

**CHINESE NEW YEAR 2004**  
**YEAR OF 'THE MONKEY IN THE TREES'**  
© Malvin Artley

Greetings one and all—and another very Happy New Year to you!

As promised, what follows is my forecast for 2004 based upon the Chinese New Year, which this year begins on January 22, 2004 at 8:04 AM AEDT (22 Jan 2004 at 6:04 AM CCT). This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the 18<sup>th</sup> cycle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Epoch (an Epoch = 3600 years) in Chinese measure, making this the 4700<sup>th</sup> year of Chinese recorded history. Not bad going! Aside from the forecast, which will come to later in this letter, I want to give out some information to you which you might find of interest, for there is much more to Chinese astrology than the 12 animal signs one finds on the place mats in Chinese restaurants—just as there is much more to Western astrology than what we read about in the newspaper horoscope section. Chinese astrology is actually an ancient, august system of divination that has evolved quite independently of the rest of the world and is, in fact, the sister system to the astrology we know in the West, giving us—as it were—the missing pages of a long-sought chapter on the mysteries of astrological art and practice. I will also give out more of the relevant information on the year data than I did last year. (My last forecast was not a general mailing.) With that, let us begin.

As stated above, this marks the year of the Yang Wood Monkey. This is also called the year of the Yang Green Monkey in some circles, denoting the element of Wood. It may be of interest to note that schooled Chinese astrologers do not use the animals at all in their delineations. They use, instead, the Branch, which the animals represent. A Branch is simply a notation of a portion of the greater cycle. It is always a division of the cycle by 12. In this way, we could say that Aries would be the 1<sup>st</sup> Branch in Western astrology, were we to use such terminology. These Branch numbers have no numerical values. They are simply labels. Animals are a convenient tool for memorizing what the intrinsic meaning of each Branch is, and there is some parallel between the zodiacal signs (Aries=1) as phases of the Western Zodiac and the Chinese Branches, although the 1<sup>st</sup> Month Branch (Rat) corresponds loosely with Sagittarius, not Aries. Seeming inconsistencies aside, the animal symbolism in Chinese astrology is actually an esoteric blind for what is really a much more profound meaning and mechanism. But, for now, the animal symbols will suffice.

When we sit down at our favorite Chinese restaurant and bemuse ourselves with what we believe to be the quaint and very simplistic system of astrology being presented to us, there are several things we should keep in mind. First of all, the year “animal” is only 1/8 of the birth data from which the Chinese astrologer would work. When we give a Western astrologer our birth details—date of birth, time of day and city of birth—we get a natal horoscope derived from that, which is simply a map of the planetary positions at the moment of our birth. We get that from a Chinese astrologer as well (at least, from a good one), but we also get quite a bit more. From the Chinese astrologer, as well as getting the natal chart, we also get what are known as The 4 Pillars (Year, Month Day and Hour)—the foundation of their fate calculation systems—the possibility of at least 100 derived “stars” in addition to the actual planets, the further subdivision of the zodiacal wheel into 28 lunar mansions with all those resultant meanings and the inclusion in the analysis of many other cycles—planetary and otherwise—of which Western astrology knows little or nothing. So, when we read about the animal associated with the year, we might be mindful next time that there are “animals” associated with the month, day and hour, as well as one of the 5 Chinese Elements being associated with each one. The learned Chinese astrologer would smile quietly to him/herself at the blissful ignorance of the restaurant patrons so delighted with their new animal labels. To top it off, the Year Pillar does not really describe the person anyway. It describes social contacts, ancestors and extended family. It is the Day Pillar that describes the self.

