

Red envelopes - Ang Pow, laisee, lai see, red packets, hung bao or Hung-Bao

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Are you really prepared for 2013?

Ang Pow red envelopes are also known as "Ang Pow" "red packets" "lai see" "laisee" "hung bao" or "hung-bao". These envelopes are seen as extremely auspicious when given as a gift and are seen as even more auspicious when they contain money. The main use of red envelopes is for Chinese New Year, birthdays, weddings or any other important event.

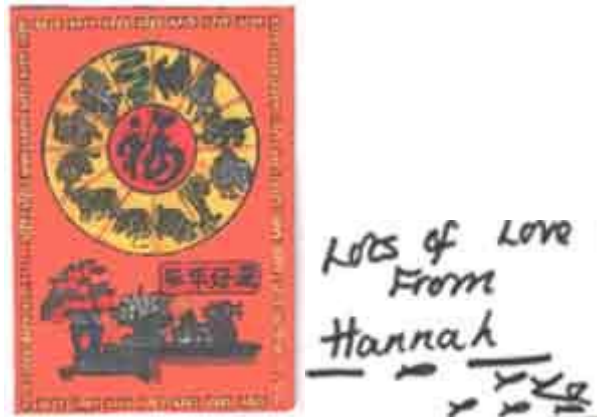
The image on the front of an Ang Pow represent blessings and good wishes of long life, success and good health to the receiver of the envelope. The artists have found new ways to improve the message of good tidings over the years such as carps swimming among flowering lotus Lilly, the fabled creatures of Dragon and Phoenix, chinese zodiac animals relevant for the year the envelopes will be used, peonies in full bloom, the three immortals, golden pineapples, Buddha's and children.

All of these designs have very striking designs and we have given and received some stunning Ang Pows over the years from and to friends, clients and family. As a company, we handpick every design that we order as the quality and presentation is very important. These are sent free with every order we send out to clients as our thank you and blessing of good luck to our clients; the Ang Pows red envelopes that we send contain a Chinese i-ching coins for extra luck.

Whenever you give money on a festive or auspicious occasion, you should never use a white envelope to put money in as a gift as you will face the bitterness of the receiver. Money that is received when it is a gloomy occasion such as a funeral when somebody receives a gift of money to help cover funeral costs; this is called "Pak Kum" which is when money for the family of the departed is donated. So if you ever come across a Chinese client, think twice before giving them their fee in a white envelope as this could offend them although this is less likely in our western countries nowadays.

The two tasks below make a great project for people of all ages, especially for children as it can teach them the cultures of surrounding countries. If you are a school teacher, please feel free to download and use in your classroom. You can also save this to your computer hard drive if you wish to forward this onto your friends and family. My cousin Hannah Sacco printed this one below in black and white and then spent a few hours colouring it in. Thank you for allowing me to show your stunning piece of work Hannah.

Handmade Ang Pow from the template below and coloured by my then 12 year old cousin Hannah. She is now fast approaching 18 and a really lovely person who I do not see enough.



The story of Ang Pow red envelopes.

The story of "ang pow" dates back to the Sung Dynasty in China. A village called Chang-Chieu was at the time, being terrorised by a huge demon. No one was capable of defeating it, not even their greatest warriors or statesmen. However, a young orphan, armed with a magical sword which he had inherited from his ancestors, fought the evil demon and eventually killed it. The villagers were triumphant and the elders presented the brave young man with a red envelope (more like a red pouch I would imagine) filled with money for his courage in saving them all from the demon. Since then, the ang pow has become a part of traditional Chinese customs.

How much money do you place inside the red envelope?



This all depends on your situation. If you are giving red envelopes to children for the Chinese New Year, age will be an important factor. The usual practice is that as you get older you usually tend to receive a bit more each year. For a 5 year old child, £2 GBP (about \$4 USD) will be fine. The amount contained has to be in even numbers.

