

Happily in the jungle

Welcome 2022 with courage and wisdom
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The Lunar New Year date is different each year, but always keeps to one thing: the cycles of the moon. The lunisolar calendar tracks the phases of the sun and the moon, in contrast to the commonly used Gregorian calendar which does not.

Although the Lunar New Year date varies annually, it will always fall between 20 January and 21 February on the Gregorian calendar. Another constant is that each year has a corresponding animal from the Chinese zodiac, based on ancient Chinese Buddhist mythology: 2022 will mark the Year of the Tiger.

The tiger is leader

There is no lion in the Chinese zodiac, which means that the Tiger is the Lord of the Zodiac. To Buddhists, this means that we should take every initiative to do good for others who need it (who does not?) and to be kind and forgiving (which is somehow appreciated). The Tiger protects himself by being alert. Alertness is constant mindfulness against any kind of bad karma of the mind, of speech and of the body. As humans, we are capable of guarding these 3 doors so that no evil will enter our lives. Yet, we keep these very same doors open, with kind thoughts, kind words, kind actions to others, and welcome them into our home, and let them leave with greater happiness.

The water tiger

This year's element is Water: it is the Water Tiger year. Water is a great element for cultivating lovingkindness. We need water to clean ourself and slake our thirst, which means that this is a year for us to keep our body and speech pure (keep the precepts), and not thirst for unwholesome things, which will only attract more unwholesomeness and endless suffering, sooner or later.

When it rains, all the beings and plants in the open get water all the same. Let us show our unconditional acceptance of others in the same way, by learning to listen and understand what others are trying to say or do, especially those who are near and dear to us. Let our kindness drop like the gentle rain from heaven. Let it be twice blessed: blessed to the giver and to the receiver. This is true blessing.

The moon and the Buddha

The lunar calendar follows the cycle of the moon. This is the very same moon, so to speak, that shone on the Buddha as he sat under the Bodhi tree and awakened to arhathood. This is the one most important event in human history for our lasting happiness.

When we see the Full Moon, we should remember the radiant figure of the Buddha sitting under the Bodhi tree. His teaching frees us from the subhuman realms. As humans, we are able to tame our animal nature and to cultivate our human mind to rise into divine wisdom.

This New Year is a reminder that we are human, and should never fall below this level, by keeping at least the 5 precepts.

To fully celebrate the blessing of the New Year, we must ensure that all whom we know, at least as many of them as possible, are happy enough to celebrate it. This is a time when we should be kind and generous to the poor, the aged, the infirm and the lonely. Only by showing them kindness, we make this year new and blessed: we continue in happiness, goodness and wisdom.

May your year, your month, your day, your hour, your moment, be blessed as you live it.

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