

In this city, the setting off of fireworks is not allowed. New Year's Eve was very quiet. I went downstairs to buy a pack of cigarettes. On my way back, I saw two guys sneakily squatting on the overhead bridge. The one wearing a dark red school down jacket held a string of small balloons that had been secretly taken from the archway of a store as he squatted on the ground and burst them one by one with a tree branch, popping sounds echoing about. They made an earnest show of covering their ears and shouting out loud.

The man wearing a light brown overcoat took two small ground spinners out of his pocket. He lit them up with the butts of cigarettes they had just smoked and threw them onto the ground.

The small ground spinners that used to cost five jiao (*T/N: 0.5 yuan*) a bunch had risen in price to cost three yuan, but their sparks were not any brighter than before. The two of them squatted on the ground, staring at the two small fireworks dying out with smoke rising up as they each said 'Happy New Year'. Suddenly, they noticed me. Thinking that I was scolding them for their improper behaviour, they kicked away the extinguished remnants on the ground and quickly fled hand in hand from the other end of the overhead bridge.

Actually, at the time, what I had said was 'Happy New Year'.