

**CHINESE NEW YEAR 2018**  
**“THE YEAR OF THE MOUNTAIN DOG”**  
**16 FEB 2018**  
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<b>Hour</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Year</b>
<b>Stem: 4</b> yin fire	<b>Stem: 6</b> yin earth	<b>Stem: 1</b> Yang Wood	<b>Stem: 5</b> Yang Earth
<b>Branch: IV</b> Wood Rabbit <i>Rabbit Dreaming of the Moon</i>	<b>Branch: IV</b> Wood Rabbit <i>Rabbit of Woods and Mountains</i>	<b>Branch: III</b> Wood Tiger <i>Tiger Standing Firm</i>	<b>Branch: XI</b> Earth Dog <i>Mountain Dog</i>
<b>Combined</b> Fire <i>Fiery Furnace</i>	<b>Combined</b> Earth <i>Ramparts Earth</i>	<b>Combined</b> Water <i>Fresh Stream Water</i>	<b>Combined</b> Wood <i>Scrubland Twigs</i>

Name: CHINESE NEW YEAR  
 Date/Time: 16 Feb 2018, 5:05 am (CCT -8:00)

**Building strongholds also keeps out friends. Learn to be less defensive. Life will bring many battles before victory is achieved, but success ultimately comes. Great changes are made through gathering small things.**

Further information on the chart is at the end of this letter

**Topics** (linked to paragraphs):

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- The Dog**
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  - Earth**
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  - Trump and US administrations**
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Gong hey fat choy, Everyone!

Welcome to the Year of the Mountain Dog, also known as the Yellow Dog or the Earth Dog. While many of us will be happy to see the end of the Year of the Fire Rooster, it was a very significant year and set the stage for the coming year in good fashion. We will see why later on in this letter.

But for the present year, Mountain Dog years have typically been ones of significant changes in the geopolitical landscape. They have signaled both the rise and the fall of empires, years of great frustration or advances by conservative or entrenched interests and setbacks for the same. At the same time, there have been significant advances in science, especially in terms of space and space exploration, despite the fact that the Mountain Dog represents a double-Earth emphasis. Double Earth would normally point to changes in ‘affairs on the ground’, which there were in past Mountain Dog years. This year and the next will have the Earth element as their transformative influence (Stem), and with that we have the phrase stated about great changes coming as a result of gathering small things. That phrase applies especially to nations. But before we get to what all that might mean, there is something that you may want to do in order to follow along and see how the year might affect you in particular. We will have more on the latter along with the next letter.

To begin, go to [this page](#) on my site, where you will find links to Chinese astrology calculators in various languages. Enter your birth details in the appropriate calculator – Four Pillars, in this case – and then write down or print out the elements and animal signs for each pillar. Most of you will know your Year Pillar, but the others are probably an unknown quantity. The most important one to note for individuals is the Day Pillar, representing the self, and especially the element that rules that Pillar, called the ‘Day Master’. Once those other pillars are known, set the information aside for now and read on. I will be posting some instructions prior to the new year (16 Feb) for what to do with the information, and in the meantime, you can browse the articles on the Eastern side of my site for further information. With all those points in mind, then, let’s first have a look at the Dog in general and then at last year in order to see what might be coming in this one.

**The Dog:** All Dogs in Chinese astrology are especially noted for their loyalty, and they expect the same from others. They are also known for their warmth in general. But they can hold grudges when they are offended, and depending on the Element associated with the Dog, that will show how the aforementioned qualities manifest. It is the 11<sup>th</sup> sign in the Chinese zodiac and is very closely associated with family, along with the Pig, the latter being the 12<sup>th</sup> and last sign of the Chinese zodiac. Thus, we have entered the ultimate phase in the cycle of the Great Year (12-year cycle), that phase being about group and family relations, retiring from the world. So, every 12 years we have a complete cycle of the Chinese zodiac, with the next Great Year starting in 2020, with the Year of the White Rat, or ‘Rat on the Crossbeam’ – marking a year of great decision. Not meaning to seem ominous, but given the way we are headed in many countries, it is not difficult to see that certain decisions about our planetary future will have to be made and those objectives pursued vigorously from 2020 onwards. But this year we have the Dog to consider.

Everyone loves the Dog. It has a sort of Aquarian influence, normally needing contact with many people, although Dogs prefer to stay at home quite a bit as well. They are serious, sincere and hard-working on the whole, but not the best communicators. The Dog is one of the more conservative of the signs in its outlook on life, having Earth as its natural element, although that can be greatly altered by other factors in the four pillars. They generally have great care for their families, being very protective, and speak much of family values. The Dog is a yang sign, and Dogs are thus proactive their outlook. As such, in relationships they can be a bit overbearing and try to shape the other person to their view, but on the whole they are also very loving. They form a natural trio with Tigers and Horses – the ‘physical trio’ – and have a love of sport and outdoor activities. Dogs prefer to run in packs, as we know, and in human terms the Dog is quite comfortable mixing with crowds. In fact, if they are denied contact with others, especially intimates, they can quickly become depressed, which is the one thing which they should avoid at all costs – the ‘black dog’ of depression. You can tell when a Dog is feeling down: they become irascible and snarky, and the best cure for that is for their friends and family to bundle them up and take them out somewhere. They are one of the signs that actually requires physical activity, along with Tigers and Horses. While it might be nice to laze in front of the fire at home with family, every Dog needs their

outings. There is good reason why the Chinese named their signs the way they did, aside from making it easier to remember the way the Branches<sup>1</sup> operate, and a significant part of our language is derived from observations of animal behavior.

