

Chinese New Year Couplets (Talismans) & Kitchen God for 2018

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Are you really prepared for 2018?



Chinese New Year Talisman Couplets and Kitchen God are both longstanding charms that are used all over Asia in workplaces, shops, and homes. Today, due to their auspicious properties, people around the globe, place the couplets and kitchen god on walls and above the kitchen stoves or cooker extractor fans.

Printed in black ink on red paper, (red being a lucky colour) Couplets and Kitchen God would be hung around different rooms of the home, shop, office or by the front door. It's also tradition to present the Talismans as a gift to send good wishes to your friends and family through the year of the Yang Earth Dog.

These Talisman/Couplets and Kitchen God make a very delightful gift to print out and give as presents to family members or friends. Although, given out during the build-up, or on [Chinese New Year 2018](#), they can also be given and placed at any time of the year during the year of the dog.

The Couplets/Talismans are considered very powerful, reputed to discourage all evil and bring peace, harmony, happiness and good fortune. They're favoured and used by most Chinese families and businesses. However, in recent years they have become popular around the globe including Canada, France, Singapore, USA, Australia and here in the UK. See below how to display them correctly. The Couplets are excellent to utilise during the year of the Yang Earth Dog 2018.

The Nian monster

Red is a very auspicious colour for the Chinese; representing good fortune, fame, and riches. It's also believed to frighten off 'Nian,' the New Year monster who arrives and destroys crops and homes during the Chinese New Year celebrations. 'Nian' is repelled by red, fire, and any loud noise. Hence the reason why the colour red and firecrackers feature so prominently during this New Year period. In previous times the villagers would build huge fires, paint their front doors red and place red couplets on either side of the doors. Rattles, banners, firecrackers, and anything that would make a loud noise, would reverberate around the village. The aim was to surround and protect their village with all the things that they believed 'Nian' loathed.

The legend of the Nian monster (Nian translates to 'year') still features heavily over the Chinese New Year period. On the eve of every Chinese New Year, Nian would come down from the mountains ravenous and looking for food. Terrorising the villagers, he would eat them, their animals and their crops. Seeking safety, the villagers decided to escape to the mountains and today Chinese call the eve of the New Year "Nian Guan" which translates to "the pass of Nian". The villagers soon grew weary of living in fear and hiding from the Nian monster. One Chinese New Year's Eve an old lady greeted a visiting old beggar who had arrived at Peach Blossom Village. The old lady gave the beggar some food and told him to go up into the mountains to avoid the wrath of the Nian monster. The old beggar promised to scare the Nian monster away from the village if the old lady would give him a bed for the night at her home.

Unable to persuade the beggar to go with her to the mountains, the old lady gave him a bed in her home. During the middle of the night on New Year's Eve, the Nian monster came storming into Peach Blossom Village in search of the villagers and animals. A big fire burned brightly in the middle of the village and so when Nian arrived at the door of the old ladies home the Talismans on the front door was clearly visible. Distressed by the red Talismans but still hungry, the monster ventured closer to the old lady's door when suddenly he heard the loud sound of firecrackers and the old beggar appeared at the door in a bright red robe. The sight of red and noise was too much for Nian and, wailing, he ran out of the village never to return.

[Feng Shui Chinese New Year couplets and talismans](#)

The Feng Shui Couplets and Talismans can be placed on the exterior of the property and each side of the main door of your home, shop or office. They can also be placed inside your home or office in any important room such as the kitchen, bedroom, office and living room. The tradition is to hang the Talisman's on either side of the cooker or hob on the 4th February 2018 where they would stay for the two months following New Year. However, many, including myself, like to leave them in place all year round for continued good luck throughout the year.

The two projects below make brilliant fun for people of all ages as well as being a fabulous task in the classroom. The activity would enable children to learn about other cultures in a fun and interactive way. If you're a teacher, please feel free to download this file and use in your class. If you're happy to share with us some of your student's finished work we'd certainly love to see them.

[Printing instructions for the Talismans/Couplets](#)

I have copied two versions below: one is in black and white and the other in colour, which you can print straight from your printer. The other option is to print the black and white version and colour it in yourself or print onto red paper. If you're a teacher, you'll obviously recognise that the second option will engage the children more and arouse their curiosity about the customs and traditions of a Chinese New Year. Please feel free to use these templates in your

class, but we do request that you do not alter or change any of the text. I would also recommend printing this on thicker than standard paper if possible for a stunning effect.

