

Traditional Chinese Festivals:

Four Solar Terms for this time of year.

As we move towards the close of the solar year there are four monthly signifiers over the current and next month that are marked on the Chinese calendar as Solar Terms. Not festivals in themselves, they are observed especially amongst China's vast farming communities as days on which the seasonal changes can first be seen. The concept here is different from the gentle and slowly progressing changes in the seasons we experience in New Zealand.

The first full year I spent living in northeast Asia, I was amazed at just how quickly the seasons changed in comparison to the subtle, almost imperceptible changes one notices in New Zealand. I well remember my father

always observing during the first week of May, 'Only six weeks to the shortest day now!' Then on the 22nd of June he would say, 'Another six weeks and we will see the days starting to draw out.' As a kid, I wondered how he could know that and just put it down to yet more of that weird *adult stuff!* But the point he was highlighting of course, was just how subtle the changes of seasons are here in New

Zealand. Barely noticeable, imperceptible, creeping along day by day without any marked difference until we realize that autumn or winter or spring or summer has finally arrived and we are no longer in the season we just were in. To me this is one of the wonderful things about New Zealand's climate but I must admit to the occasional twinge of nostalgia all the same, for the suddenness of the seasonal changes and the variation of diet that always heralded in Northeast Asia. One of my favourite harbinger's of winter in Tokyo was the haunting melancholy of the Yaki-imo man. The roasted sweet-potato men who would wander the streets in their little modified vans, hailing their presence with a loud hailer, setting off all the neighbourhood dogs in howling sympathy. With the silence that heavy snow brings, theirs and the dogs often the only sound; the perpetual drone of Tokyo's traffic finally quieted.

Watching the weather reports on television in Tokyo the first spring I was there, I recall how amazed I was when they predicted that the Cherry blossoms would start in

the Kanto area the next day –imagine my surprise when they actually did! I was even more startled when a few weeks later in that June and with the same certainty, it was forecast that the Rainy season would begin on the morrow, and it did! Not the great torrential down-pourings I had expected but rather six weeks of stifling, sunless, misty days in which even my shoes started to go moldy when left in the closet. It was like living in a humidior! After that spring I was persuaded in my need for an aircon unit and went and bought one!

Initially, I thought perhaps I was just fantasizing that Japanese weather forecasters were a great deal more reliable than their Kiwi counterparts, especially when approximately six weeks later they announced with absolute confidence again that the rainy season would

finish on the next day and summer and all its heat would then begin. Sure enough, the next day, as if some divine hand had turned a switch the heavy, clammy mists lifted, the sun came out and the Japanese summer in all its sultry energy-sapping ferocity began. Within three days the temperatures had climbed from a clammy 19, 20 degrees to a fiery 35 degrees and climbing, reaching full heat a couple of weeks later usually around the high

30's and even dipping into the 40's on occasion. Then approximately eight weeks later another announcement would be made that summer was expected to end. Sure enough the next day temperatures would drop by a good 10 to 15 degrees and slowly decline until mid winter, without there ever being a warm, sultry day in between. The suddenness with which the seasons changed and stayed changed in Northeast Asia never ceased to fascinate me all the time I was there.

These four end-of-year markers the Chinese observe are in the Farmer's calendar to help them keep in mind the rapidity with which the deepest cold of mid winter will soon be upon them. They are:

Da Xue - Heavy snow: It is said that in the region of the Yellow River (Nth China) there will be snow drifts. There is a peasant adage: "Snow whirls around the time of Da Xue and Dong Zhi, it is a time for engaging in sideline production and collecting more manure." This usually occurs on approximately the 7th and 8th of Dec.

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Dong Zhi - Winter Solstice: This of course falls on the 22nd of Dec. The sun beams overhead on the Tropic of Capricorn and so in the Northern hemisphere it marks the shortest day. In rural China, the country folk guard against frostbite and begin the deep ploughing and see to it that their animals are well safeguarded against the coming cold of deepest winter. This usually occurs on the 21 or 22nd Dec.

Xiao Han - Slight Cold: At this time it is not yet truly as cold as it is about to get but after approximately the middle of the twelfth month it will get bitterly cold. This usually occurs on the 5th or 6th of Jan.

Da Han: Severe Cold: This is the last of the twenty four solar terms. By this time the severest of the cold has arrived and people survive as best they can in the most northerly parts of the country. This usually occurs on the 20th or 21st Jan.



READER'S QUESTION:

Question: Judy asks: Is it Ok to have water such as a fish tank in a child's bedroom?

Answer: Not if the room is being used as a bedroom.

The principle of the Mountain energies apply to a bedroom and having water, especially reticulated water will put these energies, 'into water' and thus is likely to damage the mountain stars present. This could well create poor Human Harmony. This may show itself as either poor health or quarrelsome relations for the person sleeping here. If however, the room has positive Water Stars and is intended to be used as a child's study, then in principle yes, but it really should be checked first!



Quote:

This is his first punishment, that by the verdict of his own heart no guilty man is acquitted.

RUMINATIONS FROM DANNY

With all the turmoil in the financial markets this year both here and overseas, I am reminded of something one Chinese feng shui master once said to me about the change-over from one feng shui period to another. 'At these times it can be dangerous. Rich men can quickly lose their money and become poor, and poor men can suddenly become rich.' This brings to mind the simply staggering number of finance companies that have gone under within the past few months. I was interested to see on the news just recently that one of these companies had their registered offices in a building on Princes Wharf here in Auckland. I wonder how many companies have by now, gone under whilst associated with that edifice. It suffers from what in feng shui is referred to as 'Cutting Feet' a situation in which a building's foundations are below the line of water. Since good feng shui requires solid (dry) land, I am led to wonder just how many

other people will suffer at the hands of this kind of ignorance of the environment before town planners and architects begin to awake to the protective value of feng shui?

On a more positive note, it is interesting to see the dynamic economies of two places that were predicted to do well in the present period of 8: Mumbai (Bombay) and Perth/Freemantle in southwestern Western Australia. (Both face water to the southwest with mountains to their northeast. Although there may well be a interim downturn even for these locations, and of course Mumbai will need to gather itself after the atrocious terrorist attack earlier last month but both cities are likely, in my opinion, to recover more quickly from the global downturn than places such as the Northeast coast of the USA. i.e. New York and its financial markets.



MERRY XMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL MY READERS AND CLIENTS:

As the year comes to a close I would like to thank all my reader's and clients for their continued

support. When I set out to create New Zealand's first feng shui consultancy using and promoting classical Chinese feng shui, little did I know the journey it was about to take me on. Now, 14

years later I am delighted to see that so many more people are aware of the subject than were back then and am grateful to have been a part of that. Feng Shui Consultants New Zealand has been proud to lead the way in introducing the principles of classical, science based feng shui not only in this country but also in Suriname and New Caledonia. I am looking forward to a productive and busy time next year and wish all of you success, health and prosperity in 2009. The first of my Newsletters will be out in February. In the meantime, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Danny

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QUOTE:

Love can neither be bought nor sold; its only price is love.