**General luck indicators for the year:** The best months for the Dog this year are February, March and June, with the least favorable being April. Their lucky numbers are 3, 4 and 9, the lucky colors being red, green and violet, and the lucky flowers being rose and cymbidium orchids. Dogs generally do better with Rabbits, Tigers and Horses. They generally don't get on well with Dragons, being their opposite sign, as they dislike the Dragon's unpredictable nature and the Dragon's need to be in the limelight. Dogs also have somewhat stressful relations with Oxen and Sheep. If the Dog is found in the Month or Year pillars, the family/ancestral influence is very strong with such a person, especially in the month pillar. If in the Day Pillar, the emphasis is on the person working to develop the qualities of the Dog in that life, and they will seek a partner who exhibits those types of qualities, thus being able to mirror those qualities to them. If in the Hour Pillar, this is perhaps the best position to find the Dog, because there the emphasis is upon one's children and creative output. It is the Dog's natural position in the four pillars, calling forward all of the nurturing qualities of the sign. The Year Pillar emphasizes one's social contacts and interface with the outer world. It is one's public face. Thus, if one has the Dog in the year pillar (from Feb 4 of 2006, 1994, 1982, 1970, 1958, 1946, 1934, 1922) it marks the ability to interface well with the public, giving an endearing quality. If such is not the case with the 'Year Dog', then it implies either a poor upbringing, stressful environmental factors, separation anxiety, or some trauma that has caused them to have depression, or a combination of any of those factors. But even with those factors present, the positive qualities of the Dog manage to come through given the right circumstances.

**Famous 'Year Dogs'** include the likes of Michael Jackson, Madonna, Bill Clinton, "W" Bush, Donald Trump (the Dog helped with public appeal in getting those presidents elected), Elvis, Mother Teresa, Steven Spielberg, Paul Ryan, Queen Latifah, Tina Fey, River Phoenix, Melania Trump, Matt Damon, Prince William, Ian Thorpe, Anne Hathaway, Alan Rickman, David Gilmore, Liza Minelli, Donovan, Cher, Xanana Gusmao, Bon Scott and Sylvester Stallone, to name a few. There is a more extensive list of Mountain Dogs (this year's Dog) at the end of this letter, and that brings us to the Earth emphasis for this year.

**Earth** is associated with stability, solidness, circumspection, reserve (hence conservatism), the stomach and spleen in Chinese medicine, Saturn (the 'Earth Planet'), protection, resources, the colors yellow and brown, and practicality. In its highest aspect it endows the native with a high intellect, though tending to a conservative bias. Its strength is boldness. Its weakness is too much flexibility. If Earth is excessive it becomes obstinate and over-emphasizes boundaries. It tends toward a big, moderate voice. Excessive Earth in transitory or progressed pillars can bring injuries to the flesh (skin and muscles) and if danger of excess is seen in the system, it manifests as hiccoughs, vomiting and/or coughing. In other words, there is something the person is 'finding hard to stomach' in such cases. Imbalances in Earth show in the lips, such as cracking, blueness, dryness, etc. Over-thinking injures the Earth element or is a manifestation of feelings of instability.<sup>2</sup> Keep these points in mind as we look at countries and people, along with your own four pillars, and the manifestations of both Earth and Dog will become clearer. And that brings us to the Mountain Dog.

**The Mountain Dog** is known by various monikers: the 'God Leader Star' when found in the Four Pillars or the progressed (Luck) Pillars; the 'Guardian of the Gates of Hell' or the Underworld (the Dragon guards the gates of Heaven), the 'Grave of Fire' (meaning the natural Earth element of the Dog 'buries' or 'hides' Fire), most of which sounds negative on the face of things. But as always, it depends on how this Dog combines with other influences with regard to Pillars, Branches (Animals) and Stems (Elements) as to its effects. At its best, the Mountain Dog gives a very strong expression and robust constitution, especially in the Day Pillar, leaning toward a conservative outlook, extremes of stubbornness when opposed, great caution in its approach to external affairs, and thus a

slow and steady progress that on the whole can guarantee success if carefully applied. In such a case we have the expression “God Leader Star” (if in the day pillar), “...bold, upright, outspoken, decisive, with strong leadership qualities, many ups and downs in life, but resilient, positive and hard-working. Makes for beautiful women, but strong. In essence, tough, persevering, resilient people.”<sup>3</sup>

But the Mountain Dog has another side, too, in that it is said to often be seen in relation to disasters. In my own work I have not seen that, so much as I have seen the over-emphasis of the Earth element in general being prominent in disasters, either through an elemental or Branch (Animal) emphasis. The ‘Earth Animals’ in Chinese astrology are the Ox, the Dragon, the Sheep and the Dog. People or countries who have combinations of these in their Four Pillars are prone to accidents. Both Iran and Syria have clashes of these, for example. And with persons who have the Dog or one of the other aforementioned animal signs in their Four Pillars, this year is not so favorable, unless you were born with a strong Wood or Fire emphasis, in which case much can be made of this year with careful and focused work. With these points in mind we can briefly cover some countries and how they are likely to fare in general this year, and then move on to specific people and nations.

