

2005 The Year of the Rooster
乙酉

乙酉年
二〇〇五年

The Chinese calendar uses a unique way of counting the years called sexagenary cycles. These cycles repeat every 60 years. Each year has a name, which is composed of two parts: the heavenly stem, and the earthly stem (celestial and terrestrial components). The 'heavenly stem' words do not have an English equivalent, but they are as follows:

甲 乙 丙 丁 戊 己 庚 辛 壬 癸
jia yi bing ding wu ji geng xin ren gui

The 'earth stem' words are listed here:

子 丑 寅 卯 辰 巳 午 未 申 酉 戌 亥
zi chou yin mao chen si wu wei shen you xu hai

In addition to the words listed above, the earth stem portions are also assigned animals (this was originally to aid in memorization of the cycle, kind of like 'a is for apple'). The animals are shown here (each corresponds to the characters in the earth system listed above):

鼠 牛 虎 兔 龍 蛇 馬 羊 侯 雞 狗 豬
shu niu hu tu long she ma yang hou ji gou zhu

In order they are: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, pig.

Each of the two components is used sequentially. Thus, the 1st year of the 60-year cycle becomes jia-zi, the 2nd year is yi-chou, the 3rd year is bing-yin, etc. When we reach the end of a component, we start from the beginning: The 10th year is gui-you, the 11th year is jia-xu (restarting the Celestial Stem), the

12th year is yi-hai, and the 13th year is bing-zi (restarting the Terrestrial Branch). Finally, the 60th year becomes gui-hai. Since it takes 60 years to complete a full cycle, almost everyone can meet the exact same year again only once in lifetime.

By this system, we are in the year yi-you or yi-ji (using the earth system & animal name respectively). Because yi (celestial symbol) is a 'wood' sign, it is sometimes referred to by the color green, so this year would be a "green rooster" year. These are the ways you are likely to see the Chinese year written :

乙酉 (yi you)

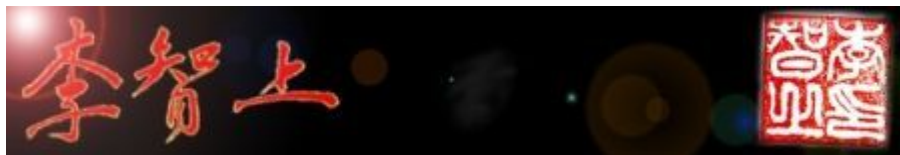
乙雞 (yi ji)

green rooster

wooden rooster

Here are both of those cycles again, in a table form (I've included the 'type' of sign that each of the heavenly signs are:

1	甲	jiǎ	Wood	1	子	zǐ	鼠	shu	Rat
2	乙	yǐ	Wood	2	丑	chǒu	牛	niu	Ox
3	丙	bǐng	Fire	3	寅	yín	虎	hu	Tiger
4	丁	dīng	Fire	4	卯	mǎo	兔	tu	Rabbit
5	戊	wù	Earth	5	辰	chén	龍	long	Dragon
6	己	jǐ	Earth	6	巳	sì	蛇	she	Snake
7	庚	gēng	Metal	7	午	wǔ	馬	ma	Horse
8	辛	xīn	Metal	8	未	wèi	羊	yang	Goat
9	壬	rén	Water	9	申	shēn	猴	hou	Monkey
10	癸	guǐ	Water	10	酉	yǒu	雞	ji	Chicken
				11	戌	xū	狗	gou	Dog
				12	亥	hài	豬	zhu	Pig



Hope you enjoyed this. Questions? Comments?

Zhongwen@LostboY.net

Thanks, LoST