

## Press Release

### After the dog comes the pig

**Freudenberg employees talk about Chinese New Year customs and traditions**

**Weinheim, Germany February 5, 2018 Good fortune, wealth and contentment - the Year of the Pig promises all this and more. February 5 is the first day of the Chinese New Year. The day also marks the beginning of a new chapter in the Chinese zodiac. The year of the dog gives way to the year of the pig. The New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, is the most important traditional holiday in China. Three Chinese Freudenberg employees based in Weinheim tell us about their customs and traditions – the most important dishes for wealth and good fortune, money gifts via group chats and a TV gala lasting several hours.**

“Have you already eaten?” is a typical Chinese greeting and reveals the significance of food in Chinese culture. Chinese cuisine is even more important at New Year. Just a few days prior to the holiday, an exodus of people begin the long journey home to enjoy a traditional family feast. Almost every dish has a special meaning for the New Year. Traditional dishes include Chinese dumplings - so-called Jiaozi. As Jiaozi resemble shoe-shaped gold bars, they promise wealth, good fortune and prosperity for the coming year. “At New Year, you simply must eat Jiaozi,” says Yang Yueying, a trainee in Controlling and Finance at the Freudenberg Group. She won’t be making the dumplings herself this year though; she’ll be buying them in the Asian supermarket. Tangyuan, sweet sticky rice balls, are also at the top of her shopping list. The pronunciation and form of “Tangyuan” symbolize reunification and togetherness. “Another

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important meal is an entire fish,” says the Freudenberg employee from Shanghai. “A whole fish on the table promises good fortune in the New Year. The Chinese pronunciation of “Yu” – the word for “fish” - sounds like the Chinese words for “Abundance” and “Prosperity.”

### **“Grab the Hongbao”**

Giving red envelopes containing money also has a long tradition at New Year. These so-called “Hongbaos” are given to wish people good luck. Their color symbolizes good fortune and prosperity. Wang Yang, a Freudenberg Technology Innovation employee will not be flying back home to his family in Wuhan for this Spring Festival. But he can still hand out Hongbaos - with a little help from an app. “With WeChat, a Chinese version of WhatsApp, I can put some money in an envelope as a gift even though I’m not there in person,” says Wang. Not only have red envelopes been sent online for several years now; the tradition has also become a game. Group chats know it as “Grab the Hongbao”. The money in the red envelope is divided unequally among those who are fast enough to click on the Hongbao first. “It’s fun, and I can stay in touch with my friends in China and give them a small gift at the same time,” says Wang happily.

### **Five-hour TV gala**

A five-hour New Year TV gala broadcast by the Chinese CCTV channel is a Chinese New Year tradition for Chen Ting, a Freudenberg Sealing Technologies employee. “I grew up with it. It’s part of our culture,” says Chen. The TV gala has been a mainstay of every Chinese New Year’s Eve since 1983. It has something for everyone: Chinese opera, acrobatics, dancing and singing. After the banquet, Chinese families switch to the live broadcast from Beijing at 8 p.m. “Of course, I’ll also be watching the gala this year. Currently, there’s a time difference of seven hours. So, in Germany it’s early afternoon. Perfect,” says Chen, who plans to watch the TV gala on the internet.

Chinese New Year is not just celebrated in China but also in many parts of Asia. “What brings the Chinese together on this day - no matter where they celebrate – are the culinary delights. The greeting should no longer be: “Have you already eaten? but rather “How much have you already eaten?” say the three Chinese Freudenberg employees grinning.

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