

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

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CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN

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THE YEAR OF THE OX

Dear Friends:



ainland China has long suffered from over-population. In 1984, this situation was further complicated because, according to the Chinese system of astrology, it was the Year of the Rat. Because this rodent is highly respected by the Chinese people, it was unlawful for human beings to kill rats in the year over which they presided. According to reliable sources, the rats multiplied with fearful rapidity and even threatened to take over the country.

Furthermore, honorable rats were well disciplined in laws of survival. It must also have been a fortunate year for these rodents and there is no report that they spread any germs which resulted in sickness throughout the country.

It is all different now: When the Year of the Ox came in 1985, there immediately followed a massive program for the reduction of the rodent population. In Chinese astrology, our equivalent of the signs of the zodiac change annually rather than monthly. Persons born in 1901, 1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, and 1985 belong to the sign of the Ox and the influence even extends to all worldly circumstances.

Throughout Asia, the Ox, or water buffalo, Brahman steer, or sacred cow were members of this family. Experience over long periods of time has proved conclusively that the ox is a patient beast of burden. It plods through the rice paddies, pulls carts, and is faithful to its master as a perfect embodiment of resignation. It should be noted, however, that this highly disciplined animal is capable under severe provocation of violent emotional outbursts.

The Year of the Ox strongly emphasizes hard work, loyalty, and self-sacrifice. People in general will learn to stay with their jobs and do the best work of which they are capable. Those who attempt to avoid responsibility will be in trouble and new fangled notions are likely to be penalized. The ox likes to keep things the way they have always been. He stands ready to repeat a familiar procedure for the entire extent of his lifetime. Many farms have small altars on the corners of the rice fields to honor the memory of a respected and admired water buffalo. Little bits of food may be offered to the ghost of the faithful beast for it is likely that he stayed exactly where he was even after death.

If the ox has anxieties about the destiny of human society, he keeps these completely to himself. On one of the farms in the Philippines, this huge animal is the delight of small children. They crawl all over him, tease him outrageously, and then feed him a little fresh grass. Contentment reigns supreme. In the year of the ox, it is mandatory that nations all around the world must solve their own problems by a restatement of basic values and the common needs of humanity. This is not a glamorous year. Luxuries and extravagances must be sacrificed to the solution of major issues. In the universe of the buffalo, one must work to eat. This is not a good year to set up new nations or make elaborate plans for political or social change.

Speculation is too complicated for an ox to understand. One thing is certain, however, he must eat regularly or there will be bad trouble. Leaders should remember this in estimating the dispositions of their citizenry. If denied his proper ration, the ox will bellow and the noise will be heard for miles. We seem to see symptoms of bellowing in various parts of the world and, if this condition is allowed to go too far, there can be a stampede. In spite of its size, the ox is a very sensitive creature and if its health does not receive proper attention, it will sicken and die and its demise is a financial loss to the owner.

Persons born in the year of the ox are not easily deceived and are suitable for practical projects. The agricultural group is favored. The farmer and his ox walk side by side in mud up to their knees. The man may stumble and have an attack of self-pity, but the ox, sweeping off flies with its tail, completes its appointed task without complaint. To the Chinese, therefore, 1985 would favor the poor and the downtrodden. It will not provide luxuries, but indicates that those who do the best day's work will be protected so far as essentials are concerned. Persons born under the ox sign have fixed opinions. If the going becomes too rough, they will settle down to watchful waiting and, when the auspicious time comes, restate their original convictions. They like responsibility and can succeed in economic careers. If they have a good job, they will stay with it until retirement.

The old temples are being reopened; young men are once more admitted to the priesthood; Confucius has been reinstated; and the Chinese are now ashamed of the way they treated the Tibetans. The great leap into the future was far from successful. The mind of the ox is now slow of thinking; it has a solid kind of common sense which even education cannot destroy. Ultimately the innovations will be curtailed and the Chinese will come into their own because of internal strength of character.

Lao-tzu, at the end of his life, departed from China and rode into the desert of Shamo on the back of a tired old ox. This wise man, without honor in his own country, finally came to the realms of the blessed, borne on the back of a tired old water buffalo. In the Taoist sense, therefore, the ox becomes the symbol of eternal and immovable reality--the law that works year after year and age after age, serving human needs when possible, but always strangely detached from the furious conflicts of human society.

Those born under this sign, in any year of the ox, should also remember the hour of the ox which falls in the middle of the night when all virtuous persons should be sound asleep. There is a sympathy between night workers and the ox.

Both are abroad to protect human needs and receive very little recognition. It is sleep that carries us over from one day of labor to another and rest plays the part of the water ox. The quiet and peace of timelessness and repose assures the world that new opportunities for achievement lie ahead.

