

## 國旗下講話

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主題：元宵節

Good morning Principal Mr Wan, Vice-Principals, Assistant Principals, teachers and students, I am Chan Bernice from Class 5A.

Today is the Lantern Festival, a time when families gather under the first full moon of the lunar new year. Today, I would like to share with you why this festival holds such special meaning in Chinese culture.

The Lantern Festival dates back more than 2,000 years to the Han Dynasty. Emperor Ming of Han ordered lanterns to be lit in palaces and temples on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month as part of a religious ritual. Over time, this practice spread among the people and became a nationwide celebration. By the Tang and Song Dynasties, lantern festivals had developed into grand public events, with brightly lit streets and lively night markets — a tradition that continues in many parts of China today.

The Lantern Festival is not only about beautiful decorations; it carries deep cultural meaning. The round lanterns and the full moon both symbolize reunion and completeness. In Chinese culture, the concept of “yuan,” meaning roundness, represents family unity and harmony. This is why families gather together on this day to eat tangyuan, the sweet glutinous rice balls whose round shape reflects the wish for wholeness and togetherness.

Another important tradition is solving lantern riddles. During ancient times, scholars and poets would write riddles on lanterns, turning the festival into an intellectual celebration. This practice reflects the Chinese respect for wisdom and knowledge.

The Lantern Festival also reflects the Chinese philosophy of harmony between light and darkness. The first full moon of the year symbolizes brightness after winter, and metaphorically, hope after hardship. Throughout Chinese history, our nation has experienced challenges and transformations. Yet like the lantern shining in the night, the spirit of resilience and hope has always guided the Chinese people forward.

Standing under our national flag today, we are reminded that our traditions are part of our identity. The Lantern Festival teaches us the importance of family unity, cultural continuity, and optimism for the future. It reminds us that while times change, our cultural roots remain strong.

This is the end of my sharing today. Thank you.