

Idiom by Lon Yan

歡天喜地

huan1 tian1 xi3 di4

The National Day fireworks display this year has eight scenes. The last one was named “歡天喜地” (*huan1 tian1 xi3 di4*), an auspicious title, and is certainly what we would hope for every day.

No English name was provided for the scene, which was instead graphically described in the government press release as “fast and rhythmic firing of shells arranged in birthday cake patterns.”

“歡” (*huan1*) is “cheerful,” “joyous,” “merry,” “天” (*tian1*) “the sky,” the heaven, “喜” (*xi3*) “happy,” “delighted,” and “地” (*di4*) “the earth,” “the ground.” Literally, “歡天喜地” (*huan1 tian1 xi3 di4*) is “cheerful sky, happy earth.”

The idiom means “with boundless joy,” “in high glee,” “overjoyed,” “to be rapt to the seventh heaven,” “to tread on air,” “delighted,”

“wild with joy.” It is used to describe great joy, a joyous mood.

“歡天喜地” (*huan1 tian1 xi3 di4*) applies to all occasions that bring happiness. When children get their dream toy for birthday, they will be “歡天喜地” (*huan1 tian1 xi3 di4*). When a student is admitted to a top school, both the student and his or her parents will be “歡天喜地” (*huan1 tian1 xi3 di4*).

There is another idiom that contains the characters “天” (*tian*) and “地” (*di4*) – sky and earth – but that is definitely not what we want to see. It is “呼天搶地” (*hu1 tian1 qiang3 di4*), meaning “to cry to heaven and knock one’s head on earth,” “to utter cries of anguish,” the direct opposite of “歡天喜地” (*huan1 tian1 xi3 di4*).

Terms containing the character “歡” (*huan1*) include:

歡迎 (*huan1 ying2*) – to welcome

歡樂 (*huan1 le4*) – happy; joyous; gaiety

歡呼 (*huan1 hu1*) – a cheer; to shout for joy

新歡 (*xin1 huan1*) – new flame; new lover