



TI-SARANA BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

Ti-Sarana

NEWS

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Chinese New Year Message from Bhante:

GONG XI FA CAI!

Since the Chinese New Year has come to our doorstep, once again we have the opportunity to recollect our roots and evaluate the cultural and social significance of the Chinese New Year and celebrate the New Year in a way appropriate for the occasion. Undoubtedly it is worthwhile to celebrate this annual event more successfully for the satisfaction of all concerned. Evidently, the feeling that we get when we think of the New Year we have inherited and celebrated nationally and culturally is quite different from the feeling that we get by celebrating the New Year that dawns on the 1st of January after each twelve months' period. This is because, the traditionally stipulated New Year carries us back to our legitimate roots and makes us feel that we are not culturally isolated or socially segregated. What is more important, regardless of whether the New Year of a nation has been calculated according to lunar or solar calendar is that it delivers the message of cultural identity of that particular nation.

Family gatherings during Chinese New Year strengthen the cohesion and mutual cooperation resulting in smooth social mobility. On the other hand, lost identity due to ever changing urban life is reestablished by adhering to customs, which have been handed down from generation to generation. Therefore, it is indeed more real than apparent that Chinese New Year, just as a New Year of any given race, plays an important role in the social life of Chinese people. Customs, traditions and norms of national culture are embedded in the New Year rituals from time immemorial. Since modified and stereotyped by practice for centuries those rituals are socially as well as culturally significant practices.

Get Away from Superstition!

According to traditional horoscope, this year of the tiger may not be an auspicious year. But as Buddhism has advocated, this is a superstitious belief calculated to obstruct one's progress. Among the generality of people in India during the time of the Buddha there were many such superstitious notions, which the Buddha criticized in several occasions and delivered the **Mangala Sutta** to convince them what were the really supreme and auspicious blessings. The world is full of events and life is confronted with gain and loss, fame and disgrace, praise and blame and happiness and sorrow. When one understands these worldly conditions intelligently, one is ever enthusiastic and marches ahead successfully. The tiger is only a symbol just as monkey and pig in the horoscope. In the solar calendar too there are such 12 symbolic representations, which have nothing do with the forecast of the horoscope.

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Chinese New Year Rituals and Buddhism

Traditionally, there are many rituals to be performed during the Chinese New Year period, which lasts for 15 days. Among the numerous ritualistic performances on the eve of the New Year, visiting elders of the family and the paying respect to them are very significant customs followed with concern. As given in Buddhism, this is a virtue resulting in happy returns. For, it is stated in the **Dhammapada**:

“One who is in the habit of honouring and respecting the elders would be blessed with long span of life, bodily complexion, health and physical strength.” – Dhammapada 109

This means that the satisfaction one gets by paying respect to elders and the blessing in return from the elders have a cumulative effect for the happiness of one’s life. Moreover, visit to the sacred places of worship during the New Year is also another custom continued for centuries. Among other things, the honouring of King Sakka, a pious deity in Buddhist pantheon who is also known as the Jade Emperor, on the 9th day of the celebrations is worthy of mention. It is to be noted that the performance of harmless traditional rituals do not conflict with Buddhism.

Be Mindful and Energetic

Natural disasters, which are mostly unpredictable, take place every year. According to astrologers, personal horoscope as well as the horoscope of the year, one may have ups and downs. Therefore, in this context, what we have to do is to put forth effort, understand the conditions rationally and undertake the task ahead diligently for the creation of a beautiful New Year.

WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS CHINESE NEW YEAR!

Ven. Dr. P. Gnanarama Mahā Thera

Celebrating Bhante Gnanarama’s and Bhante Chandawimala’s birthdays on 6th Dec. 2009



Proud Parents having their baby blessed by the Bhantes at Ti-Sarana



Thank you Bhantes

A section of the congregation

*Bhantes chanting inside the
Mandapa*

*Dispensing Blessed Water after
the chanting*

Puja at Anuradhapura

*MYC girls' band at the procession
to welcome Rev. Ong*

*MYC Boys' Band
welcoming Rev. Ong*

*Exuberant MYC children
performing their finale*

Children who received prizes

Activities of the Sunday Dhamma Classes

Annual Speech Day

The Sunday Dhamma Classes will hold its annual speech day on Sun., 24th January 2010.

Programme on 24th

The auspicious year of the Tiger will soon be upon us. To usher in the new year, we will be holding a Special Blessing Service on Chinese New Year's Eve. May the upcoming Year of the Tiger be one of abundant love, joy, peace, harmony and prosperity for you and your family!