Secondly, much of Chinese astrology in the public domain is actually what is known as Ming Shu—Fate Calculation—which does not use the actual planetary positions at all. The reason for this goes back to old China where astrology as we know it was reserved for the Imperial court and for people of real importance

within the state. Possession of star charts by commoners was a crime punishable by death in those days. The reason for that was the simple fact that the Emperor was supposed to be the representative of Heaven on Earth, so for someone outside the Imperial court to be in possession of star charts, they would be a danger to the state because they would essentially be in possession of state secrets and in a position to usurp the power of the throne, if they knew how. Fate calculation was used in the court as well, but its secrets were not obvious and the veiling of the true cycles and meanings was so complete that safety in the hands of the public was assured. The motions of the stars are obvious. The operation of more esoteric cycles is not apparent to the average person.

Thirdly, there are many different methods of Ming Shu, some of which are very simple and others of which are very complex, such as the Tzu Wei (Purple Palace) system. The latter, though complex, is not the be-all-end-all of Ming Shu, however. There are some methods that are amazingly exact, but these are generally kept out of view from the general public and, due to the nature of the calculations involved, are prohibitively expensive for the incomes of most Chinese.

As an aside, there is a method of Ming Shu which can actually give one their birth weight, among other things. This system works, and it is reasonably accurate. The system is called *San Shi Xiang Fa*—Three Worlds Physiognomy Rules, and it is based upon the 4 Pillars. Each Pillar is assigned a weight, the summation of which yields the person's weight at birth. This system is well-known in China and it appears in many dictionaries there. There is another system called "Plum Flower" I Ching, which relates astrology to that well-known system of divination, the I Ching, or Book of Changes. This is one of the more accurate systems, but it is virtually unknown in the West. Yet another system is called "Iron/Wood" Ming Shu—the "Iron/Wood" being a description of what we know in the West as a slide rule. (I actually learned how to use one when I was coming along, which dates me a bit.) It has as its basis a plethora of calculations all done on a slide rule (I suspect they are computerized by now) which also yields remarkable results. But, just how does all this stuff work if they are not based upon planetary cycles, one might ask?

This is one of the more obscure parts of Chinese astrology. The fact of the matter is that all these methods of Ming Shu and the 4 Pillars themselves *are*, in fact, based upon real planetary cycles, even though there is no correspondence with the actual orbital positions of the planets. As an explanation, just as anyone has their own physical cycles, such as respiration, heartbeat, sleep, etc., so we also have cycles associated with our psyches. Just as we breathe in and out ceaselessly through life, so our psyches do as well. To use a simple analogy, there are times when we are more outwardly focused and times when we withdraw inwards, and these periods have their own cycles and timing. And, as surely as we do this, so the planets as great Lives do as well. The esotericist will recognize these periods of in-breathing and out-breathing of the psyches of the planets as "Ray cycles". These Ray cycles are indeed *bona fide* planetary cycles, and they condition the psyches of humanity, the lower kingdoms and all other kingdoms in nature, throughout the solar system. To give an example of how this might work, consider the following:

The Chinese have used a cycle of 9 years in their Feng Shui calculations for many centuries. It is used to determine a person's orientation within the environment. The Chinese also listed this cycle centuries ago as the lesser cycle of Saturn, their Earth Planet. Saturn, as we know in the West, governs a person's placement within the greater scheme of things and it astrologically defines the boundaries within which we must work. But, for the most part, this is a subjective matter. It governs our place upon the earthly sphere through the very power of our thinking. This number 9 is also recognizable as a subdivision of one of the Ray cycles as given out in the Alice Bailey material. Although this particular cycle does not figure in Chinese *astrological* calculations, there is another one that does—the number 5, which is a lesser subdivision of the Ray cycle for Jupiter. In fact, the entire 5-element, 12 Branch hexagesimal cycle is governed by Jupiter, the Branches being governed by its 12-year orbital cycle, and the cycle of the 5 Elements (Stem cycle) being governed by its Ray cycle. Jupiter is said to be their Year Planet, or that planet whose orbit maps out the course of the Great Year. There are others of these Ray cycles embedded throughout Chinese astrology, but all we are doing here is indicating that these fate cycles are not simply based in fancy or used as matters of

convenience. They have been arrived at through many generations of careful observation and study, for which the ancient Chinese were renowned.