The ox is also the animal on which the Hindu deity, Shiva, is seated, and in Nepal, Shiva is depicted sitting on the highest peaks of the Himalayas. Probably the Chinese, following eastern customs, realized that the earth, itself, is the great water ox. It serves man age after age and asks only to be preserved and protected. It is the earth that the farmer depends upon for salvation. We all fulfill our ambitions on a small ball in space which apparently has no ambitions of its own. It plods about the sun and contributes to all the harvests that sustain life on this lonely planet. We might hope, therefore, that in 1985 the peoples of the world will recognize their debt of gratitude for the benefits which the environment provides.

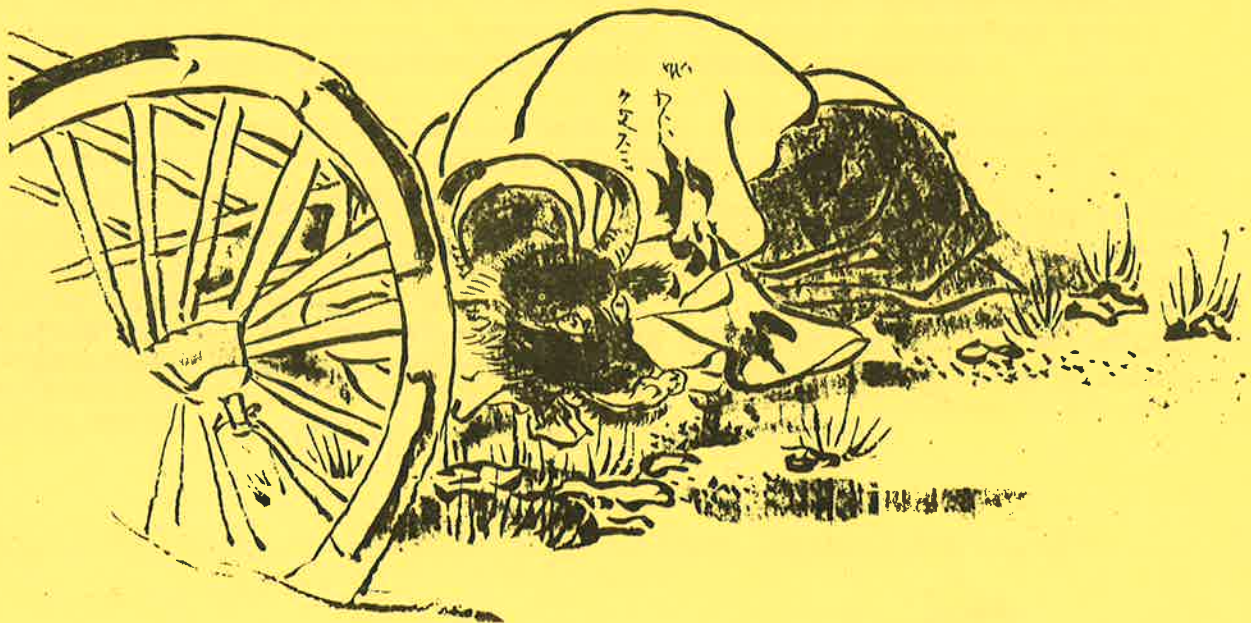
According to Kakuan a disciple asked his teacher "What is Buddha?" The Master replied, "It is like searching for an ox while you, yourself, are riding on it." In the symbolism of The Ten Bulls, the truth seeker first searches for the bull, then finds it, and next bridles it. When he has accomplished this, the bull begins to fade away and finally nothing remains but the circle of Eternity.

In the Year of the Ox, the first labor is to find the solution, the second to apply the solution, and finally to discover that all complexities fade away and only Infinite Reality remains. This concept is always of major concern in the Year of the Ox. We can already see that we are trying to bridle a vast, ungainly creature that is a useful servant, but a dangerous master. In a sense, therefore, we must control our own inventions and devices, bridle our ambitions and desires, and become gradually aware of those great universal objectives that must be attained before peace and true prosperity can prevail.

Most sincerely yours,

Manly P. Hall

MANLY P. HALL



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Brown	Macrobiotic Miracle	(C)	\$12.95
Budge	Gods of the Egyptians (2 Vols.)	(P)	20.00
Chivington	Seeing Through Your Illusions	(P)	5.95
Devi	Dance and Music	(P)	5.00
Ferguson	Signs & Symbols in Christian Art	(P)	7.95
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Goldstein- Jacobson	Here & There in Astrology	(C)	9.50
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Rose Cross (School of)	Esoteric Bible Dictionary	(P)	3.00
Schultes	Medicines from the Earth	(P)	12.95
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