

CHRISTMAS THEFT

Michael Knapp

Thieves are trying to steal our Christmas joy. For centuries, Christmas has been a joyful holiday, but today holiday theft threatens to ruin the fun for everyone. I'm not talking about thieves stealing wallets and iPhones. What I mean is that they are trying to steal Christmas.

It's happening all over the world. In North America, some call it the "war on Christmas." In order to avoid offending people who don't celebrate Christmas, stores, schools, and other institutions are being encouraged (some places, required) to only say, "Happy Holidays" instead of, "Merry Christmas." In China, there are some who say Chinese people shouldn't celebrate Christmas because it is a "western" holiday. Some, on both continents, say that Christmas is a "Christian holiday," and therefore should not be celebrated by non-Christians. Whatever the reason for attacking this holiday, thieves are trying to steal our Christmas joy, but we don't have to let them.

For those who attack Christmas as a Christian holiday, or as a holiday that does not include people of all religious (or non-religious) backgrounds, I respond by saying that Christmas is a joyous celebration for anybody, from any background. I have a lot of friends who are atheists, but still enjoy the holiday. They decorate a Christmas tree, exchange gifts, and even enjoy Christmas music.

To people in China who try to steal other people's right to enjoy Christmas, saying it's a western holiday that Chinese people should not celebrate, I would respond with a question: I'm not Chinese, so is it bad for me to celebrate Chinese Spring Festival? I'm a western person. Should I avoid anything that someone may call "eastern influence?" I don't believe in the "nian monster," but I still celebrate Chinese New Year with my Chinese relatives.

Chinese shopping malls are beautifully decorated for Christmas (see pictures below)



Millions of people, all over the world, from different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds joyfully celebrate Christmas. A person doesn't have to be a Christian to celebrate. True, the main meaning behind the holiday is the birth of Jesus Christ. But, people who don't believe Jesus is the Son of God have no reason to be offended. In the USA, we celebrate Martin Luther King Day, and he wasn't the Son of God. People who do believe that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world celebrate Christmas as his birthday. Regardless, of our belief, we can all freely celebrate this joyous season together! There are lots of ways to enjoy Christmas.

Give your friends Christmas gifts or cards. Take delight in the bright red and green Christmas decorations while you wander through a shopping mall or relax in a coffee shop. Listen to some enchanting Christmas music, or even better, sing along. Taste some Christmas goodies. Ignore the Christmas thief and determine to appreciate Christmas and partake in the joy of the holiday.

Christmas in China fits perfectly well into the holiday season. In the USA, our holiday season starts with Thanksgiving Day, near the end of November, and goes through the New Year. Traditionally, the holiday season in China runs from the January 1 international New Year, through the Chinese New Year. Now, with the popularity of Christmas in China, the holiday season starts a month earlier.



Christmas decoration sales are a great boost to China's economy.

Even the person who bitterly hates Christmas must acknowledge the holiday's contribution to the economy. Sales for stores and online shopping outlets benefit from masses of people rushing to buy Christmas gifts, Christmas trees and other Christmas related products. Everybody wins. Nobody loses. People who don't celebrate Christmas can still reap the economic benefits. And, people who do celebrate Christmas get to participate in the joy of the holiday. So, this winter, don't let the thief steal Christmas. Make the best of it and have a Merry Christmas!



China's shopping malls, restaurants and coffee shops are looking great for Christmas!





Coffee shops & restaurants in China are ready for Christmas!



Christmas concert at Hope International School, Beijing