This brings us, then to a consideration of the year at hand. We will go through all the relevant data the Chinese astrologer would use—though very briefly--and then see what the year really holds for us, aside from being a year which is classed as one with a lot of activity. We should keep in mind that the Chinese year is a lunar year, and that its length varies year to year because of the varying lengths of the lunar months. As another aside, all of the ancient calculations that yield up the secrets of the greater cycles and that have been passed down to esotericists and Initiates through the ages, have as their basis a *lunar* year. The Moon and the lunar cycles are those that govern the periods of manifestation for all life on this planet and within the solar system, for our bodies are said to be “lunar vehicles”—the vast bulk of the life on our globe having come from the Moon, the mother of our Earth—and it is the Lunar Lords who provide us with our very bodies and the forms of all that we see around us. But, that is another letter.

In the Year Pillar we find the following: Stem=1 (Yang Wood), Branch=IX (metal monkey, Monkey in the Trees), resultant element =Water (Rains and Springs). In all Chinese mundane charts the Year Pillar represents the biggest body of people involved. In the individual it represents extended family, ancestors and social contacts aside from friends. In the New Year figure, then, the Year Pillar represents the world at large and, to a lesser extent, the major nations of the world on the basis of population. Subjectively (as indicated by the Stem, Yang Wood), this is to be a year of prolific expansion outward. Wood is the Element associated with the planet Jupiter and it is the Element that governs growth, imagination, inventiveness and creativity. It also governs electricity, the wind, acidity, verdancy, and the Soul. The 9<sup>th</sup> Branch represents a phase characterized as a final phase of reaping (feeding) and a sort of frenzied gathering-in of forces--hence, the connection with the Monkey. It is “the final ingathering before the retirement from activity”. The combined element—Rains and Springs—is what can come to pass if the energies of this Pillar are correctly handled.

Putting all this together, what we will see as this year progresses is, in one way, a general expansion and feeling of growth and creative imagination evidencing therefrom. But, this is all geared toward a harvesting of what was sown in the period of 1996 and just after. I will leave it to the reader to work out the particulars for your own area. In that period of world history the economy was in full swing in the West, the Euro was introduced as the European currency, there was trouble in the Balkans, we had the Asian financial collapse, Hong Kong was returned to the Chinese, Clinton was impeached, Princes Di was killed, the first cloned sheep was “hatched”, Mad Cow disease appeared in Britain, the testing of nukes by India and Pakistan and the appearance of the Hale-Bopp comet, to name but a few. As we begin to reap the results of those times and then begin to prepare for the next cycle of the Great Year in 2008 we will see a lot of jockeying for positions of power (re: US and Australian elections), much “creativity” with flows of money around the world and into government coffers, expansion of public works projects, a general instability in the economy due to public insecurity, the exposure of many things that have lain hidden due to the unscrupulous dealings of public officials and people behind the scenes and the general growth of the film industry and the arts.

This is classed as a doubly-bright year, meaning that the Li Chun (commencement of Chinese spring) comes after the start of the New Year and after this year ends. It is an extraordinarily auspicious indicator and augers a year of great prosperity for everyone. But, given the phase (Branch) of the Great Year this has to be modified somewhat. The tendency for this particular combination is for people and governments to squirrel away the gains of the year and to not give them out for general distribution. If the governments of the world are prepared to “share the wealth” with the people and with their neighbors, this can be an extraordinary year indeed. The Wood in the Year Stem, along with the doubly bright year, could mean fantastic opportunities for growth and advancement. At a material level this can, and probably will, mean that great fortunes can be made this year. But it also means this in a spiritual sense as well, and anyone prepared to work toward that end can make terrific strides in their inner life this year. It is a year of the Soul, after all, as indicated by Jupiter. It is to be a year of bounty—unless public confidence flounders. So, cast ye your doubts aside and get on with the business at hand, for this is to be a plum year.