For example:

Two pounds, eight pounds, ten pounds or twenty pounds are all auspicious amounts. I used to get extremely excited as a young child as I would earn myself a small fortune when I was younger!

You would be surprised how often we supply red envelopes to people for weddings; if you attend a chinese or even a western wedding and decide to make a gift of money, you should place it inside a red envelope. The amount that you give should be relevant to your financial situation and you should not put in more than you can afford as this can be considered as showing off. It is very similar with birthdays although the red packets will usually contain less money as birthdays are not considered as important as weddings.

Giving red packets to employees before the New Year is also very common. This can be either a gift or a bonus. It is also believed that when you present them with your gift, their good fortunes will come back to your company.

The number of coins or notes that are placed in the red envelope may take advantage of the Chinese homophones. For example: you can give a favourable amount ending with eight (8), this sounds like fortune in Chinese; or nine (9) which sounds like longevity. Four (4) is not a good number to give as it sounds like death. You should always make sure that you give money in even numbers because unlucky numbers are considered as inauspicious, although receiving a single i-ching coin in a red envelope is considered very lucky.

When are Ang Pows given?

Even though the tradition of giving and receiving red envelopes is centuries old, it is still as popular as it ever has been! During Chinese New Year, they are given by married couples to small children, teenagers and unmarried adults. This year, Chinese New Year falls on the 10th February.

Ang Pow red envelopes can be given at any time and do not just have to be given on a special occasion. Red envelopes are considered very auspicious and can be given at any time; it is recommended that you use some of the money to try and pay some debt off if you have any. You should always leave a small even amount of money inside the red envelope and place it in your purse, handbag or wallet.

A small selection below of our shop red envelopes, they really are a work of art and our quality is second to none; the quality is actually very important.



Birthdays:

It is traditional and customary to give a red envelope to parents when their baby celebrates their first month of life. The parents will, in return, distribute to well wishers gifts like red dyed eggs (and nui), yellow rice (nasi kunyit) with curry chicken or bean cakes (ang ku). Money is usually given as a birthday gift for people of all age groups. The elderly also give gifts of money to their younger generation when they celebrate events like their 70th birthday for example.

Feng Shui:

Feng Shui enthusiasts believe that a red envelope containing a gold i-ching coin can bring good luck to the holder when it is placed in their purse, wallet, accounts books or handbag. Red envelopes can also be used as wish list holders; you write your dreams and aspirations on a piece of red paper and place it inside the envelope and sit back and wait. Some Feng Shui practitioners especially those that practise Tibetan black hat Feng Shui even insist on being paid with their cash fee inside a red envelope, this is not something that I adhere to though, although it is a lovely thought when I do receive it.

School activities:

We were contacted by a local primary school about seven years ago, the teachers wanted to give all their students an Ang Pow red envelope for chinese new year. we have many different schools that order large quantities of Ang Pows year after year which I think is lovely that they want to educate their student in other cultures.

I don't want to make one; I just want to buy them already made:

Oh go on, believe me, it can be great fun, I have just spent about five hours writing this article and a further two hours I spent watching my cousin Hannah cutting out and colouring her red envelope, it was lovely to see her enjoying herself and asking questions about them. Actually I have to admit Jo runs a bit of a "sweat shop" here, Hannah regularly helps her out and is one of our cherished team members and this time of the year is a very busy time for us with the Chinese New Year in a few weeks.

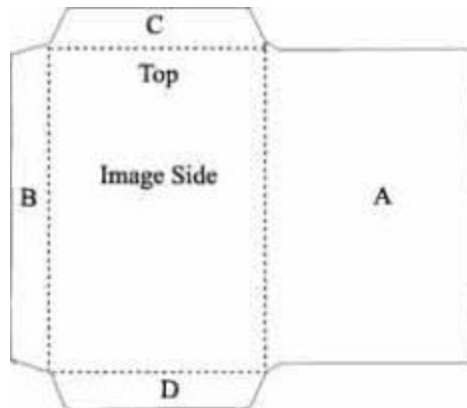
If you really want to buy them, you can follow [this link](#)

To make your own red envelope you will need:

I have copied two versions below, one you can print straight from your colour printer and the other you can colour in yourself or print onto red paper, this is a nice project to give to children and if you are a school teacher please feel free to print this out and use in your class, all we ask is you do not alter or change any of the text on there.