**How the nations will fare:** Countries that are likely to benefit from this year are Italy (having a strong Wood count) and the UK (bolstered by Earth this year). Countries that are less favorably influenced this year are much more numerous, such as Australia (problems with conservatives and possible natural calamities – overabundance of earth), New Zealand (although theirs is an interesting case, having a surfeit of Water, which inclines toward having to take a more disciplined approach), Turkey (double-Dog, though similar to New Zealand in elements) and Syria (obviously, although their strong Metal will benefit them, causing gradual strengthening, as we are seeing). The US will be a mixed bag this year. Foreign policy will suffer, as will the people, as economic and health care realities hit home. Leadership in the US will suffer there this year, too, but Wood industries – fashion, media and environment – can make gains if carefully handled. All other industries and the banking sector will likely see a downturn this year and into the following years in the US.

The current Iranian state, with a count of 8 out of 12 in Earth (a very excessive amount) and having three of the Earth animals in its four pillars, will be in the crosshairs this year and next. This year will produce one of two probable outcomes for that state this year: either a disastrous fall, beset by natural disasters or internal unrest/external threats, or an extreme move toward the East, thus ensuring its survival – or an attack by the West. Western astrology show the latter case, i.e., a move toward the East. With the Iranian government we see what a surfeit of Earth means: a very conservative outlook, being quite circumspect, but at the same time very tough, resistant to change and outside forces, very focused on its security and having considerable underground resources at its disposal. It is not a country that should be underestimated and its current structure causes no end of headaches for the advancement of Western, Israeli and Saudi corporate interests in the Middle East. It has been and will continue to be a strong hedge against imperial interests in the region. This year also may well see a reorganization of their banking/financial sector. They are also very prone to earthquakes and we may see some big ones there this year.

**Russia and China:** Russia is in an interesting situation this year as well. They have two of the ‘Earth’ animals – the Wood Dog and the Metal Sheep – in their four pillars, but the Elements are helpful to them. The Yang Earth of the year will feed their Metal (‘direct resource’), which is in their year pillar, aiding their foreign relations. And the Wood in the hour pillar will enable them to make gains this year and the next, this year being their ‘indirect wealth’ year and the next being their ‘direct wealth’ year. However, with the Earth emphasis it will not be smooth sailing. There are challenges from Western countries, who see them as their favored enemy, with propaganda from many media outlets and government officials constantly parroting ‘Russian interference’ and ‘Russian aggression’, the memes coming out of Washington and London being particularly strident.

China has a similar situation to Russia, given the Earth animals, but their elemental emphasis is with Earth and Metal. They, too, have the Direct Resource placement with their Metal, affecting their international relations as with Russia, but with the excessive Earth there will be a tendency to slow down or to be too circumspect or perhaps heavy-handed with regard to their populace, which the hour pillar represents. That could also indicate earthquakes or other natural disasters for China. Given these two countries with their four pillars, though, we can most likely expect them to make good progress on their plans in the next couple of years, much to the consternation of Western corporate and banking interests. And that brings us again to the United States.

**The US, the Ox and Earth:** The US has a double Earth emphasis in its day pillar – the Ox in the Barn – the day pillar indicating the sitting administration in any nation. The US had a ‘Déjà vu’ year in 2009, which was one of its worst financial years since the Great Depression due to the bursting of the housing bubble. That was Obama’s first year in the White House. The Ox is known as one of the three ‘financial animals’, along with the Snake and the Rooster. ‘Déjà vu’ emphasis in a person’s four pillars represents “...pain, depression, or even bankruptcy, as well as personal damage, such as self-harming or addictions.”<sup>4</sup> In terms of [that particular Ox](#) what is called for periodically is a sudden and complete change of direction, along with the advice that there be no conflict between family and business. One could argue about whether or not the Obama administration did the right thing in bailing out the banks after the housing bubble burst, but the indications we have now with the current stock market bubble are that the choice made at the time was for more of the same rather than a change of direction, and we now have a bubble very similar to what we had just before 2007/2008. Trump trumpeted that the economy is doing great in his recent State of the Union speech due to the stock market, but economists who really understand what is going on still warn of the coming collapse of the current bubble, and it could well come this year, given the overly-strong Earth emphasis for the year. Also, following on Trump’s speech, we saw two sharp drops in stock prices within a week – what economists are optimistically calling a correction – with indications that 2018 is likely to be a volatile year in stocks.<sup>5</sup>

The Ox is known for its obstinacy, its slowness to change, its emphasis on security matters and its great interest in finances, and these have been persistent themes through virtually every US administration. Watch what happens with the Trump administration very closely this year, because there may well be some earthquakes from the top down, and on the whole, optimism in the US will likely be sinking as the year rolls on and into the next. In that regard, it may pay us to look a bit at last year in the US to see where we are probably headed, remembering too, that Donald Trump is a ‘Year Dog’. This year will ‘bury’ the Fire of his year pillar.