It would seem, being a Wood Year, that all types of activities regarding the plant kingdom and trees in particular would be indicated. Such is not the case, though. Whenever a particular element is found in a Pillar it is said the activities indicated by that element should be given sway and not interfered with. Wood is about the growth of the verdant covering of our world. Only a foolish leader would endanger himself and his realm in the old days by authorizing the cutting down of trees and by starting major forestry projects. The planting of trees and shrubs is very favorable, but the pruning and cutting of timber is not. It will be very interesting, as well, to see how the various Green movements in the political spectrum fare over the next two years. Their fortunes have been bolstered over the last two years (water years) and in these two coming years they will be in their element, both literally and figuratively. National parks have suffered in countries like the US under the present administration. Will the record be set straight this year and more attention given to the remaining forests? Or, will leaders such as Bush reap rewards of a different kind under their present policies?

Jupiter is in retardation of the place where it should be found in terms of its lunar station (Xiu) and the Branch number. It should be found in the station Tung Pi (Lunar mansions 27 and 28), but is instead in Xiu 26 (Wei). In the old days the omens for the realm were not good when this was the case. Indications were that the leaders of the army of the corresponding realm would be wiped out and that the royal house would collapse in ruins. Indications for the Xiu of Wei are that of drought, but prosperity, the mourning of women and epidemics. We are already seeing the seeds of some epidemics in the bird flu of Vietnam, recurrence of SARS and Mad Cow disease in the States. Whether or not these will fully manifest remains to be seen. As for the mourning of women, this generally referred to the after-effects of wars and the collapse of the army of the realm. There are still drought conditions in many areas of the world, including parts of Australia and there is talk of a recurrence of the El Nino pattern this year, which always brings drought to Australia. Jupiter is retrograde in opposition to Venus in this New Year chart as well, which is a further indicator of the destruction of armies (the failure of an army to achieve its directives), since Venus governs the course of warfare in Chinese astrology.

There is another side to this 26<sup>th</sup> Xiu, though. Aside from the general indicators of the retarded Jupiter there, the trends for that lunar mansion are generally favorable. Jupiter goes direct just before the Wesak Moon of May and it will eventually catch up to its appointed place before the year is out. The indications for the year after going direct are for right conduct being rewarded, the flourishing of one's business activities, the acquiring of new property, the promises of riches after a successful career and happy, harmonious relationships. So, although this year is set to get off to a rocky start, the overall prognostications for the later 2/3 of the year are generally very good.

We need to have a brief look at this May full moon, though, because it will be a particularly powerful one and will be an eclipse at that. The particular series of Saros cycles that full moon belongs to is marked by a greater than normal forcefulness and it is about taking power. On the day of that eclipse there is a double emphasis on the Wood Element and we find the Element of that month (Yang Earth) being controlled by the Element of the year. There is said to be a great force and strength manifesting in the area of relationships with that class of eclipse and there may be evidenced very large efforts of a group nature, whatever that may mean. The month in the mundane interpretation of the Chinese Pillars is descriptive of states within larger nations and smaller nation-states, with the implication being that they will come under the thumb of greater powers during this period. Watch world events very closely after this coming full moon of May, because there will definitely be shifts in power in the world and there will be people in power making their plays for dominance within certain areas.

Just after that in early June, Venus begins its new 2<sup>nd</sup>-order cycle. This will be the time when the new relationships brought about by the Wesak eclipse will be put in place for the next 8-year period, and the scales of justice will hopefully balance. Venus is the "Great White" in Chinese astrology and it governs the course of justice as well as the outcome of wars and the punishment of criminals. It is high in the evening sky at the moment and it is in its Western Hesperus phase, which indicates stability and the garnering of wisdom. But, it will soon begin its descent to the horizon, and when it gets close to the Sun just prior to its

conjunction there will be a period of intervening change and instability, which will coincide with the post-Wesak eclipse period. It will be an altogether “interesting” time, and one full of opportunities for letting go of old paradigms in the personal realm and the institution of new ones. This year is also known to be the start of the true new Millennium in some quarters, and from the preceding it is not difficult to see why, being such a potent setup for the wiping away of the old and the commencement of the new. Of course, there are many other cycles at work this year as well, but we do not have the space to cover them here.

