

Happy New Year!



Original by Cathy Ordway

Based on the Chinese lunar calendar, the New Year festival is celebrated each year on the second new moon after the winter solstice - January 26, 2009. According to the Chinese solar calendar, February 4 marks the beginning of spring this year, and ushers in the year of the **Yin Earth Ox (Ji Chou)**. The Ox is the second of the astrological animals in the twelve-year cycle and in 2009 is associated with the **Earth** element. As the tumultuous 2008 year of the **Earth Rat** draws to a close, most would agree that the wild fluctuations and excitement the new turn created are best observed in our rear view mirrors.

Unlike the energetic and sometimes frenetic Rat, the Ox is known for its consistent work ethic and methodical, measured progress. The Ox does the heavy lifting and represents a no-nonsense approach to getting the job done. His unselfish service to humans is honored in agricultural societies. In Feng Shui, the earth element represents stability, conservation, health, and the center. This combination of **Yin** (gentle) **Earth** (stable) **Ox** (reliable) energy portends a more moderate path for 2009. It represents a back-to-basics gathering of energy for construction, re-building, and “plowing” ahead, and a more disciplined approach to putting our affairs in order. Exciting projects must wait for the more expansive Tiger year in 2010, for this is the year we take stock of where we are and labor to achieve our goals.

In nature we observe the powerful influence of what Feng Shui calls the *Wu Xing* (phases) of the elements, **Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Metal**. Fire melts metal into useful tools, earth harnesses and diverts water, while wood builds and feeds fire. Individually, these elements provide warmth, quench thirst and filter the air we breathe. But together, their power is even more magnificent. As in nature, when people in a family, a business or community work collectively for a common goal, their efforts are less scattered and their results more dramatic. The humble and hardworking Ox reminds us to roll up our sleeves and do the work that is required.

We've heard much about change in 2009 – politically, economically and socially. Many of us are feeling pressure to adapt to changes in our lifestyle and environment, since we are creatures of habit and take comfort in what we know. However, in Feng Shui, change is part of the natural order of things. We purposefully move energy to lift stagnation. We clean house and clear our clutter in the new year to attract positive energy to us. We wash windows, mirrors and crystals so we can better “see” where we are going. We honor our ancestors and plan for the future, knowing that we are the ancestors of our children and grandchildren. Like the elements, we influence, educate and engage each other. Some people make us stronger, while others teach us powerful lessons - whether we wanted to learn them or not. But each association imprints and informs us and we take that knowledge forward on our journey.

This is a good time to evaluate where you are in your life and to formulate your plans for the future. Yin Earth is moderate, peaceful, intellectual and charitable. We have not experienced this energy in combination with the energy of the Ox for sixty years, and we've earned a respite from our forward motion. The steady, reliable energy of the Earth Ox is necessary to our growth, for it brings us back to our center and encourages us to re-evaluate our priorities and our obligations. Rebuild your nest egg. Consolidate your holdings. Learn a new subject and take better care of your health. Share the burden of someone less fortunate than you and reconnect with your center. You will reap the rewards of your slow and steady progress as the year of the Yin Earth Ox draws to a close.