**Trump and US administrations:** The most obvious event that took place last year, the one that had the world on its toes, was the ascension of Donald Trump to the White House, which took place in the Fire Monkey year, and which is a sign favorable to him. That single event alone was one that set the tone for the intervening four years or so in the US. His admirers think he is some sort of savior, come to deliver the US from the clutches of ‘the swamp’ – establishment politicians, the national security state, over-regulation of people’s lives and so forth. His detractors see his presidency as one of the worst things that could have happened to the country. Neither side seems to grasp the reality of Trump’s presidency: that the US government has been run and dictated to by corporate and security interests for some time, supported and enabled in the past decades by both of the main political Parties in the US, along with the monolith that has grown to be the military-industrial-intelligence complex. Trump is merely the end result of that.

The presidential elections of the past decades in the US reflect and support the idea that it does not matter who one votes for, at least for president, as the results are always the same. Trump is a figurehead, nothing more – a Trojan horse for the billionaire/corporate class – too malleable to make a dent in what he has now turned to enabling, too self-absorbed to represent any true leadership potential, and he has done U-turns on just about all of his major campaign promises,

except for those policies that aim to increase the hatred of immigrants and refugees along with the press among the American public. This will anger some readers who have stated to me in the past that such statements dishonor the people who voted for Trump. Those people did not vote for the man, though. They voted for [Trump's message](#) on the campaign trail, some of which was good, for example: the need for universal health care, bringing jobs back to the US, calling health insurance companies to account and increasing competition between them, increasing veterans' benefits, making no cuts to Medicare, Medicaid or Social Security, enacting term limits for members of Congress, etc. Bernie Sanders championed the aforementioned items, too, but he was sidelined and opposed by the Democratic Party, which is solidly in bed with Wall Street along with the Republicans, and he was unsupported and even opposed by corporate interests.

The election of Trump was a con job (for which the Monkey can be known) by factions in the US, a man who it is [claimed](#) did not really want the office in the first place, and pushed by an establishment – behind the scenes in most cases – that would like nothing better than to bring the nation back to where it was in the years prior the Great Depression, in their mind, to 'make America great again'. Trump's election was cinched by two main factors: the evangelical Christian vote and a sudden infusion of [dark money](#) in the last weeks of the election process in swing states. If these words seem harsh, we need only look at the reality of what is taking place in the US, and it is to drive home a point: The increasing suffering of the American public and the rest of the world through the increasing support of militarism by US administrations over the past decades, more or less fully supported by most of the Washington establishment and corporate media, is testimony to the fact that government policy in the US is guided by corporate interests, reflected by the Ox emphasis in the nation's day pillar.

Trump unwittingly serves the interests of corporatists and certain billionaires quite well as he distracts the nation with his bombast and destructive statements and actions. Meanwhile the real power base in Washington and elsewhere works silently in the background to further their own agendas. Those agendas amount to totally doing away with any social programs, erasing all government regulations over financial markets, increasing the power of the military – as if it needed to be – and maintaining the hegemony the US had enjoyed post-WWII, none of which is sustainable or desired by the wider American public now. However, the message of 'draining the swamp' is one that needs to happen, but no one man or small group of people is going to do so, especially Donald Trump. The swamp will be drained either by the collective will of the populace of the US to effect the needed changes, or under the weight of infighting between factions therein and bad policy, such as what we saw with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

**Double-Earth years** take place every 30 years, in alternating 'Dragon of Pure Virtue' and 'Mountain Dog' years. In that, we can see the influence of conservatives and corporate interests in their effects on US administrations with every double earth year. The last double-earth year was 1988, at the end of Reagan's 2<sup>nd</sup> term. 'Trickle-down economics' was the order of the day. This was just prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union<sup>6</sup> (having a double Dog in its four pillars), when the Soviets were trying to reorganize their economy and oil prices were being manipulated heavily by Saudi Arabia, thus drastically affecting the Soviet economy. Russia (having a different four pillars chart) has made for a much more stable economic base since then. The Reagan 'Star Wars' (Strategic Defense Initiative<sup>7</sup>) initiative was in full roll-out and anti-Soviet sentiment and propaganda was at a high. The Soviet Union collapsed soon thereafter under the weight of its poor economic policies. In 1958 the Eisenhower administration was in the process of rolling out its National Defense Education Act (NDEA),<sup>8</sup> when there was great unease in the US about Soviet advances in space and worry over a shortage of mathematicians in the US and scientists in general. There was also the US-UK Mutual Defense Agreement<sup>9</sup>. In 1928 the US was at the end of the Roaring 20s, and the economic collapse was looming. Laissez-faire capitalism was at its height,<sup>10</sup> guided and encouraged by preceding Republican administrations, pretty much as we are seeing

now, and people were blissfully going on about their business, unaware of what was about to befall the country. It would seem that we do not pay attention to or learn from history or cycles.

