

《双语新闻：“年三十”不属于2014年中国法定节假日》

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Imagine finalising plans for a long-awaited new year family reunion – calling the parents, booking flights – when suddenly, the government posts a simple document online that renders it all in vain.

That's what has happened to many Chinese people, after the general office of the state council released its 2014 official holiday schedule. Many were shocked that it did not grant vacation time on Lunar New Year's Eve – an evening of ancestor worship and family reunion dinners, one of the most important nights of the traditional Chinese calendar. It has been an official holiday since 2007.

"It's like a Thanksgiving dinner," said Apple Dai, a 29-year-old employee at the Beijing office of a European conglomerate. "You're supposed to spend the day with your family – it's a cultural thing. And now because of China's development, it feels like we're losing our culture."

Next year's calendar will give workers 11 days off, including week-long vacations during the lunar new year – also known as the spring festival – and the anniversary of the October 1949 founding of the People's Republic of China. The official spring festival holiday will run from Friday 31 January until Thursday 6 February. Employees will be required to work on the weekends before and after to make up for lost time.

State media outlets said the new schedule "reflects public opinion". Shi Peihua, a professor at Beijing Jiaotong University, told the state news agency Xinhua that the arrangement eliminates "very long consecutive work days in weeks before or after holidays". Dong Keyong, a professor at Beijing's Renmin University, said it avoids "the interruption of people's regular work and life".

Yet more than 80% of nearly 180,000 respondents to a poll on Sina Weibo, the country's most popular microblog, said they were unsatisfied with the new arrangement. Many users proposed visiting government offices on Lunar New Year's Eve, to ascertain whether officials are working as hard as everyone else.

"The spring festival holiday without Lunar New Year's Eve is like making love without foreplay," said one well-forwarded post. "Mum, if I can't make it home on time for new year's eve, please don't take me to court," said another user, referring to legislation passed this year that allows parents to sue their children for lack of filial piety.

"I'm really worried about the migrant workers who live far away from home," wrote a third user. "For some, the vacation period will end while they're only halfway there."

Dai said she plans to take leave on Lunar New Year's Eve anyway – she wants to get back to her home province, Anhui, in time for dinner. She doubts her company will be inhumane enough to keep her working. "You just tell your boss you want to go home early or something like that," she said. "And sometimes they'll just let you go."

Because China's 1.3 billion people must abide by the same holiday schedule, the crush of hundreds of millions of

