

# 2020 Chinese New Year Couplets (Talismans) & the Kitchen God

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**Are you prepared for 2020?**



Two longstanding charms used all over Asia in the workplace, shops, and homes all around the year are the Chinese New Year talisman couplets and the kitchen god plaque. In modern times, due to their promising nature, people all around the globe place the couplets and kitchen god on walls and the kitchen stove or cooker extractor fans.

These couplets and kitchen god charms will usually be printed or painted on red paper with black ink. Red is associated with luck around Chinese New Year and also has another meaning which I will go into more detail about below.

The couplets and talismans are displayed in different rooms of the home or office or by the front door, and the tradition is to hand them out to family and friends to promote a healthy and happy year ahead.

In this article, you will find free print outs of the kitchen god talisman and the couplets which make a great gift for family, friends and loved ones during [Chinese New Year 2020](#) although you can place them all year round.

These talismans are considered extremely powerful and are believed to discourage all evil and bring peace and harmony into the building that they are placed, and I keep mine up all year to encourage a happy home.

The couplets and kitchen god talisman are favoured and used by most Chinese families and businesses. However, in recent years, they have become popular around the world. The Couplets are excellent to utilise during the year of the Yang Metal Rat 2020.

## **The Nian monster**

The legend of the Nian monster plays a big part in Chinese New Year and why we place the couplets at our front door.

The Nian monster was said to come down from the mountains during Chinese New Year to find food and terrorise and eat the villagers and their crops. One day, the villagers decided to hide in the mountains out of sight from the Nian

monster. To this day, the Chinese will refer to Chinese New Year's eve as "Nian Guan" which means "the pass of Nian".

On one Chinese New Year's Eve, an old lady greeted a visiting old beggar who had travelled to Peach Blossom village, and the old lady told the beggar all about the Nian monster and gave the beggar some food and tried to send him up into the mountains to safety. 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 although the monster was greeted by a big fire burning brightly in the middle of the village. When Nian arrived at the door of the old lady's home, the old beggar had placed a pair of Talismans on the front door. 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.

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.

Red is a very auspicious colour for the Chinese, representing fortune, fame and riches and is also believed to scare off the Nian months during the Chinese New Year. Now when you see firecrackers and bright red couplets and decorations around a home or business during Chinese New Year, you will know that they are keeping the Nian monster away from their home and wishing a good year ahead for the occupants of the home or office for the year ahead.

### **Feng Shui Chinese New Year couplets and talismans**

These Feng Shui Couplets and Talismans can be placed on the exterior of your home, office or shop main door on the left and right side of the door around eye height; if you prefer, you can place them on the inside although they will not be as effective.

If you do not want to place the couplets at the front of your home, they can also be placed in a window or rear door on the outside. If you would rather have the couplets on the inside, you can place them in any vital 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 2020 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. I would recommend laminating the talismans if you can as the steam can make them twist and warp. I would make sure you replace these each Chinese New Year as this will ensure they are as powerful as possible.

You will find two projects below which are great fun to do with children, and you should find that cutting the Talismans and Couplets will usually lead to a lot of question about Chinese New Year and is a great way to teach the younger generation about these traditions.

If you're a teacher, please feel free to download this file and use it 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 added two different versions below that you can print off: 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 which makes a great activity with children and adults alike.

If you're a teacher, you'll recognise that the second option will engage the children more and arouse their curiosity about the customs and traditions of the 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 & white version:**

I would recommend printing the on an a4 sheet of paper (preferably card), or you can print this straight onto red paper or card. If you prefer to make this an activity for children, I would print this on white paper or card and get some red felt tip pens and colour them in as this makes a fantastic activity for with the younger generation.

It's very common for the whole family to join in with the colouring in and traditionally 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 print this version straight from your printer in a full-colour format on white paper or card. Once completed and cut out, the head of the household would be assigned to place them.

#### **Hanging Instructions for the couplets and talismans:**

It would be wise to laminate the Couplets or cover them in clear Sellotape, especially the ones that will hang on the outside of the property. Covering the couplets will help protect them against the elements and keep them clean while they are in place. When they become too weathered, it's recommended to replace them.

The Couplets and Talismans are very effective and are traditionally left at the front door or cooker area for two months after Chinese New Year when this would then be taken down and removed from the house. I like to leave my couplets and talismans up all year round for continued luck. Please remember to renew these every Chinese New Year and also pass them onto friends and family as these make a lovely gift and passing forward these Couplets (without charge) is considered very auspicious.