**The 60-year cycle:** Here is a point to be noted, however: Chinese astrology works with different cycles than does Western astrology. The 60-year cycle and its halfway points show trends in geopolitics. Indeed, Chinese astrology in its days of formation all those centuries ago was evolved to forecast affairs of state, and only later, the destiny of the average citizen. The 60-year cycle shows a tendency to repeat events until they are resolved or evolve. What we are seeing with the cycle of 60 years ago is a repeat in many ways of the days of the early Cold War, along with economic trends, and also the Red Scare. We can trace this from the early '50s with their reflection in the 'teens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the development of the national security state in the US, anti-Russian/Soviet sentiments, the nuclear arms race, efforts at US and Western imperialism, and so on. And if we want a dramatic example of how the 60-year cycle shows repeats of trends, then look at what happened with the US in 1941 and then in 2001 – Pearl Harbor and 9/11 and the wars that resulted. But aside from geopolitics, there were also great advances in science and technology in those periods.

But going further, if we trace that 60-year history and what is trended to come in the ensuing years, a rather disturbing picture appears, especially if we take into account the halfway points of the 60-year cycle. Just stop and think – Kennedy, Cuba, the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam war, economic downturns, fearful propaganda, but on the other side rebellion against conservative policies (the '60s and Roaring 20s). Thus, we get a rather interesting mix. If the trend continues, as it appears it will, the next decade in world affairs looks to be one of tremendous change, with politics in the US taking a sharp turn to the left, toward social programs and away from reactionary politics. And Russia is no longer the Soviet Union. It has turned itself around, as has China, and the world is quite different than what it was 30 or 60 years ago, with a move away from imperialism and hegemony by any single power and toward a more multipolar world.

**The Emperor has no clothes:** If there has been one great thing that has happened in the last year, it has been the revelation to the world at large that 'the Emperor has no clothes', referring to US domestic and foreign policy. Rooster years are particularly reflective of such a thing, because the Rooster is especially involved with presentation as a mode of expression. This [past year](#) was especially pointed in the advice that "one should not pay attention to yes-men", instead inviting differing points of view, but that is exactly what we saw in the White House. We have a President who had surrounded himself with yes-men. But therein lies the gift to the world and the American public: With Trump so doing, the gloss has come off of the true machinations of US domestic and foreign policy, of a great number of leaders on Capitol Hill, of the true forces that shape government in the US – and the world and many Americans have taken notice. The nations of the world, with many nations of Europe and long-time US allies elsewhere included, are starting to look to the East for alliances, for trade, for security, etc., to abandon US foreign policy and interference in the affairs of other nations in favor of nations that appear on the surface to be more stable and more amenable to working on mutual interests, not beholden to a single nation's ideology. It will take time, but the Trump administration along with the Washington establishment and the press, is unwittingly accelerating the process.

**Last year's events:** So, in setting the scene for the current year, keeping the preceding points in mind and looking at the trends, what did we see forecast and actually come to pass last year? It was quite in line with the past Rooster of Solitude trends, as it turns out, but with a few exceptions:

- **Public outrage over treatment of minorities:** The Rohingya crisis in Myanmar was probably the biggest story this year. It has been likened to an ethnic cleansing, and much of the world is rightfully outraged over it. As for the rest of the world, sentiments among Europeans against immigrants and immigration policy is rising, as witness with the rise of

far-right parties in Europe. The general perception among Americans is that tensions with minorities in the US are worse since Trump has taken office. It is reported in the media that minorities, especially blacks, are specifically targeted by police in the US, but it is debatable.<sup>11</sup> There was the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, with focus on militarization of police forces worldwide. The Latino community in the US suffered with the poor response to the Puerto Rican hurricane crisis, which is still largely unresolved. And there has been a sharp focus again on the plight of Palestinians this year with the Jerusalem announcement by Trump.

