Lunar Year of the Ox

Roosters herald the dawn, dogs guard the doors, rabbits worship the moon, oxen and horses plough the fields, tigers and monkeys roam the mountains, dragons and snakes control the rivers, pigs and goats provide food to the people, and all of them are part of the Chinese zodiac. In Chinese astrology, the "丑" branch (Chou) occupies the second place among the 12 Earth Branches, belonging to the Earth element, one of the Five Elements of nature, and corresponds to the ox, one of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac. Another branch, "Wei", which occupies the eighth place, also belongs to the element Earth and corresponds to the Goat, so there is reference of "Ox of Chou and Goat of Wei" in the Chinese Horoscope.

According to "Jinanfuzhi Suishi", official records of Jinan City on the customs of the Chinese New Year during the reign of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty, among the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac, the ox is the one that has the greatest proximity to the "New Spring", that is, the Lunar New Year. As mentioned in the texts of rites of "周禮" (Zhouli) and monthly decrees of "月令" (Yueling), the oldest collection of records on laws, orders and ceremonies, as well as the customs of Chinese astrology, "create clay ox to ward off the cold", gave rise to the popular rite of "flogging the spring ox". "In the beginning of spring, officials have vivid battles, oxen are used to crop, and this season became known as cropping spring, to show the intention to promote agriculture. In late autumn, crops are sown with oxen, official's families are sent everywhere, and drum music is presented, this is called the sending of spring." Lively and outstanding. The custom of cropping with oxen continues to this day.

There is an ancient saying that "the earth opens with the "丑" (Chou), and the ox is the creature that opens the earth, so "丑" (Chou) corresponds to the ox", which indicates the important role of the oxen in popular customs. Oxen temples were built in the city of Chengdu, Sichuan Province, Sanyuan Bridge, Beijing, and the city of Xingtai, Hebei Province. The oxen temples were completed and then people came to offer fruit and worship. All oxen temples protect the younglings and eliminate the plague in order to ensure that farming brings fruits to the people. From then on, the cycle continued, year after year, the incense continued burning, and the sacrifices were endless.

The Chinese nation has its roots in the farming culture, which has gradually deepened people's thoughts with oxen, recognizing their excellent qualities such as diligence, simplicity, honesty, loyalty, hard work and all without complaining. "Bow your head and be willing like an ox" is the spiritual embodiment of tens of thousands of diligent compatriots. Wang Anshi of Song Dynasty has a poem: "The grass is ploughed in the morning, and the water is ploughed in the evening. The ploughing in the morning and the dew come down, while the ploughing in the evening accompanies the moonrise. There is no gross profit but the owner has a thousand boxes of goods. Bright as a star in the sky, fame does not quite justify its contribution.

The Lunar Year of the Ox, which is celebrated this year, is at the intersection of the 8th element of the Celestial Stem "辛" (Xin) and of the 2nd element of the Earth Branch "丑" (Chou). Remembering that Spring comes home in the hours of "丑" (Chou), period between 01:00 and 03:00 in the morning, and fortune knocks the door on the arrival of the Lunar Year of the Ox. Wish you all happiness and good fortune in the Lunar Year of the Ox!

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