

Reading comprehension (Beginner)

Answer 01:

People in Taipei can celebrate a new year twice. They can go to the countdown and see some spectacular fireworks as December 31 turns into January 1. And a few weeks later they can enjoy all the fun of the Lunar New Year. All around the world, the start of a year is celebrated at various times and in different ways. Let's take a look at a few of them.

In Sri Lanka, people who follow the Hindu religion observe New Year around the middle of April. It is celebrated through various customs and rituals, including heating milk in a pot until it boils over, which indicates prosperity. On the Indonesian island of Bali, New Year is called Nepi. Religious people spend the day in complete silence. They stay home and avoid any kind of fun activity. The aim is to spend the day reflecting on one's actions.

In East Africa, September 11 or 12 marks the start of a new year in Ethiopia. To celebrate, people sing special songs and exchange bouquets of flowers, as well as enjoying a big feast. The Eastern Orthodox Christian church follows the Julian calendar, on which New Year falls on January 14. People in Russia, Macedonia, Serbia, and Ukraine celebrate this day with entertainment, fireworks, and large meals.

- (1) What is this passage mainly about? (A) Ways different cultures celebrate New Year. (B) What religious people think of New Year. (C) Why people light fireworks at New Year. (D) What people give each other at New Year.
- (2) In which month do Hindus in Sri Lanka observe New Year? (A) January. (B) February. (C) March. (D) April.
- (3) What is the symbolic meaning of a pot of milk boiling over? (A) It represents the stroke of midnight at New Year. (B) It means there will not be enough to drink. (C) It symbolizes the arrival of spring. (D) It suggests people will become wealthier.
- (4) Where do people avoid speaking on New Year's Day? (A) Russia. (B) East Africa. (C) Indonesia. (D) Serbia.
- (5) According to the passage, what makes some people in Eastern Europe different from those in the west? (A) They don't celebrate New Year. (B) They use a different calendar. (C) They eat a lot at New Year. (D) They don't go to church.

Answer 02:

It is well known that Chinese food culture has a long history. Although Chinese food is available all over the world today, a lot of travelers still agree that in Taiwan, they can find all kinds of Chinese food. For the Taiwanese, food is a form of art and cultural expression. Taiwanese historical background and central location for international commerce have made the food culture in Taiwan more diverse. Not only can we find Chinese cuisine in various places, but also a collection of foreign foods from all over the world can be eaten in Taiwan.

Aside from Chinese cuisine, local Taiwanese snacks in night markets are the most representative of food culture in Taiwan. The uniquely flavored snacks are cheap and delicious. In addition, each night market is full of special products and snacks with different characteristics and flavors. Through local snacks, visitors can learn more about local specialty, and culture. Therefore, if you visit Taiwan, do not miss the excellent night market culture!

- (1) What is the main purpose of this passage? (A) To tell people about special eating habits of the Taiwanese. (B) To invite business into Taiwan. (C) To promote Taiwan to tourists. (D) To indicate that Taiwan is an international

- commercial center.
- () (2) According to the passage, which of the following statements is incorrect about night market culture? (A) Businessmen talk business there. (B) There are full of special products and snacks with different flavors. (C) The snacks are cheap and delicious. (D) It is a unique culinary experience only available in Taiwan.
- () (3) We can learn from the passage that night markets _____. (A) are all over the world (B) are a unique part of the culture in Taiwan (C) are full of Chinese cuisine (D) only provide various foreign foods
- () (4) Why did the author say “If you visit Taiwan, do not miss the excellent night market culture”? (A) Visitors can do international business in night markets. (B) Visitors can learn about local culture by having local snacks in night market. (C) Visitors can eat foreign food in night market. (D) Visitors can have cheap food in night market.
- () (5) What is the author’s attitude towards night markets? (A) He believes night markets are only for adventurous people. (B) He thinks night markets are endurable. (C) He only goes to peculiar night markets. (D) He admires night markets and thinks they represent Taiwanese culture.

Answer 03:

In ancient China, there used to exist a harsh tradition that prevented women’s feet from growing naturally. At an early age, a young girl’s toes were broken in order to reshape her feet in a particular way. Despite the fact that this old tradition was ended around 60 years ago in China, some of the oldest women in parts of the country still suffer today as a result.

The habit of binding feet originated in the 10th century in China. During that time, people believed that for women, tiny feet were a sign of beauty. If women did not allow their feet to be bound, it would be almost impossible for them to find a good husband. Although it is a common thing these days for women to sacrifice comfort for beauty, millions of women in China went to extremes, having their feet tightly bound day after day with a view to achieving the “three-inch golden lotus” feet that were so highly valued in society.

At the beginning of the 19th century, nearly all women in the country had bound feet. Moreover, those who lived in rural villages continued the practice much longer. It was not until the 1850s that the Chinese government made a final move to ban the tradition of foot binding. The practice had been illegal since 1912 and it had been taboo ever since, only being done in the shadows. In the mid-20th century, anti foot-binding officials went even further, requiring women with bound feet to unbind them.

The tradition actually started in the cities, and was most popular among the upper classes. However, it was in the countryside where foot binding became most common and caused of the most problems. One of the problems was that women with “lotus feet” were unable to walk around easily. As a result, those who lived in remote villages were forced to endure great pain while doing daily housework.

One of the last remaining survivors with “lotus feet”, Pi Shi, said that she was happy to see the day when the practice was stamped out during her lifetime. At the same time, she envied the freedom and equal rights that young women in China could have today. “It’s easy for them to run around and have a free life. Back in my time, women would be punished if they dared to say no to foot binding,” she said. The last reported case of foot binding was in 1957, and the last factory making lotus shoes was shut down 42 years later.

- () (1) Which of the following would be the best title for this passage? (A) The History of Foot Binding in China (B) The Last Case of Foot Binding in China (C) Government Policies on Foot Binding (D) The Influence of Foot

Binding on Women

- () (2) Why did women in ancient times bind their feet? (A) Because it was the government's policy. (B) Because it helped them do their daily housework. (C) Because it would be easier for them to get married. (D) Because it was a popular fashion for a short time.
- () (3) Which of the following was NOT one of the problems of foot binding? (A) Women were not able to walk around easily. (B) Women suffered from great pain while doing housework. (C) Women might not be thought of as beautiful if they refused binding. (D) Women would be sentenced to death if they refused binding.
- () (4) What does stamped out in the last paragraph refer to? (A) Preserved. (B) Gotten rid of. (C) Widely talked about. (D) Appreciated.
- () (5) What was Pi Shi's attitude toward the fact that women nowadays do not bind their feet? (A) She thought they should be punished severely. (B) She was envious of their freedom and rights. (C) She thought they were not as beautiful as back in her time. (D) She did not believe that women did not have to bind their feet today.