult," said he, "such handicraft is more like a culture carrier, containing people's beautiful wishes and positive attitude towards life." He also mentioned the commonalities between his hometown's customs and those of Ningbo.

After the fun of handicraft, it was the time for snacks. Among all the traditional snacks like gold-balls(金团), rice cakes, spring rolls, and sweet dumplings, the sugar-painting became the eye-catcher. Sweet sugar was melted and turned into shapes of animals, which made the air smell sweet as well.

A coastal city as Ningbo is, it enjoys a reputation for its fresh



Expats get a hands-on experience on Spring Festival couplets in Zhenhai.

[Photo by Tang Yan]

seafood. Sitting around the table, foreign guests and local kids enjoyed themselves and tasted the most authentic Ningbo New Year's meal.

Various Activities Held around the City

Making salted vegetables, rice cakes... Recently, more than 20 foreigners came to Dongwu Town of Yinzhou District to participate in the activity "I'm spending the Chinese New Year in Ningbo". At the Museum of Salted Vegetables, foreigners learned how to make salted vegetables and had fun stepping on vegetables while wearing shoe covers. Then they went to Tian-tong Old Street to experience the local intangible cultural heritages and Maritime Silk Road culture with the villagers.

This event has been held for eight years. Every year, foreigners who live and work in Ningbo are welcomed to visit local villages, experience local traditional culture, and participate in cultural activities in an innovative way,

so that they get the chance to tap into the important measures Ningbo has taken on to promote rural revitalization and intelligent construction and their results.

In Dayan Town, Fenghua District, the villagers set up a festival market near the Zhenting bridge, allowing tourists to feel the lively and traditional atmosphere of the Chinese New Year in advance. Local pork is a must-have item on many people's New Year shopping lists. Pork in Dayan is raised by the villagers themselves and is fed with radish, green vegetables, and beans. In addition to local pork, there are other specialties in the market too, such as rice noodles.

Scenic areas in Dayan also held interesting folk activities, like making rice cakes, writing Spring Festival couplets, and handing out red envelopes by the "God of Fortune" on the spot to interact with tourists. Rich rural customs activities, carrying rich traditional culture and profound cultural deposits, kicked off the lively prelude of the Spring Festival, attracting tourists to expe-

rience the taste of festival in villages.

Fresh Flowers and Take-out Dinners Became Popular

As the Spring Festival approaches, flowers become one of the popular "New Year goods". Recently, flowers are in full bloom at the Tiansheng Flower and Bird Market in Haishu District. Wu Jinbiao, the owner of a flower shop, said that the days before Spring Festival is the best time of year for business in his shop.

"There are thousands of different kinds of flowers in the store, including hundreds of moth orchids, which are also the best sellers, with prices ranging from 120 yuan to 3,000 yuan per pot. 30,000 plants are expected to be sold in the month before the Spring Festival. "With the improvement of living standards and the growing demand for flowers, sales have increased at least 10 percent in the month before the Spring Festival on average in recent years," Wu said. Booking take-out package,

or purchase prepared dishes and quick dishes, is becoming a new choice for Ningbo people to enjoy the New Year's Eve dinner. For example, starting from January 11, the Dongfuyuan Restaurant specially launched two New Year's Eve dinner packages, including smoked fish, plain chicken, seafood soup, yellow croaker with salted vegetables, and other dishes. Clients are required to order a day in advance, and they need only simple processing to serve the dishes with their family after taking the package home.

Some fresh food e-commerce platforms have also prepared the New Year's Eve dinner menu, as well as the corresponding ingredients for customers. People don't need to worry about what dishes they could prepare for the Spring Festival. They just need to place an order on the platform to buy corresponding ingredients and cook according to the recipes provided by the platform to complete a rich New Year's Eve dinner.

SPOTLIGHT

Spring Festival: Volunteer Services Warm Travellers

By Gou Wen

The annual Spring Festival transport is starting again. As always, volunteers come to help the passengers at railway stations, airports and other transportation hubs.

"I just do what I can to help people return home safely. I'm also very happy," said Ma Keli, a bus driver and volunteer. This is the 9th Spring Festival transport that he participated. When he is not on duty, he would come to the railway station as a volunteer to patiently remind and help the passengers.

"There are two squares in Ningbo railway station. If passengers come out of the railway station, they often can't tell where to take bus and which bus to take. Then, they will come to ask for directions," said Ma Keli.

He often meets passengers who can not find the direction. At this time, he will help carry the luggage and guide the passengers to the right bus stop to take the bus.

Over the past nine years' Spring Festival transport, he has provided more than 400 hours of volunteer service. He said that he could hear a lot of "thank you" every day, which is the best reward for him and his fellow volunteers.

At the railway station, volunteers from the Ningbo First Hospital were giving a mini anti-pandemic class.

Due to COVID, when using public transport facilities, passengers are required to wear masks, which has become part of the common sense though, not every one is doing it the right way. For example, some of the passengers wore reversed masks or the edge of mask did not fit the face nicely... The volunteers helped correct one by one.

Qian Guoqing, a volunteer from the Ningbo First Hospital, said that he hope his efforts could help more people master anti-COVID knowledge and skills to enjoy a healthy and happy Spring Festival.

The services they provide may be different, the same thing is that they warm the heart of the passengers and let them feel the care of Ningbo. The volunteer services, which come every year as promised, have also become a "beautiful scenery" during the Spring Festival transport.

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双语汇 Different Tongues

四明山: 诗意四明, 革命圣地

By Xu Zhuowei

Located in the east of Zhejiang and spanning across five districts, including Yuyao, Haishu, Fenghua, Shengzhou, and Shangyu, the Siming Mountain is known as "the green lung of eastern Zhejiang" for its superior environment. Lush ancient trees, numerous lakes, and many rocks of extraordinary shape are found in the Mountain, together with various kinds of birds and beasts.

四明山位于浙江东部, 跨越余姚、海曙、奉化、嵊州、上虞。四明山区内古木参天, 湖泊连绵, 奇岩众多, 各种鸟兽出没其间, 生态环境十分优越, 被誉为“浙东绿肺”。Throughout history, many scholars and poets were at-

tracted to Siming, who, becoming very excited by the splendid mountain and river landscape, chose to write poems to express their feelings. For example, to name a few, Li Bai, Liu Changqing, and Pi Rixiu, all famous poets in the Tang Dynasty, once sang indulgently for the beauty of the scenery here, leaving us with great poetry.

千百年来, 众多文人墨客慕名游胜, 兴情所至, 吟山咏水, 题诗寄情。唐代大诗人李白、刘长卿、皮日休等曾为此地的山景景色纵情吟唱, 留下无限“诗意”。

Siming Mountain is not only a cultural and tourism attraction, but also a revolutionary base. During the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the War of



Siming Mountain. / 四明山风光。

[Photo by Xu Neng] 徐能摄

Liberation, Siming Mountain witnessed China's revolutionary cause. The revolutionary martyrs fought dauntlessly to win final victory. Today, people constantly come to visit the former sites of the Anti-Japa-

nese-aggression Base in Hengkantou Village, Liangnong Town, Yuyao (Siming Mountain), to commemorate and learn the history of the martyrs. They are also inspired by the heroic stories of the martyrs.

四明山既是文旅胜地, 也是革命根据地。在抗日战争时期和解放战争时期, 四明山见证了中国的革命事业。革命先烈在这片“红色热土”上抛头颅、洒热血, 取得了最终胜利。如今, 前来余姚市梁弄镇横坎头村的浙东(四明山)抗日根据地旧址群参观学习、缅怀先烈的人络绎不绝。