

Document 2.3: Annual calendar of festival-related activities, 1635

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>
<i>Lichun</i>	Prefect and elites “welcome spring” in the eastern suburbs.
1/1-15 ¹	Lunar New Year. Families celebrate the new year at home and call on relatives and friends over the next weeks. Visit certain temples.
1/8-18	Lantern market. Buy, display, and view lanterns on city streets.
1/15	Lantern festival. Everyone can stroll the streets and stay out all night.
1/19	Celebrate <i>yanjiu</i> at the White Cloud Daoist monastery. ²
1/25	Cook and eat a huge meal on special cakes, called “filling up the granaries.”
2/2	Clear out insects and eat special foods associated with the “dragon raising his head.”
<i>Qingming</i>	Commemorate deceased ancestors by visiting family graveyards.
3/28	Birthday of the god of the Eastern Peak, celebrated in his temple.
4/8	Birthday of Shakyamuni, celebrated in Buddhist monasteries
4/18	Birthday of Bixia Yuanjun, celebrated in various temples
5/5	Visit scenic spots. Take prophylactic measures to “avoid poisons” thought to be in the air.
5/13	Birthday of Guan Yu, celebrated at his temples
6/6	Air books and clothing, at homes and in temples.
<i>san fu</i>	During the hottest days, bathe the imperial elephants in the moat.
7/7	Girls forecast their domestic skills by floating needles in a bowl in their

¹ The 1/1–15 does *not* correspond with the Western New Year—January 1. The Chinese New Year falls on the eve of the second new moon following the winter solstice. These dates are for the traditional Chinese calendar based on when the new year begins.

² The *yanjiu* festival commemorates the Immortal Qiu Chuji. Practitioners of Daoism would go to the Beijing White Cloud Temple, hoping to see him on this day. Immortals, in the Daoist tradition, are beings who live ideal Daoist lives and have therefore achieved immortality.

- home courtyards.
- 7/15 Religious professionals perform rites in temples to appease the spirits of the untended dead, culminating in the floating of lantern boats on city lakes.
- 8/15 Make offerings to the full moon. Families eat moon-cakes³ together.
- 9/9 Visit high places to enjoy the view.
- 10/1 Send spirit-clothing to deceased relatives in anticipation of winter.
- dongzhi* Winter solstice. Officials celebrate; others begin counting out the coming days of winter.
- 12/8 Eat special porridge.
- 12/24 Each household fetes its Stove-god.
- 12/25 Make offering in the home to the Jade Emperor.
- 12/30 Hold rites in the home; family gathers and stays up to see in the new year.

Source: *Dijing jingwu lue* (“Description of the Scenery of the Imperial Capital”), 1635.

Quoted in Naquin, Susan. *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400-1900*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, 275.

³ small, festive cakes made of pastry filled with sweet bean paste