

Ringling in the Ox



Sharon Tiffin/News staff
Four-year-old Eric Liu gets dinner served by chopstick from dad David at the University of Victoria Chinese New Years

Students, scholars gather to celebrate Chinese culture

Todd Devlin
 News staff

Muyuan Liu simply wants to ensure that important Chinese traditions are carried forward.

That's why she took on the role as director of the University of Victoria's Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA). And it's why she worked tirelessly to organize this year's Chinese New Year party, held at the University Jan. 17.

"The New Year is the most important holiday for the Chinese community," said Liu, a graduate student at Royal Roads University. "The tradition is very important. It's like Christmas in Western culture."

Liu took over as director of the UVic club after she was recommended by the outgoing vice president.

The group's goal has always been to "provide assistance, advocacy and service for Chinese students and scholars, and to safeguard their rights and promote social, intellectual and cultural activities at both the University of Victoria and the Greater Victoria community."

The CSSA has seen an increase in its membership and volunteer

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— **Muyuan Liu**

Sharon Tiffin/News staff
Five-year-old Mido Luo, a young dancer from the Ocean Rain Chinese Arts Academy, hangs out as she waits for her group to perform at the University of Victoria's Chinese New Year party, held at Vertigo Saturday night.



base since last year, in which the Chinese community in Victoria celebrated its 150th year in the city. The CSSA remains the only organization of students and scholars in the Greater Victoria area officially sponsored by the Chinese government.

The New Year festivities are the highlight of the year for the group, and this year's event, entitled "Chinese Tonight, Chinese Together," featured a dinner and professional performances by the Chinese Performing Arts Troupe of Victoria and the Ocean Rain Chinese Arts Academy.

The event helped to show the public a more authentic China, Liu said. The celebration — open to both the university and the public — was attended by such

dignitaries as the counselor of the Chinese embassy in Vancouver, Ya FeiXue; the consul, Li Wang; and the mayor of Victoria, Dean Fortin.

Overall, it was a great opportunity for all Chinese to improve unity within the community, and also to introduce Chinese culture to others.

Grace Wong-Sneddon, the University of Victoria's diversity advisor, agreed this was an important part of the event.

"There are a number of customs — like eating long noodles for long life, or eating candy in the morning to start the day off sweet ... how would other people know about these things unless you share them?"

Liu, meanwhile, noted the importance of the Chinese celebrating their own culture.

"Traditions simply won't develop and continue unless we keep them going," she said.

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Ox fame

■ People born in the Year of the Ox are said to be highly responsible, independent and inspire confidence, but at times may tend to be eccentric and somewhat gullible, according to Chinese astrology. You are an ox if you were born in 1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, or 2009. Famous oxen include Wayne Gretzky, Michael J. Fox, Douglas Coupland, Oscar Peterson, Margaret Thatcher, and President-elect Barack Obama.