The symbolism of the Metal Monkey in the year Pillar for 2004 is also reflective of this new cycle of Venus about to start. Venus is known as the Metal Planet (note carefully that this is metal, and not *mental*). Metal, as a Chinese Element, carries with it the qualities of strength, courage, decisiveness, directness and a progressive attitude—not normally qualities that we attribute to Venus in the West. The 9<sup>th</sup> Branch of this year is thus colored by the qualities of this Element. This is quite a powerful manifestation of this phase. The “Monkey in the Tree” is a very vigorous and agile symbolism and it adds further strength to the expression of the year. We should bear in mind that, although the Year Pillar applies to large bodies of people, it also applies to every individual as well, because there is no nation without its people. So, if the nation is full of stamina and its leaders are decisive in a positive way, then everyone will benefit in the long run. Again, the only problem will come in if the leaders of a nation are only in office for their own gain and seek to keep the status quo of power rather than moving the nation into a phase of growth and expansion, as should happen this year. Everything should grow vigorously this year. If it does not, then look to the leaders and start asking a lot of questions.

The main problem with this year lies at the grassroots levels of political life—the small community and the individual. In the mundane Pillar analysis, these are indicated by the Day and the Hour Pillars, respectively. The Day Pillar has Yang Metal as its Element and the 1<sup>st</sup> Branch (Rat) as the phase. True, there is the possibility and, hopefully, likelihood of many new things beginning at those levels, but there is more than meets the eye here. Those readers who are familiar with how the Chinese system of Elements works will know that Metal controls Wood, so we could say that there is the possibility that small communities can bring a lot of pressure to bear on governments this year, which is true. But, the states—which have dominion over the communities—are ruled by Yang Fire, which controls Metal. Also we have the added problem that Wood feeds the Fire, and thus increases the ability of the states to control the little guys. To put this in modern terminology, there is the distinct possibility that this year will see the ascendancy of the increased control at the state level over the lesser communities. This would happen through legislation at the national level or through direct imposition by the national ruling body. The savior in this situation is that most Western societies “elect” their officials, and in order to effect change at a national level, there has to be a fundamental change in thinking at a grassroots level and the will of the people to effect a change. There are so many possibilities in this regard that I will not even try at a conjecture.

Suffice it to say that there is likely to be a regime change in the US and very likely in the UK as well, or—at the very least—a curtailing of the activities of the present ones. George Bush is coming up for the transit of Saturn over his Sun, which is the “president-buster” transit. The eclipse in May conjoins the Beau Blair’s Sun and it will not be long before Saturn perches itself on John Howard’s Sun—not to mention an end to Arnie’s California dreamin’ in a couple of years. And a good time will be had by all! The problem is that all this does little to bolster public confidence. The fact is that we are all going to have to make some fundamental choices this year about how we live our lives, especially in the middle part of the year. I reiterate—*this is going to be an amazing year of change in the world*. If it is not, then there is something very wrong with our attitude and with the way we are doing things.