I tend to change mine two or three times a year and will typically 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.

### **Red Envelopes (Ang Pow)**

**Red envelopes** also are known as “red packets” “Ang Pow” "laisee" or “Hung-Bao” are also an essential part of a traditional Chinese New Year. I have written an interesting article on this and also made another project should you wish to make your own. Follow this link for more details. <https://www.fengshuiweb.co.uk/advice/angpow.htm>

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“Si Ji Ping An”

May you be blessed with peace  
and safety in all seasons

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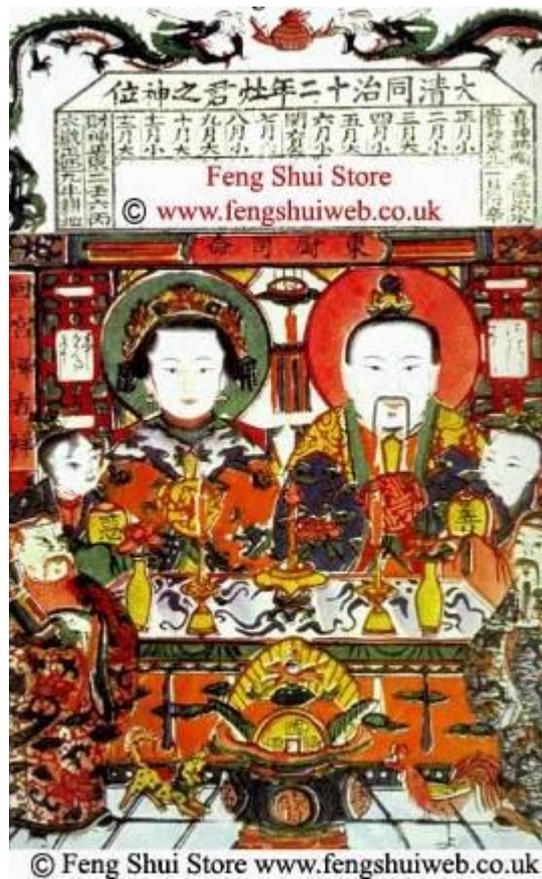
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“Chu Ru Ping An”

May you be blessed with peace  
and safety wherever you are”.

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Chinese mythology tells us that the Kitchen God, who went by the name of Zao Jun which 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 is believed that the Kitchen God would leave homes all around the world on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the last month before Chinese New Year to report back to the other gods in heaven with reports of how every family had behaved throughout the year. To avoid punishment and ensure only good things were said about the people of the earth, each family would go to great lengths to appease and impress the Kitchen God just before he made his journey to the heavens.

On the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the family would offer the Kitchen God sweet, sticky food and honey in the belief that a lovely offering along with the stickiness of the food would seal his mouth from and stop the Kitchen God saying anything negative about the family and ensure a trouble-free year ahead.

Once the Kitchen God had returned to heaven, the family the family would carry on with their preparations for the upcoming Chinese New Year celebrations before the Kitchen God returned on the first day of the New Year.

The family would give gifts of fruits and teas around this period similar to favours being given out around Christmas time. These last few days are also the perfect opportunity to settle accumulated debts and return borrowed items.

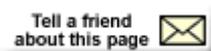
Although there are many stories on how Zao Jun became known as the Kitchen God, the most common tale dates right back to around the 2nd Century BC. At that time Zao Jun was a mortal being, who lived on earth and was known by the name of Zhang Lang. He married a very honourable woman but abandoned her after falling in love with a younger woman. As punishment for his adultery, the god of 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 2020 Chinese New Year etc.**

**Chinese New Year 2020 \*\* Checklist for Chinese New Year 2020 \*\* How to make your own Ang Pow \*\* Chinese Talismans for 2020 \*\* Chinese animal predictions for 2020 \*\* Flying star Xuan Kong 2020 \*\* Avoid the fury of the Grand Duke, three killing 2020 \*\* Chinese New Year world time converter 2020 \*\* 2020 Cures and enhancers kits \*\* How to take a compass reading \*\* How to determine your facing direction \*\* Feng Shui software \*\* Feng Shui resource \*\* 2020 Tong Shu Almanac Software \*\* Feng Shui Blog \*\* Chinese culture \*\***



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