Lunar Year of the Goat

Lanterns at night announce wishes for Peace
Colorful decorations welcome the Goat of Great Fortune

This couplet is in the format of Hedingge (crane's head), the sentences start with the words "Yi" and "Wei" respectively, hinting that this is the lunar year of Yi Wei.

The character of "Yi" refers to the second quarter in the evening, which is equivalent to 10 o'clock in the evening, while the character of "Wei" refers to the time between 1 o'clock and 3 o'clock in the afternoon. From the history of "Song-Third Volume of the Legal Calendar", it states "A particular office (Qie Hu) was established in the dynasty, which responsible for time reporting and water clock system maintenance. The office is stationed at the east end of the Wen-De Palace, while the drum tower and bell tower are built at the left and right side of the office. Instruments used by Qie Hu include brass jar, scale with water, bent tube, indicator-rod, time tokens, and the other components of a clock. The tokens are used to indicate time in the day." In the original note, it states "There are seven tokens, which are used to indicate the hours from 5 o'clock in the morning and 7 o'clock in the evening; they are made of ivory, on which the words are engraved and gold is plated." These tokens are the ivory tokens used for timekeeping, thus the "Hours of Wei" is also known as the "Signs of Wei".

On the lunar New Year's Eve, people will light the lanterns or hang the festoons to welcome the arrival of New Year. The word "wishes for peace" is written on one side of the couplet, while the word "goat of great fortune" is followed on the other side. The "peace" and "great fortune" are what people most longing for. Fortune is a wonderful omen. From the Lower Volume of the "Jici" of "I Ching", it says, "Good luck is followed by Fortune". Fortune is commonly written as "goat of fortune", as usually seen on the engraved ancient tripods. For example, in the ancient book "Lixu – Yuanjiadaoming", there is a phrase "Yi Hau Wang, Da Ji Yang". The word "wishes for peace" in the first part of the couplet is correspondent to "goat of great fortune" in the second part as a blessing word, and the word "goat" even points out the lunar year of Yi Wei, as the zodiac of the year is Goat.

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~ About the "Five Goats" ~

There are two kinds of theories about the attributes of the Five Elements in each year: one saying is dependent on the "Heavenly Stems" while the other is based on the sound retainers of the Five Elements, which are calculated by "Heavenly Stems" and the "Earthly Branches".

If it is calculated by "Heavenly Stems", the goat's nature for the Five Elements is as follows:

"Wood Goat":	*Yiwei* Year	(*Yi* belongs to Wood)	2015, 1955
"Water Goat":	*Guiwei* Year	(*Gui* belongs to Water)	2003, 1943
"Metal Goat":	*Xinwei* Year	(*Xin* belongs to Metal)	1991, 1931
"Earth Goat":	*Jiwei* Year	(*Ji* belongs to Earth)	1979, 1919
"Fire Goat":	*Dingwei* Year	(*Ding* belongs to Fire)	1967, 1907

If it is based on the sound retainers of the Five Elements, the goat's nature for the Five Elements and their mnemonics are as follows:

"Metal Goat":	*Yiwei* Year	*Yiwei* – metal in sand	2015, 1955
"Wood Goat":	*Guiwei* Year	*Guiwei* – wood of willow	2003, 1943
"Earth Goat":	*Xinwei* Year	*Xinwei* – earth at the roadside	1991, 1931
"Fire Goat":	*Jiwei* Year	*Jiwei* – heavenly fire	1979, 1919
"Water Goat":	*Dingwei* Year	*Dingwei* – water of celestial river	1967, 1907

The Macao Post adopted the "Heavenly Stems" calculation method to figure out the nature of the "Five Elements" in the eighth issue of the third series of Chinese Zodiac stamps "Lunar Year of the Goat". This year, the goat's nature from the "Five Elements" is "Wood Goat", so it becomes the main character of the five stamps.

"**Wood Goat**" – The Wood Goat belongs to the "white goat" category. He is full of energy, good at leadership, and also love to take initiatives on matters; born with courage to tackle various challenges; he is easy going yet humble, with the manner of a great commander.

"**Water Goat**" – The Water Goat belongs to the "sheep" category. He is gentle, responsible, and loyal to his friends, deeply loved by his friends and colleagues. While being friendly, he also has artistic talents and dedication towards his careers.

"**Metal Goat**" – The Metal Goat belongs to the "wild goat" category. He appears to be gentle but he is tough inside, has a kind-hearted personality; he has courage and visions, also, he is able to stand by his own principles; he has ambitions to entrepreneurship.

"**Earth Goat**" – The Earth Goat belongs to the "mountain goat" category. He is frank and impartial, gentle, truthful to his friends. Because of that, he always gets unexpected help, and has a successful career as a result. He is not only crowded by friends, but also has a strong attraction from the opposite sex.

"**Fire Goat**" – The Fire Goat loves to keep things orderly. He has the personalities of Lord Menchang such as being hospitable, generous, helpful, deeply liked by the opposite sex. He is assertive and dedicated in his works; as a result, it always goes smoothly in his careers.

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