

FEATURES

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Xīn Nián Kuài Lè! 新年快乐!

Feb. 8 marked the beginning of a very special holiday in many Asian cultures: Lunar New Year, which is also known as the Spring Festival. It marks the start of the new year that begins on the new moon after the winter solstice and ends on the full moon.

According to the stories and legends from the Asian culture, the origin of Lunar New Year started with a fight against a mythical beast called the "Year." The "Year" resembled an ox with a lion head and lived in the sea. During the night of New Year's Eve, "Year" would appear and attack people and animals, but "Year" had certain weaknesses: loud sounds, fire and the color red. Learning the weaknesses of "Year," the people launched fireworks and hung lanterns at their houses to keep the beast away from them. Thus, every time "Year" comes out to attack, the people would scare it away and that event would mark the Lunar New Year.

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What to Know About Chinese Zodiacs

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The Chinese zodiac that is so commonly associated with the Lunar New Year has been a part of Chinese culture since as early as 475 B.C. According to China Highlights, the zodiac is divided into 12 parts in which each division is represented by a different animal. In addition, the zodiac is based on a 12 year cycle that can be used to determine one's zodiac animal. For example, if you were born in the first year of the cycle, you would be born in the year of the rat. Today, the Chinese zodiac continues to influence Chinese culture by associating each animal with a different human personality characteristic.

The actual date of the origin of Chinese astrology is unknown, although it first appeared in the Zhan Guo period. According to a famous Chinese folk tale, the mythical Jade Emperor summoned the animals of the universe to participate in a race to his palace. The race was significant due to the fact that the order in which they finished would determine the order of the animals on the zodiac. Despite the tale, some scholars argue that these animals entered China through the Silk Road, while others believe that the Lunar calendar paved the sequence of the Chinese zodiac.

Each animal on the zodiac represents a specific year and set of human characteristics. Depending on the year you were born in, the Chinese zodiac may be able to predict your personality!

Ox (seniors): The ox is a symbol of diligence, persistence and honesty. Those born in the Year of the Ox are often tardy and stubborn, yet industrious and cautious. They are talented leaders that are deeply devoted to their work. They are contemplative before taking actions and are not easily affected by their surroundings.

Tiger (seniors/juniors): Tigers are considered to be brave, cruel, and forceful, for they symbolize power and lordliness. They're also stubborn, expressive and perform tasks in a "high-handed manner." Tigers also never waver in their decisions.

Rabbit (juniors/sophomores): The rabbit is a tame creature representing hope within the Chinese culture. The moon goddess Chang'e in Chinese legend had a rabbit as her pet, which stimulated the thought that only this creature was pure and docile enough to match her noble beauty. They are impulsive, yet lovable and possess compassion, modesty and mercy.

Dragon (sophomores/freshmen): In ancient China, this imaginary creature was thought to speed across the sky with divine power. Dragons are the symbols of authority, dignity, honor, success, luck and capacity. They are usually a group of impatient, yet smart, witty and confident people.

Snake (freshmen): People tend to regard the snake as a cunning and sly animal. However, this animal also serves as a symbol of wisdom, intelligence and intuition. They also embody other characteristics such as calmness, sensitivity and passion.

Dates:

Rat: 2020, 2008, 1996, 1984, 1972, 1960
Ox: 2021, 2009, 1997, 1985, 1973, 1961
Tiger: 2022, 2010, 1998, 1986, 1974, 1962
Rabbit: 2023, 2011, 1999, 1987, 1975, 1963
Dragon: 2024, 2012, 2000, 1988, 1976, 1964
Snake: 2025, 2013, 2001, 1989, 1977, 1965
Horse: 2026, 2014, 2002, 1990, 1978, 1966
Goat: 2027, 2015, 2003, 1991, 1979, 1967
Monkey: 2028, 2016, 2004, 1992, 1980, 1968
Rooster: 2029, 2017, 2005, 1993, 1981, 1969
Dog: 2030, 2018, 2006, 1994, 1982, 1970
Pig: 2031, 2019, 2007, 1995, 1983, 1971

New Year, New Luck

MADELEINE PARAGAS

Staff Writer

Lunar New Year, also known as Chinese New Year, can be seen to many young children as a time to receive and collect red envelopes. However, like any other big event in a culture, there is more to it. Traditionally Lunar New Year is not only one day in a whole year, but a 15 day event.

In the preceding days, many may find themselves cleaning every corner of the house to drive away bad luck and allow the new start to come in. After cleaning, they will then move on to purchasing items, such as clothing, which symbolizes bringing in the good luck and new start. A series of giving and decorating the house is then done, from putting up couplets, pictures, and paper-cuttings with the Chinese character "Fú," meaning good luck or good fortunes, to place around the house for good wishes and good luck. People will usually visit temples to worship and enjoy carnivals.

With an event such as a New Year come several superstitions that many families do to keep or bring in good luck. In addition to buying new clothes, many tend to wear red on the day of, thinking the color can scare away evil spirits and bad fortune. Firecrackers are also used to drive away evil; it is said that the person who launches the first firework of the New Year will obtain good luck. All in all, Lunar New Year mainly revolves around traditions to continue bringing in the good luck and taking out the bad.

Alhambra's Celebrations

MICHELLE LIN

Staff Writer

Like previous years, Alhambra will be hosting a Lunar New Year celebration on Saturday, Feb. 13, on Valley Blvd.

The festival will have many booths, including a dragon boat rowing station, children's workshops, a health fair and cultural demonstrations. Through the festivals, Asian Americans can learn more about their own culture and strengthen their community as a whole. Many of the Asian Americans today were born in the United States and have little knowledge about their home country. These festivals allow them to have an insight on Chinese culture. According to Pasadena Star News, Pasadena will also be holding a festival in the Pacific Asia Museum on Feb. 7, where you and your family can spend an entire afternoon for free. They will be featuring traditional lion and folk dances, taiko drumming and a taekwondo presentation.

Going to these festivities will allow more people to learn about the Asian culture by giving them an insight into the Chinese tradition. Therefore, take the day off to enjoy a fun event with your family and friends on Feb. 13.

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