



1998 Welcomes

By Sylvia Mo

At midnight on January 28, 1998, we entered the year with a fierce roar from the Earth Tiger. What does that mean and why are Chinese years named after an animal?

Dating back to an old legend, Buddha honors every year after one of the twelve faithful animals that attended his feast before he left the mortal world. In the order they arrived, the 12-year lunar cycle consists of the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Rooster, Pig, Dog, Snake, Dragon, Goat, Horse and Monkey.

During an animal's particular years, it influences and effects world events, as well as the personality and fate of the other animal signs for that year.

Like the animal itself, the Year of the Tiger signifies dynamic activity, so expect fast changes, quick actions and instructive yet sometimes agitated times in this year that has just started for us.

With all the excitement this rebellious and restless animal promises, the Chinese have characterized Tiger years with universal upheaval, breakthrough discovery and political ferment (If you need proof of the validity of the Tiger Year predictions, need I go any further than Clinton's intern problems?).

Did you know that some inventions associated with previous Tiger years included the touch tone phone, automatic clock, pop-up toaster, microscope, camera, traffic light and satellite?

Many significant infrastructure projects were also completed in Tiger years, such as the Panama Canal in 1914, the Aswan Dam in 1902 and the Trans-Iranian railway.

Despite thrilling and productive changes, Chinese history indicates that these years also tend to bring disastrous droughts, high winds, earthquakes and possibility of war and financial crisis (1914 and 1938 were Tiger years).

Already this year, intense rain and unusual weather patterns around the world have been blamed on the freakish natural phenomenon El Nino — an manifestation of the Tiger's predictions?

You don't need to worry too much, but do know when to pounce and when to linger, for "Timing is everything in life," warns the Tiger. Those who are daring and brave should fare best during the Tiger Year, but the meek and timid should watch their step.

On a happier note, like a Tigress and her cubs, this year is filled with love and renewed affection. So, there may be marriages soon to come!

However, forego any temptations to embark on any illicit flings, for dangerous repercussions may occur.

Ending on a more personal level, the Tiger affects each individual animal in a different way. Since the Tiger dominates this year, the Pig, Tiger's best friend, should have a great and successful year.

The Horse and Dog, teammates of the Tiger, should also do well. However, the Monkey should heed caution and avoid confronting the ruling boss of the year. All others fall in between these extremes.

Enjoy the Tiger year and for those who want the year to end, you will have to wait for the Rabbit year to begin February 15, 1999.

Year of the Tiger