There are a couple of final things regarding the day of the New Year that bear a look. First off is the Day Indicator, which gives the general tone of the day in terms of luck. Since it is connected with the day, then it also has a bearing on the general luck of the small community (councils and neighborhoods) for the year. The Day Indicator for Chinese New Year is “Shut”, which is always painted black in Chinese almanacs. For most events, it is generally considered to be a day of misfortune and evil. It is, however, a great day for

funerals, erecting memorials, saving and hoarding, beginning a diet, making resolutions, dealing with correspondence and advertising—in short, indoor activities and ones that do not require one to bring things to fruition. It is, therefore, a day for making starts and for storing things away. In addition, the Day Constellation is that of the Wolf, which happens to be the darkest of the animal constellations. It represents the official who extracts money unfairly from the people. It is also a day upon which travelers should beware. Building is said to be the only auspicious activity associated with this constellation but, given the Day Indicator, maybe even this should be given a miss. All the indicators are that the common people of the world are going to have to watch out for themselves and their neighbors and communities will have to band together in order for the full benefit of the tremendous energies of the Year Pillar to filter through. The governments of the world must be called to task this year through the will of the people.

The one Pillar I have not addressed is the Hour Pillar and, in fact, I cannot. The reason I cannot is that it will be different throughout the world for the commencement of the New Year. The Hour Pillar shifts by a factor of one for every 30 degrees of longitude. There are several websites that deal with the 4 Pillars if you are interested, and a simple search of the web will point you in the right direction. This last Pillar represents the common person on our planet and children in general.

As for the zodiacal chart for the year, there is quite a lot there, but it mainly supports what has been outlined. Earth and Metal are in harmony for the year figure, indicating a further indication for the success of building projects and public works. It is also a good augury for the Olympics and for athletes in general. Metal and Water are harmonious, indicating mining projects should fare well and that the digging of watercourses would be well advised. On the other side of that, Earth and Water are in discord, indicating disturbances in weather patterns, farmers and miners maybe entering into disagreements or that one of those groups will be favored over the other, a tendency for people to be too pliant regarding the loquaciousness of politicians and that there is a danger that people will find it difficult to maintain their center because of miscommunications or outright untruths. The Earth Planet (Saturn) is retrograde in Xiu 22, indicating a fortunate time to build, take exams, to be industrious in the garden, digging ditches and watercourses (again) and that all work in progress must be completed. All manner of electrical and electronic devices will also be well posited for growth this year. There is so much there, but this letter is already starting to get long.

Finally, we get to the part that most of you have been waiting for—the forecast for the spiritual part of the year. Most of what we have covered thus far is the mundane aspect. Spiritually, this is a year of reaping benefits and of building upon foundations laid sometimes long ago. It is definitely a year of possibly profound inner and personal expansion. It is a time when we are all called upon to use whatever artistry and creativity we have in our nature to further the general welfare and the greater good and to actively promote the concordant messages of brotherhood and community. We could say that such a message is always in effect—and it is—but it is particularly pronounced this year and is capable of bringing about some amazing results. If you have any creative abilities this is very much the year to use them, foster them and to expand upon them. Believe this year that your wildest imaginings can come true—you never know what can happen—and the power of a good idea, rightly placed and fostered, can be an unstoppable catalyst for change. A simple turn of phrase, a picture, a song, or any manner of human creation can move entire nations. “Be ye as the mustard seed...”

In conclusion, then, be decisive. Be direct. Let your neighbors know you are there and that you have something to offer. Be inventive. Be enterprising. Be creative. The things we set in motion today will bear fruit for years to come and in ways we often do not imagine. In short, be the delight of your Soul and show the joy you have in living as a Soul—in the world but not bound by it. You only have everything to gain by doing so, and so do your family, friends and community. This is the year of the ascendancy of the Soul, and there is naught that can stop its progress and growth other than our own inaction or inattention. Just as the plants cover our world with their beautiful tapestry of green, food and wonderful useful materials, so the Soul fills our lives and the world with its bountiful gifts from the higher Worlds—the very stuff of Life itself. Revel in the truth of your own true nature and, by all means, share the wealth around! See you to it, as I will

for myself, for you are your only Master and the divine architect of your own destiny. Much happiness and joy to you all!

Happy New Year!

(and do pay a tribute to your local Dragon)

Malvin.

17 Jan 2004