- A sheet of white paper, red paper or paints/pens for black & white version.
- Scissors
- Pritt stick glue or paper glue.

Straighten the packet out as shown below, and turn it over so you are looking at the side with the image, as in the diagram below.



Now fold over flap A and apply some glue along its right edge. Fold over flap B and press it firmly onto the glued edge of flap A. Apply a little glue to flap D and press it firmly onto flap B & A.

You now have your Chinese red envelope! Flap C is the top and this is where you should place the money in and then seal it after.

Chinese New Year 2013:

Chinese New Year (according to the lunar calendar) starts on the 10th February 2013 and is celebrated by Chinese all over the world. Chinese New Year denotes new beginnings and a fresh start. This is a time of celebration, reunion, forgiveness, sharing and thanksgiving. This is the date to celebrate the Chinese New Year with Ang Pows, fireworks etc and not the date you use to place your [2013 cures and enhancers](#) in Feng Shui.

The Lunar Chinese New Year Day is very different from the Solar (Hsia) New Year Day (February 4th 2013). The Lunar Calendar plans the days of the month according to the cycle of the moon whereas the solar year is governed by the sun. Although the Chinese solar year starts on a different date from the western year, the theory whereby the year is calculated on how long it takes the earth to go round the sun is the same. The lunar cycle lasts approximately 29.5 days and in order that the start of the Lunar New Year is not too far removed from the Solar New Year, the Chinese insert an extra month, this being called an intercalary month, once every few years. This is why Chinese New Year Day falls on a different date in each of the two calendars.

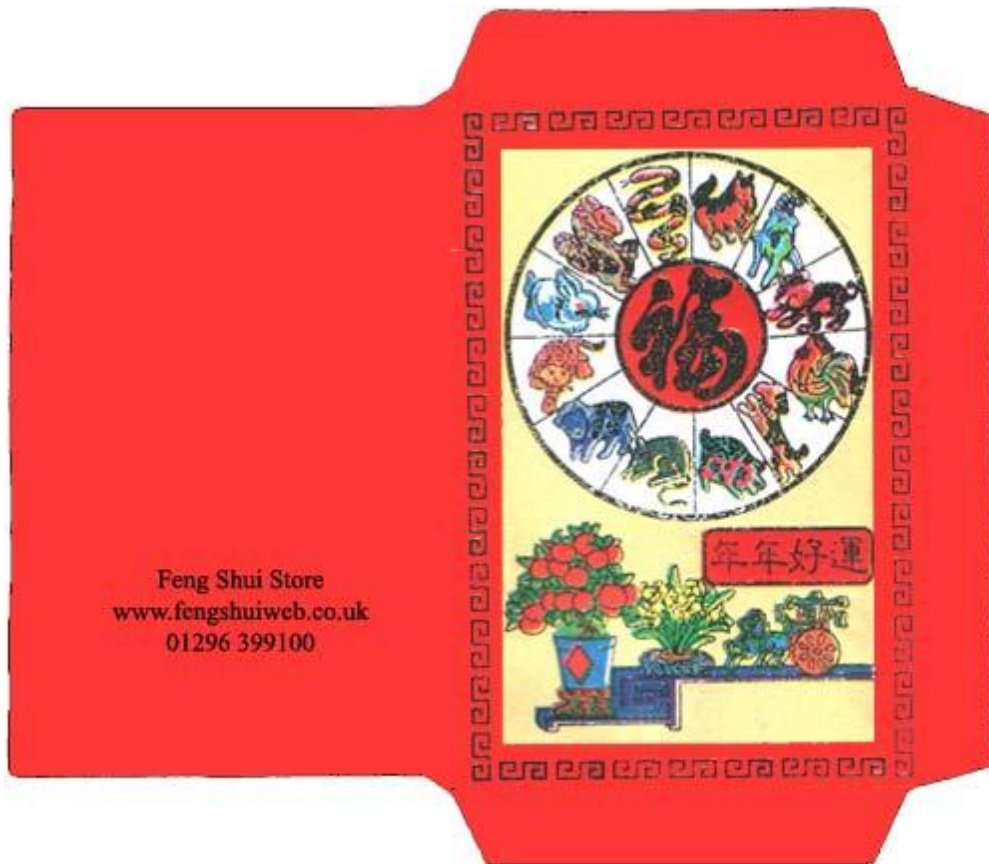
Whilst the solar (Hsia) calendar starts the New Year at the beginning of Spring, which falls normally between the 4th and 5th of February, the lunar (yueh) calendar marks the New Year on the second New moon after the winter solstice. In 2013, Lunar Chinese New Year also called the 'Spring Festival', falls on 10th February 2013 which is the New Year that is celebrated by all ethnic Chinese. The solar New Year (4th February 2013) is not celebrated at all and only used for Feng Shui placement.