- **Crises in the Middle East:** This was a real hotbed of activity for the year. We saw the Saudi coup, the moves against Qatar by many other Arab states, the main one being Saudi Arabia, the evolving and worsening tragedy of the Yemeni war (which the US and some European countries back), the Iraqi Kurdistan vote (which was promptly crushed), the military defeat of Daesh by US and Russian-backed allies, the recognition by the US of Jerusalem as Israel's capitol with resulting Arab tensions, the Turkish invasion of Afrin, protests in Iran that were agitated by Israeli and Western interests. Add to this the heightened rhetoric against Iran by the US and increasingly Europe, and there is further possibility of flashpoints to come in this year, too, in many parts of the Middle East.
- **Expulsion of Western powers from o/s colonies:** European powers no longer have overseas colonies, at least in the sense that they once did. There were increased protests aimed at the closure of US military bases in Okinawa and South Korea.
- **Advances in racial equality and resulting racial tensions from backlash:** Race relations took a sour turn in 2017, especially in the US and Europe, and in Myanmar.
- **Periods of economic downturns (the Rooster is very connected with economics):** 2017 bucked the trend of past Fire Rooster years, in that we saw increasing economic recovery in much of the world, especially in Asia and Africa.<sup>12</sup> The gains in Europe and the US remain modest. But it is useful to keep in mind that the stock market in the US is in a prolonged bubble, reflecting the fact that the wealthiest players in the US economy are enjoying the current climate of deregulation. The stock market is not a true indicator of economic health, though. The growth in GDP in the US as of September 2017 was a very modest 2.3%, an increase of only just over 1%, despite the rhetoric put forward by the White House of the US enjoying strong growth. That growth is actually on shaky ground, given its current bubble economy. There are three main bubbles:<sup>13</sup> student loan debts, state pension liabilities and health care costs, and the current government appears to be doing nothing to address these. If we learned anything from the last financial crash on 2008/9, it is that if the US economy crashes it tends to draw much of the rest of the world economy down with it. And, if one really stops and looks at the economic figures in terms of GDP, then recovery and growth has gone slightly backward for many countries, and is only very modest for most. The world economic outlook is not very rosy at the moment, by any means.
- **Economic reforms in Europe:** To begin, Europe is increasingly looking East in terms of trade and economics. The EU has just finalized the world's largest free trade agreement, with Japan, sidestepping the US after Trump abandoned the TPP.<sup>14</sup> It is also courting possibilities for joining in with China's Belt Road initiative, which would also tend to sideline the US. This is one of the biggest reasons behind Washington's push toward conflicts with Russia, Iran and China, which aims to disrupt China's BRI, because such moves by China, Asian countries and Europe threaten the hegemony of the US dollar in world trade. It is only common sense that Europe would look increasingly to the East for economic advancement and security. The EU is the largest economic bloc in the world, and any decisions made there with regard to economic alliances and agreements should be carefully watched. If the US economy becomes shakier this year, then the EU is likely to increasingly form and seek new agreements with Asian countries. And then, there was Brexit. There is a broad consensus among economists that Brexit will adversely affect the British economy,<sup>15</sup> which in turn will affect its politics into the future.

- **Agreements between European powers and Russia:** Trade between the EU and Russia is bouncing back in spite of sanctions, which Europe extended by six months in June. Those have ended now, so we will have to wait and see what happens further. Relations soured in 2014 over the Ukrainian crisis and resulting sanctions. But the increase in trade is an encouraging sign. Now, the US is funding and [arming neo-Nazis](#) in Ukraine, creating real tensions and threatening conflict in Eastern Europe. There are similar moves in Poland. This, too, is aimed at Russia and is a very concerning trend in US-European affairs.
- **Nuclear accidents:** There was one incident in particular that caught the world's attention in 2017, when a 'harmless' cloud of radiation was released from a nuclear facility in Russia or Kazakhstan which then drifted over Europe. No disease or death was reported as a result. There was also an accident in Japan at a power plant when a bag containing nuclear material was torn open and released radiation onto 5 workers there, but nothing more was reported. But perhaps the biggest 'accident' of the year was Trump's announcement that the nuclear arsenal in the US was going to be upgraded, with a focus on 'low yield' weapons. (A hint: the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs are now classed a 'low yield' weapons). Such posturing and possible actions are an 'accident' waiting to happen, with disastrous consequences for all of us. It should be noted that Trump's announcement was actually a continuation of Obama's policy. Then, too, there was the agreement between the vast majority of nations banning nuclear weapons,<sup>16</sup> which was ignored by the US, UK and France, saying they do not intend to abide by it. In fact, the US plans on increasing its arsenal of said weapons.
- **Advances in space travel and explorations (the first satellite, Sputnik, was launched in 1957):** In 2017 we saw the end of the Cassini space probe with its crashing into Saturn, sending back spectacular pictures in the process, the Russian Soyuz-U rocket was retired, Bangladesh, Finland, Ghana, Latvia, Mongolia, Slovakia and Angola all launched their first satellites into space. In total there were 104 satellites launched into orbit this year. We have come to know that there are likely at least 40 billion planets in the galaxy similar to our own due to the work done by the Kepler space observatory, and there will be the launch of TESS – the Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite – in March of this year. 2017 was otherwise a quieter year in space exploration. Voyager fired its thrusters in interstellar space after 37 years. Private spaceflight companies like SpaceX and Orbital ATK made big strides in their efforts, moving space flight and exploration more into the private sector.

**The coming year:** Having those points in mind, what do we see for the coming year? Finances will be a significant theme this year. The Earth element governs gold and mineral wealth, and thus finances by implication. As an instance of this, if the nuclear agreement with Iran is abrogated this year, which may well happen, then Iran would likely abandon the petro-dollar as their exchange currency and fully enter into the Belt-Road initiative, trading its oil and gas in yuan instead of dollars. That alone would set the fox in the hen house in Washington, and the sabers would be rattling louder still for conflict with Iran. This is one thing behind the current anti-Iranian rhetoric in Washington, Saudi Arabia and Israel. In addition, we have the following trends from past Mountain Dog years (see the listing by year at the end of this letter for details):

- Efforts at expanding or reinforcing imperial objectives, especially by the US
- A major conflict directly or indirectly involving the US
- Revolutions in smaller nations
- Big moves by China in terms of economic advancement and possible changes in its government
- Significant discoveries in astronomy, chemistry and material sciences