Black and white version

We recommend you print this on an A4 sheet of paper or you can print straight onto red paper/card. If you prefer you can print onto white card/paper; this would be a great activity session with your children or students. It's very common for the whole family to join in and usually when it's complete the head of the household will place the Couplets. I'd also like to mention that if you do use red paper/card to print on, or if you colour them in, it's best to use the same red as shown below. Using a different shade of red can cause many unwanted problems.

Colour Version

If you'd prefer not to colour them yourself you could just print this version straight from your printer in full-colour format. Once completed and cut out, the head of the household would be assigned to place them.

Hanging Instructions

It would be wise to laminate the Couplets, or wrap in a clear protective cover, especially the ones that will hang on the outside of the property. Doing so will help protect them against the weather. When they become too weathered, it's recommended to replace them.

These very effective Couplets/Talismans are traditionally left on the door or cooker area for two months after Chinese New Year, although many like to leave them in place all year round for continued luck. However, they must be renewed each year so please save this document for future years and also pass onto as many friends as you can. Passing forward these Couplets (without charge) is considered very auspicious. I tend to change mine two or three times a year and will normally print a few copies out at the beginning of the year. Don't worry if you lose this document as we post a revised version on the website every year.

The Kitchen God

Chinese mythology tells us the Kitchen God, who was named Zao Jun and translates to 'stove master' or Zao Shen which translates to 'stove god or stove spirit.' is the most significant and highly worshipped of all the Chinese domestic Gods that protect the earth and family. The Kitchen God is believed to be the guardian of the family heart (cooker) and, in ancient times, known as the creator of fire, which as we know, is needed for cooking. The Kitchen God was also the God of household morals.

It's believed that the Kitchen God would leave the home on the 23rd day of the last month to report to heaven on the actions of each family to the other gods. To avoid punishment and ensure only kind and generous words were passed on to the gods in heaven, the family would go to great lengths to appease and impress the Kitchen God before he made his departure. So, on the evening of the 23rd, the family would offer sweet, sticky foods and honey believing this an effective bribe along with hope that the stickiness of the food would seal his mouth from saying bad things about the family.

Once the family was free from the ever-watchful eyes of the Kitchen God, who would return on the first day of the New Year, the family would commence preparations for the forthcoming Chinese New Year celebrations. Favours given over this period are very like those offered at Christmas time although the Chinese will usually offer favours of food such as fruits and tea. These last few days are also the perfect opportunity to settle accumulated debts and return borrowed items.

Although there are many stories on how Zao Jun became known as the Kitchen god, the most common tale dates right back to around the 2nd Century BC. At that time Zao Jun was a mortal being, who lived on earth and was known by the name of Zhang Lang. He married a very honourable woman but abandoned her after falling in love with a younger woman. As punishment for his adultery, the heavens cursed him with ill-fortune, and he became blind. His young lover abandoned him and Zhang Lang resorted to begging on the streets to support himself.


One day, while begging, Zhang Lang came across the house of his former wife but being blind he didn't know who she was. Despite his shoddy treatment of her, she took pity on him and invited him into her home. She cooked him a beautiful meal and tended to him lovingly. As Zhang Lang related his story to her, he became overwhelmed with grief and unhappiness and eventually began to cry recognising the error of his ways. Upon hearing his sad tale and apology, Zhang's former wife told him to open his eyes and his vision was returned to him. Seeing before him the honourable wife he had abandoned, Zhang Lang felt so much guilt and remorse that he threw himself into the kitchen hearth unaware that it was lit. His former wife attempted to save him but all she managed to salvage was one of his legs.

The devoted woman then created a shrine above the fireplace for her former husband and this is where the connection was made between Zao Jun and the stove. To this day a fire poker is sometimes referred to as "Zhang Lang's Leg."

The print-out below is the Kitchen God with his consort. You should print this out and place above your oven or hob (whichever you use the most). You must remember to renew the print every Chinese New Year.

[Visit the pages below for further details on 2018 Chinese New Year etc.](#)

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