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[Visit the pages below for further details on 2013 Chinese New Year etc.](#)

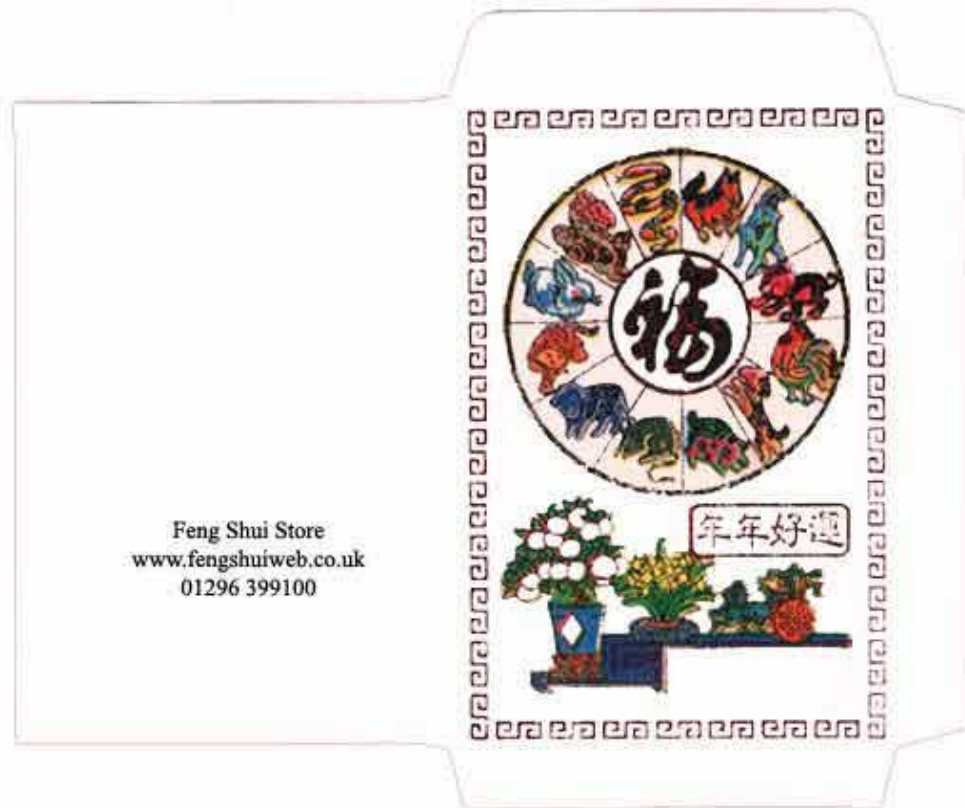
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Black and white version



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