Any one of the above events could have large carry-on effects, especially if China successfully implements its Belt and Road initiative, and if the AIIB<sup>17</sup> and the BRICS<sup>18</sup> nations are successful in their efforts at implementing their own financial system and infrastructure projects. What is quickly

emerging since the turn of this century is a more multi-polar world, not beholden to a single financial system or currency. China is forming a focal point for much of these efforts, but Russia is also playing a major role as well. It is very doubtful that Washington and Western corporate interests will be able to stop these developments. And, were the truth known in fullness, it is these very initiatives by Asian nations in particular that are at the root of most of the problems we see in the Middle East, poor relations with Russia and the growing belligerence of the United States and threatening posture toward countries in key areas: North Korea, Iran, Syria, China and Russia. The cat is now out of the bag now, though, with the recent statement by ‘Mad Dog’ Mattis (interesting, given the Dog year) that the focus of US military strategy is now on great power competition<sup>19</sup> instead of the ‘war on terror’. The focus has always been on great power competition, if we really examine the facts.

Aside from that, expect conservatives to make gains or to stubbornly hold their positions in politics in 2018. That does not bode well for Democrats in the US or the Labour Parties in the UK and Australia, but stranger things have happened. However, if they do gain strength or hold their line, it will not bode well for them into the future, given past trends. We will likely see increases in defense spending this year. As an example, the conservatives (Liberals) in Canberra are looking to make Australia one of the world’s top ten arms exporters. We are currently rated as the [paltry 20<sup>th</sup>-placed](#). The arms industry is one of the biggest industrial blocs in the world, taken collectively, and this, along with the touted need for ‘protection’ and ‘security’ will be some of the main themes this year and the next. All those arms have to go somewhere, so watch for the propaganda machine go into full swing this year, calling for the need to ‘protect innocent civilians’ in some area of the globe – most likely in the Middle East or Ukraine – to be a hedge against the ‘aggressive policies’ of Russia, China, Iran, North Korea...’ We get the idea. The defense industry is one of the biggest lobbying interests in Washington, and its influence runs far and deep.

**The need for creative solutions:** In closing, we have focused to a large extent on the US in this letter, but what happens in that nation has an overbearing effect on world affairs. The foreign offices of the US, along with the UK, Israel, Saudi Arabia and France are some of the most belligerent voices we hear in the news at the moment. Their motives need to come under close scrutiny if we are to see a more peaceful world in the near future. In this year, we are called upon to focus on the role of family and community rather than giving into the ‘black dog’ of depression, using the natural enthusiasm of the Dog this year to move us away from conflict. We are all ‘family’, after all. It is up to all of us to resist the call to “Cry 'Havoc!', and let slip the dogs of war.”<sup>20</sup> The strong Wood element for the year calls for creative solutions, innovation and grassroots actions to offset the heavier, more conservative elements that this year portends. And in truth, Wood can and should overpower Earth this year, meaning visionary and unusual people and solutions can and should be put forward this year. The roots of plants hold earth in place and control its movements. The grassroots of nations can and do hold their governments to account when motivated. Therein lies our hope for this year. Walls can confine and separate us or they can form a welcoming space. Franklin D. Roosevelt famously said, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself”.<sup>21</sup> He had the Wood Dog as his hour pillar. We have no need for walls. Cooperative effort is the greatest security we can ever have. May that be our motivation for this year and into the years to come.

Enjoy your yum cha!

Malvin

6 Feb 2018

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Element Counts:

Wood: 5 - Visionary, avant-garde

Fire: 2 - Active, stimulating

Earth: 4 - Expansive, bold  
Metal: 0 - Gentle, indecisive  
Water: 1 – Secretive, cautious, tentative

Blind year (year starts after Li Chun, Feb 4)

This is a lucky day for most things except beginnings, family gatherings, marriages, funerals, building. This is a day for "spring cleaning".

9 STAR KI (CHINESE)  
Year Number: 9 Yang Fire  
Month Number: 5 Yin/Yang  
House Number: 9 Yang Fire  
Trigram: Li

Tetragram 13: Increase: Growing in strength, Yang Chi develops all things. 16 Feb (Nighttime): The Wise One wins praise for increase. The petty man sees increase as misfortune. (Daytime): The empty mind holds all within its grasp.

### **Significant events in Mountain Dog years.**

(Bolded items were of particular importance and indicative)

#### **1958:**

##### **Communist revolution and takeover of Cuba**

U.S. Army inducts Elvis Presley

The **Nordic Passport Union** comes into force.

The plastic hula hoop is first marketed in the United States.

Alaska Statehood Act into law.

**July 14 Revolution in Iraq** (the overthrow of imperial interests in Iraq)

5,000 United States Marines land in the capital Beirut

The U.S. Congress formally creates the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

##### **Operation Argus**

Beginning of Great Chinese Famine.

Explorations by US in Antarctica

The world's first communications satellite

Earth's magnetosphere is discovered.

