



Dragon Dance

Being the day before the start of the New Ox Year, my daughters were out with their friends inaugurating the New Year. My sons were back in Singapore and that left my wife and me, in which such private time was rare to be had. Intent on celebrating the joys of the season, she got together some small dishes and that must-have Chinese traditional dish of *lau yu sheng* to mix in the joys of great prosperity, happiness and health for our lives. Adding to that was a beautiful bottle of bubbly champagne, which we savoured in our fine crystal wine glasses. As midnight came, we got up from our seats in front of the in-laid telly and dialed up our children and relatives from all over the globe to wish them goodness for the New Year. Ringing our sons, we laughed about how Perth was one hour faster than Singapore in celebrating the New Year, and how we would enjoy it first. After the wonderful chit chatting, we got back to our relaxing night.

The next day was not only the start of the New Ox Year, but also the wonderful Australian Day. We found ourselves accepting back-to-back invites for BBQ parties and house visits. It was a mission to avoid overeating and indulging in drinks, and I believed the missus and myself managed well in that area. The various events went delightfully well, and as the night progressed, we beamed with happiness and the feeling that this would be an important but good year for all.

The next day, I felt famished! In spite of all the food and drinks consumed the day before, I was ravenous. I needed a big breakfast, and I didn't want my wife to cook today. We deserved a nice day out to celebrate the beginning of the year, and my daughters suggested Dim Sum. It was a choice I accepted, and we all got ready for our lovely lunch. As I waited for the girls to finish their preparations, I observed the left hand side of my office wall as the planetary diagrams were etched mentally in my mind. Mercury and Venus in the 11th House indicated a lucky time for social group gatherings and entertainment. Moon was also in the 5th House, making social interests and feelings rather satisfying and exciting, especially in matters of food and family. Essentially, my mind and heart will touch base with happiness.

What interested me was the combination of Mars in the 10th House, which presented the idea of something aggressive and challenging possibly happening. Perhaps something along the lines of loud, fast and even furious? I thought about the possibilities that could play out on the 2nd Day of the 1st Moon as my wife called for me to get in the car.

It was as if the Rugdee blood within us agreed in unison as to the restaurant we would celebrate our wonderful meal. Stepping into the restaurant, we felt transported into one of those movies of long ago which portrayed underground Asian triads and contemporary décor of the 70s. I felt like a king entering my palace, put simply. Waitresses in *cheongsams* ushered piping hot delights secured in bamboo trays while families congregated voraciously at the tables with joy and delight. My wife immediately ordered her favourite squid fritters while I succumb to the tantalizing taste of tangy-sauced chicken feet. As I enjoyed my meal, I smiled as I saw the families around me eating the same chicken feet, and knew my choice was the best of the lot of food gracing our table.

It was when I started on the second helping of chicken feet when a loud drumming sound made me turn in surprise. Two brightly coloured and overflowing dragons tangoed with one another towards the middle of the dining hall, where we were, and started towards a ball of green cabbage dangling enticingly towards them. Everyone grabbed their cameras and captured the moments of excitement as we watched and waited with baited breath as to which one would succeed in obtaining the lucky cabbage. The golden one claimed the victory, and everyone rushed to provide *ang paos* in the mouth of the successful lion. We followed suit, and watching my family smile was the icing of my cake for today.

As I left the restaurant after footing the bill, that planetary combination flashed in my mind and I smiled in realization. I took a mental note to add that to my research, and thought to myself: what a great day this was, starting the new year with all negative forces driven away, and happiness to reign the day.