

MESSAGE FOR THE NEW LUNAR YEAR

*by the Venerable Master Hua
(Translated by BTTS)*

In the lunar calendar of sixty-year cycles based on the cyclical characters, this is the year *jen hsü* (壬戌), which is the Year of the Dog. In the Dog Year, some will be injured--barked at or bitten by the dog--but others will receive the dog's protection. The dog will guard the good and bite evil people. Take a look at how cause and effect works: sooner or later retribution rolls around, and when it's your turn you undergo it. If you plant good causes, you'll reap good rewards; but if you planted evil causes, the harvest won't be to your liking. Everything you're encountering right now came about from what you did in the past. You have to go through it, and the best way is not to hold it against heaven or blame other people, but to accept it graciously. Fate is not fixed, however. The superior person has the power to shape his or her own destiny. Your fate is up to you. You seek out blessings on your own, and determine by yourself whether you'll have blessings or disasters. You may not have been born to do great good, but if you do it, auspicious spirits will accompany you wherever you go. On the other hand, you may not have been destined to commit great evil, but if you commit it, spirits of evil omen will hover around you. Therefore, although retribution for good and evil follows you like a shadow--people of great goodness can transcend their fate,

VERSE FOR THE NEW LUNAR YEAR

*The old year has gone by, and we face the new:
Crowing rooster, barking dog making uproar and confusion.
Strictly guard the doors to avoid things being stolen.
Benefitting self and others all comes from the mind only.*

The old Year of the Rooster has passed, and we're confronting the Year of the Dog--not a very good time. So do a good job of guarding your own house by keeping watch over the doors. You don't want to lose the precious treasures of your own true nature, the true wisdom you inherently possess. That is, don't let the gates of the six sense faculties run you. Instead, cultivate the Bodhisattva Way of benefitting self while benefitting others. That's absolutely not something obtained from outside, however, but only a manifestation of the mind. In general, work hard and be sure not to waste this year's time--especially if you wasted last year!