Yemen announced it will join the United Arab Republic

**1<sup>st</sup> nuclear test ban treaty**

**Norad created**

**China's Great Leap Forward**, attempt to modernize China

**1<sup>st</sup> integrated circuit**

#### **1898:**

Start of **Spanish-American War**

Annie Oakley pushes for women in the army

Radium, neon, argon and krypton discovered

Hawaii annexed by the US

**Philippine independence**

**Coups in China and Wilmington**

First official game reserve created

**First near-earth object discovered (Eros)**

#### **1838:**

**The Trail of Tears** (Cherokee, part of larger 'trails of tears' 1831 -- 1850)

Coronation of Queen Victoria

Beginnings of Duke University (one of the oldest and most renowned of American universities)

Proteins discovered

## **1778:**

French declare war on British (spurred by the American Revolutionary War)

Oxygen discovered and named

## **1718:**

### **War of the Quadruple alliance**

Pirate battles in NC

New Orleans founded

### **Discovery of proper motion of stars**

**Famous Mountain Dogs:** Ice-T (SVU star), María Casal (Spanish actress), Tim Kaine (politician), Miranda Richardson (British actress), Andy Gibb (Bee Gee), Sharon Stone (*Basic Instinct*), Albert II, Prince of Monaco, Holly Hunter (*Raising Arizona*, *The Piano*), Gary Oldman ('Sirius Black' of Harry Potter fame), Mr. Perfect (AWA wrestling star, gone but who can forget perfect?), Alec Baldwin (does Trump better than Trump), Andie MacDowell (*Groundhog Day*), Michelle Pfeiffer ('Elvira Hancock' in *Scarface*), Eve Plumb (aka, Jan Brady of *The Brady Bunch*), Rick Santorum (ex-politician, US), Ron Reagan (the liberal son, not the President), Drew Carey (Who's line was it, anyway?), Neil Finn (Split Enz, Crowded House), Annette Bening (*American Beauty*), Prince (Greatly missed. Party like its 1999!), Lea DeLaria ("Big Boo"), Wade Boggs (Boston Red Sox and beer-drinking legend), Jello Biafra (Dead Kennedys), Kevin Bacon (*A Few Good Men*), Michael Flatley (*Riverdance*), Kate Bush (British singer), Mark Cuban (owner of Dallas Mavericks), Don Swayze (no, not Patrick), Madonna ("Like a Virgin" and material girl), Belinda Carlisle (Go-Go's girl), Steve Guttenberg (*Police Academy*, *Cocoon*), Michael Jackson (He was "Bad"), Jeff Foxworthy (everyone's favorite redneck), Andrea Bocelli (Italian tenor), Joan Jett (she loves rock & eroll), Shaun Cassidy (one of *The Hardy Boys*), Neil deGrasse Tyson (astrophysicist), Thomas Dolby he blinded us with science), Tim Robbins (*Shawshank Redemption*), Viggo Mortensen (*Lord of the Rings*), Simon Le Bon (Duran Duran), Marg Helgenberger (one of our fave CSIs), Jamie Lee Curtis (*Fish Called Wanda*), Donny Osmond (a little bit rock & roll), Nikki Sixx (Mötley Crüe bassist), Sade ("Smooth Operator"), Linda Blair (*The Exorcist*), Keith Olbermann (sports commentator and leader of "The Resistance"), Kelly Lynch (Road House)

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<sup>1</sup> 'Branches' refer to the actual 12 divisions of the Chinese cycle as it applies to many aspects of their philosophy and occultism. The so-called 'animal signs' are simply a convenient way of remembering the phases of those cycles, one which has a great appeal to the general public.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.malvinartley.com/PDF%20Files/5%20ELEMENT%20CORRESPONDENCES.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.malvinartley.com/PDF%20Files/BaZi\\_Stars.pdf](http://www.malvinartley.com/PDF%20Files/BaZi_Stars.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/05/583325123/stocks-extend-losses-with-dow-dropping-more-than-300-points-at-the-open>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.astro.com/astro-databank/Nation:\\_USSR,\\_foundation](https://www.astro.com/astro-databank/Nation:_USSR,_foundation)

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic\\_Defense\\_Initiative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Defense_Initiative)

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Defense\\_Education\\_Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Defense_Education_Act)

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1958\\_US%E2%80%93UK\\_Mutual\\_Defence\\_Agreement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1958_US%E2%80%93UK_Mutual_Defence_Agreement)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.encyclopedia.com/education/news-and-education-magazines/causes-crash-1919-1929>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/449505/police-shootings-black-men-race-not-reason-causal-effect>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gfmag.com/global-data/economic-data/countries-highest-gdp-growth-2017>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.lyndal.com/economic-bubbles/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-eu-trade/eu-japan-conclude-worlds-largest-free-trade-agreement-idUSKBN1E21BT>

<sup>15</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic\\_effects\\_of\\_Brexit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_effects_of_Brexit)

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57588#.WnlwnSXwbIU>

<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One\\_Belt\\_One\\_Road\\_Initiative#AIIB](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Belt_One_Road_Initiative#AIIB)

<sup>18</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BRICS>

<sup>19</sup> <http://thehill.com/policy/defense/371786-mattis-i-need-to-make-the-military-more-lethal>

<sup>20</sup> From Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Worth a re-read in these days.

<sup>21</sup> From his first inaugural address.