Christmas Around the World
# 欢庆圣诞节

Christmas is a time of joy and celebration. Many countries have unique customs and traditions that help make this a happy season.

圣诞节是一段欢乐庆祝的时光。有许多国家都以自己独特的传统习俗来庆贺这个美好的节日。

In Mexico, starting nine days before Christmas Day, children go through their neighborhoods reenacting Joseph and Mary's search for lodgings. Two children carrying figures of Joseph and Mary lead a procession to a particular house singing Christmas carols as they go. They knock on the door and ask for a room. At first they are refused, but then they are allowed in. A feast and celebration follow. Blindfolded children enjoy using a stick to try to break the piñata, a large brightly decorated paper figure hung from the ceiling and containing candy or small gifts.
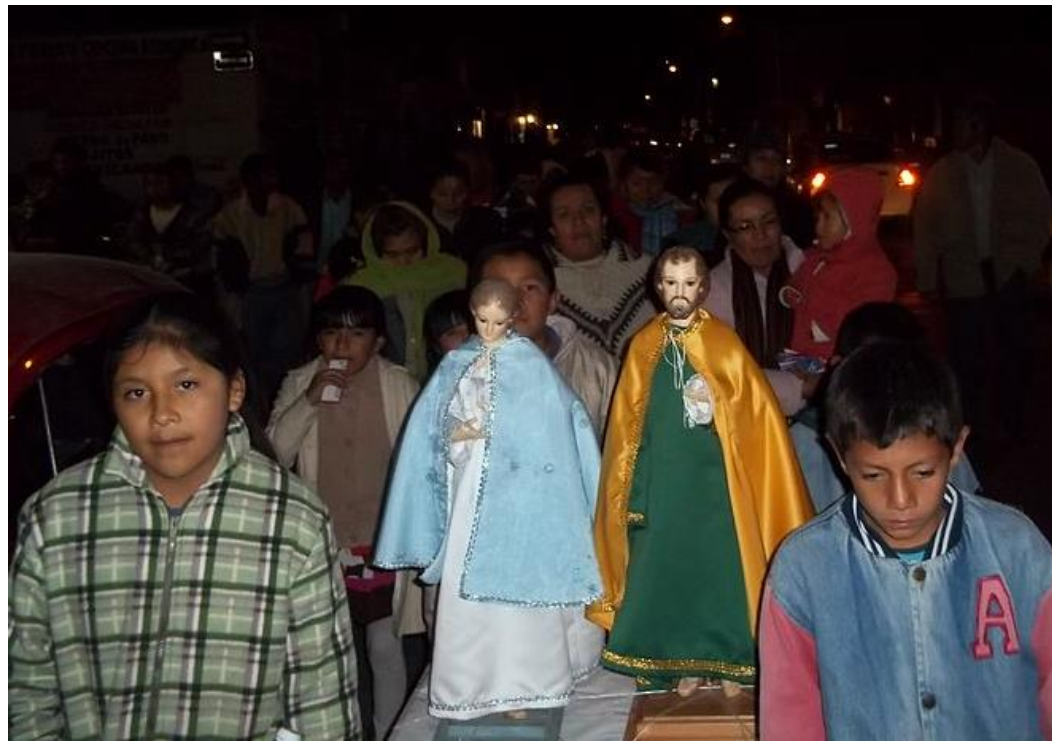
在墨西哥，从圣诞节的前九天开始，孩子们就会挨家挨户地拜访邻居，重演约瑟和马利亚寻求借宿的过程：由两名孩童手持约瑟和马利亚的塑像，带领大家一边高唱圣诞颂歌、一边前往某家的门口。他们会上前敲门，并请求屋主给一个房间来借住。而屋主则会首先拒绝，随后又答应他们。接下来，就是吃大餐和庆祝的时刻。蒙着眼的孩子们会兴高采烈地用一根棒子来打破一个悬挂在天花板上、装饰华丽、装满糖果礼物、名为 piñata 的巨大纸雕。

In Scotland, on the night after Christmas, boxes of food are wrapped and given to the poor.

在苏格兰，在圣诞节之后那天晚上，人们会拿着包好的、装着食物的箱子送给穷人。

In Ireland, a candle is lit and put in the window on Christmas Eve to welcome any weary travelers.

在爱尔兰，在圣诞前夕，人们会在窗旁点上蜡烛，以表示欢迎任何来访的疲累旅客。

In Russia, some Orthodox Christians fast during a period before Christmas. Then, at the sight of the first star in the sky on Christmas Eve, a 12-course supper begins.

