Welcome in the Year of the Ox

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by Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S.

The twelve Chinese Zodiac animals include: the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat or sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig or boar. The significance of the zodiac to Chinese culture stems from animal signs being used in their stories and folklore since ancient times. According to tradition, this system delineates various personality traits represented by each animal. Moreover, every zodiac year is defined by one of the five elements of fire, earth, metal, water or wood – bringing additional insight into the innate nature and impact of each animal. Ideas about what may come to a person during each coming year is derived from these ancient theories.

Upon looking further into this zodiac paradigm, one learns of characteristics attributed to each animal along with great understanding about its relevance to their personal makeup. In general, the zodiac provides guidance on how people live their lives. They simply need to look for the animal associated with their birth year in order to arrive at this determination. Many have had their first awareness of these associations from viewing the infamous zodiac placemats while dining in Chinese restaurants.

2020 was the Year of the Rat which won't occur again until 2032. The Year of the Ox is approaching as it begins February 12th and ends on January 31st. In general, it is related to the element of earth, the energy of yin and the season of winter. Although just like the previous year, this one is directly related to the metal element. Moreover, it is specifically applicable to those born in 1913, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997 and 2009.

Diligence, dependability and honesty are the qualities traditionally associated with the ox, along with robustness and determination. This includes having great patience and desire to make progress through consistent effort. In this vein, one stays true to their ideals in understanding how things need to take place without being influenced by others. This allows people to achieve their goals through applying inner strength with clear vision – along with a set plan containing detailed steps required to move forward successfully. These qualities are coming forth at the perfect, most opportune time in terms of triumphing over the current COVID challenges.

There is no doubt that the ox brings with it many strong characteristics that will be of great help to repair what has transpired during the devastations of 2020 – resulting from spread of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the world. The other eleven zodiac animals are called upon to do their part in supporting the work of the ox this year. Together the energetic power of these animal entities will bring us forward into a place of wellness.

The shortcomings of an ox include stubbornness, lack of openness to ideas from others and weak communication skills. Therefore, it is important to remain flexible and open-minded in 2021 to reduce likelihood of this happening. However, the stubbornness of oxen makes them more capable of handling stress and tense

situations. Such energetic fortitude will be of great support as the trials and tribulations of repairing our nation transpires.

Ox prefer to stay in solitude rather than engaging with group activities – a quality that can support us as we continue to hunker down at home and practice social distancing. Friendship is important to those born The Year of the Ox and they are known to be a good friend. Therefore, as difficult as it is to reach out for support at this time it is essential to do so.

A source of hope and optimism moving into 2021 is derived from the prediction that the Year of the Metal Ox will bring advancements in career, new work opportunities, business success and increased prosperity. We can further learn from the ox that things work best when one stays true to inner knowingness–while not being impacted by excessive fear or negativity spewed by others.

Moreover, this year is a time to embrace the hard work and discipline exhibited by the ox. Professional astrologer Susan Levitt states in her book Taoist Astrology: "The upcoming 2021 will be the year of the Metal Ox, and its message couldn't be clearer. Success will come to those who work hard. Really hard." She further states: "In agricultural societies, oxen are reliable and strong work animals. They were responsible for the survival of humanity. So, what was happening in this Rat year continues over into the Ox year to complete it, ground it, bring it to its full resolution."

Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. is an acupuncturist, Chinese herbalist and director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center in Shrewsbury, NJ for over thirty years. She is author of Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy (visit www.qigong4.us) and co-author of Peeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness. Shoshanna has taught tai chi and qigong for over 45 years and is a 6th generation lineage holder of the Guang Ping Yang Style Tai Chi Form. She is offering qigong and tai chi instruction via Zoom and outdoors weather permitting. For more information call 732-758-1800 or send an email to info@healing4u.com.