

The Story of Chinese New Year



Long ago lived an evil beast. His name was Nian. Nian lived near a village. Nian went to the village on the first day of each year. Nian ate all their grain. Nian ate all their animals. Nian even ate children who were left outside.

The people of the village were scared. They lived in fear of Nian. On the New Year, they locked their homes. The people did not know what else to do.

One year an old man came to the village. He spoke to the people. "Why do you fear Nian? You are many. Nian is one. Nian can't swallow all of you!"

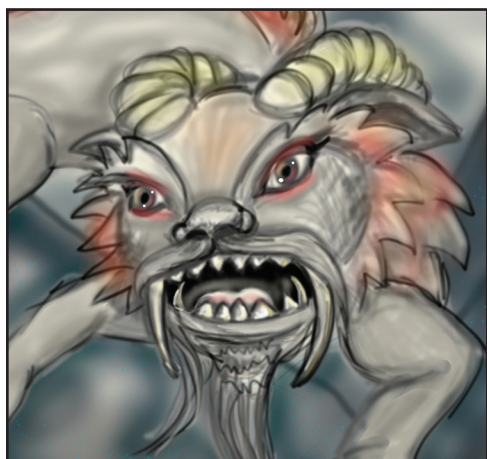
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The people did not know what to think. The New Year came. They locked their doors. They were still afraid.

But Nian did not come that night. Nian did not come the next night. Nian did not come the night after that. Then the people learned why. The old man rode Nian all night. This made Nian tired. Nian went home hungry.

The old man spoke to the people. "I can't protect you forever. I have to go." The people were scared. They didn't want Nian to come back. They asked him not to leave.

The old man told them that he was a god. He came to protect them. But now other people needed him. He had to go.



The old man told what he learned about Nian. "Nian is easily scared. Nian is afraid of loud noises. Nian is afraid of strange animals. Nian does not like the color red. Put red all over town.

Hang red signs. Make loud noises. Use drums. Play music. Use fireworks. Have your children wear masks. Have your children carry lanterns."

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The old man left the village. The people did what he said. They did it every year.

The New Year is called Guo Nian in Chinese. It means “get over Nian.” That is just what the people of the village did.

Chinese New Year is a big event. People hang red around their homes. Red is good luck. The streets are filled with music. People play the drums. They have parades. They use fireworks. They carry paper lanterns.