在俄国，有一些东正教基督徒会在圣诞节之前禁食一段时间。然后，当圣诞夜晚的第一颗星星出现时，他们便会开始享用共有十二道餐点的宴席。

In Greece, children go from house to house on Christmas Eve, knocking on doors and singing songs that herald the arrival of the Christ Child.

在希腊，孩子们会在圣诞夜时唱着歌曲、奔走左邻右舍，以通报圣婴基督的降临。

In Ethiopia, members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church celebrate Christmas on January 6, following the ancient Roman calendar.

在衣索比亚，东正教会依据古罗马历，在一月六日庆祝圣诞。

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In southern India, Christians decorate their houses with clay lamps at night.

在南印度，基督徒们会在夜晚点亮以窑土塑成的灯来装饰自己的家。

Americans decorate their houses with brightly colored lights. In some parts of the country they also line the streets with candles.

在美国的家庭则会用彩色灯泡来装饰他们的家。在某些地区，他们还会沿街摆放蜡烛。

In many countries, nativity scenes are displayed to remind everyone of the birth of Jesus. In Italy, the family prays as the mother puts the figure of the Christ Child (Bambino) in the manger.

许多国家都会摆设马槽景，以提醒大家这是耶稣诞生的日子。在意大利，母亲会把婴儿基督的像放在马槽里，家人则在一旁祈祷。

And there is the Christmas tree, of course. There is considerable speculation as to how and when the evergreen became a symbol of Christmas, but many believe it can be traced to medieval Germany, where the Paradeisbaum, or Paradise tree, a type of evergreen, was decorated with red apples. The fact that the tree is always green symbolizes the eternal life that Jesus promises those that believe in Him.

当然，圣诞树是绝对不能少的。关于常青树究竟是何时、以及如何成为圣诞节的象征之事，众说纷纭，但许多人都相信，这个传统在中世纪时来自于德国。当时，德国盛行在圣诞节时上演关于亚当和夏娃的故事，并以救世主将到来的承诺作为剧的结尾。红苹果和天堂树（常青树的一种）就是那时用来装饰舞台的道具。天堂树常绿的特质，象征着耶稣承诺给予信他的人的永生。

Perhaps the most widespread of all Christmas traditions—the giving gifts to loved ones—has its roots in the gifts the wise men from the East presented to Jesus. They had seen a sign in the heavens that signaled the Messiah's birth, and they went to worship Him. In those days, travel was not easy. It probably took the wise men about two years of preparation and travel before they arrived in Judea and were able to give their presents to Jesus. The gifts the wise men gave were gold, frankincense, and myrrh — the best their kingdoms had to offer the Messiah.

或许，在所有的圣诞习俗中，最广为流传的一项就是给亲爱的人送礼物，而它则起源于东方三博士赠给耶稣的礼物记载。三博士看见天象显兆，通报了弥赛亚的降临，因此便前往崇拜他。在那个时代，旅行并非易事。三博士或许花了两年的时间进行准备和跋涉，才终于到达了犹太省（以色列的一个地区），并向耶稣赠送了他们的礼物。三博士的礼物是金子、乳香、和没药--这是当时他们的王国能给予弥赛亚的最佳礼物。金子代表了耶稣尊贵为王。

But why all these traditions? Let's travel back to the first Christmas Eve, where some shepherds are taking care of their flocks on a hillside near Bethlehem. A bright light bursts forth and angels announce the birth of Jesus in song. The shepherds are so excited that they run and tell everyone they can about what just happened. Imagine the joy that Mary and Joseph experience when they hold God's Son in their arms! That same unspeakable joy can still be felt today by all those who open their hearts to receive God's love in Jesus.

那么，为何要有这些传统习俗呢？让我们回到最初的圣诞之夜看一看吧：那天夜晚，一些牧羊人在伯利恒近郊的山丘上看护羊群。忽然，耀眼的光芒布满了夜空，天使歌颂和宣告了耶稣的诞生。牧羊人兴奋得四处奔走，尽力告知众人发生了什么事。想象一下，当马利亚和约瑟把上帝之子抱之在怀中的时候，曾是何等欢欣啊！即至今日，这种无法言喻的欢乐，仍能为所有那些对耶稣之爱敞开心胸和接纳上主的人们所感受。

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