

Welcome the Year of the Rat

By Michelle Hess

The Chinese New Year begins on February 6th when we say good bye to 2007's Fire Pig Year and hello to the Earth Rat, the first animal in the Chinese zodiac. It is a fresh, twelve-year cycle – a perfect time to take on new projects and begin new ventures. But clear the slate first. Even before the New Year begins declutter areas like your basement, closets and desk. Reassess items that are no longer useful or desirable, and make room for the new. Whenever possible, donate, recycle or rejuvenate. Then you will be ready to paint a room an exciting new color, rearrange your furniture, hang a new picture on your wall, or buy that sofa you've been wanting.

The Rat Year is a time of hard work, activity, and renewal. It is a good year to make a fresh start – begin a new job, get married, or launch a product. The Rat Year is predicted to be a year of opportunity, abundance and good fortune. However, the Rat is shrewd. The greatest opportunities will come to those who are well prepared and resourceful, so be patient and avoid taking risks.

This is also a perfect time for introspection. Reassess last year, or even the last twelve years. Think about where you have come from and where you want to go from now on. We are leaving behind a twelve year cycle that, astrologically (Fire Pig, Earth Tiger, Wood Rooster, and so on), mirrored the 1940's when the world was at war. Let us hope that this new cycle will be the beginning of more peaceful times.

Gung Hay Fat Choy! Happy New Year!

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