

My Family Tradition

I open my eyes seeing the sunlight at the top of the ceiling of my room. The bed of my brother's is empty. I know that he is in the living room, and I hear my father shaving in the bathroom, and I smell the food my mother is cooking in the kitchen. As I get out of my bed, I hear loud popping noise like a machine gun going off. I jump off my bed and run to the window beside my bed to look outside. It was firecrackers my neighbor is burning. Then I realize that today is Vietnamese New Year. Today is the first day of the three days New Year. On Vietnamese New Year family members are not supposed to argue with each other, new clothes must be worn, and the house must be neat and clean. Red envelopes with money inside are given to young people, especially children, from older people. Firecrackers are burn to scare away bad luck and evil spirits and to bring good fortunes and luck. Both the red envelopes and the firecrackers are like horseshoes. While I eat my breakfast I know our family is going to my uncle's house to celebrate the New Year. We do this every Vietnamese New Year.

My father is now sitting in the living room preparing the red envelopes and my mother walking to her bedroom to get the camera. My brother is already in the kitchen finding the sweet treats that are often eaten on Vietnamese New Year. After my father finishes placing the money inside the red envelopes he then goes to warm up the car outside and my brother carrying the traditional treats follow my father to the car. My mother and I were the last to leave the house. While driving down International Boulevard, I can smell the incenses and firecrackers. Both sides of the sidewalks are filled with small pieces of firecrackers. The sidewalks look like they are covered with red carpets that the celebrities walk on. There are Asian stores that had hired lion dance groups to dance in front of their stores for good luck. I see red, yellow, silver, orange, and blue lions on both sidewalks.

After fifteen minutes we arrive at the front of my uncle's place. My cousin Tuan opens the door and walk down the ten steps of green stairs to welcome us inside. Tuan is 12 years old as the same age as my brother. As I walk up the stairs I can hear music playing in the living room like they are having a party. I walk to the kitchen to have a glass of water and on the way to the kitchen I can see the ingredients lay out and ready to be added to the Pho noodle soup. The ingredients on the table are lemon wedges, chili sauce, hoisin sauce, chili peppers, bean sprouts, Asian Basil, cilantro, star anise, and green onions. The broth is being boiled on the stove in the kitchen by my aunt. The broth contains ginger, beef shank, onions, fish sauce, salt and sugar. The steam from the broth rises like a sleeping ghost just having awakened. The broth smells like there is a barbeque next to me. My mother helps my aunt prepare the food by placing the noodles in 8 bowls, getting the chopsticks, spoons and cleaning the vegetables. My father and uncle sit in the living room talking about the New Year and listening to Vietnamese music, and my cousin and brother are playing computer games behind them.

Everyone gather at the dining table to indulge on the delicious noodle soup. The well-boiled broth is now being poured in the eight bowls by my mother and aunt to on the table. Then bean sprouts, basil, star anise, sauces and onions are added on top of the steaming soup. If the soup is too salty, then lemon can be squeeze into the soup to reduce the saltiness. My father likes his soup with a lot of spiciness, so he adds extra chili sauce and chili peppers. Tuan likes his with a lot of meat.

After everyone has finished eating, my parents and uncle hand out the red envelopes to all the children