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By Standard Chartered Bank

Title: Traditions Towards A Prosperous Lunar New Year

Whether you believe in it or not, it's always fun to read up on what the new lunar year has in store. As we bid farewell to the Year of the Rabbit and welcome the Year of the Dragon, as with each New Year, there is always the hope of gaining more wealth and success, better health and prosperity. For those celebrating Chinese New Year, there are certain traditions to follow based on superstition and age-old traditions to bring in better luck and prosperity.

In all good fun and to provide more insight for those who do not celebrate or are not too familiar with the Chinese traditions, here is a quick guide on Lunar New Year superstitions to help you hop your way to success.

Save the house chores for another day

If cleaning is not your cup of Chinese tea, this might be the best superstition to follow as sweeping and cleaning on New Year's Day is strictly forbidden. It is believed that sweeping out the dust will simultaneously sweep away all your good fortune. If you are worried about the state of cleanliness of your house when you are sure to have guests over, you should clean your entire house before New Year's Day or you can do it the day after. To avoid harm and bad fortune, just be sure that dirt and rubbish is swept inwards and carried out the back door.

You are what you eat

There is a whole array of food that you should or shouldn't eat on New Year's Day. Many people will regard steamed fish as the most important dish for the New Year celebration. It is crucial to eat the fish whole as it represents togetherness and abundance. Some folks abstain from eating meat on the first day because it is believed that it will ensure a long and happy life. Also, as a symbol of long life, noodles too is an essential part of the feast. When eating or preparing the noodle dish, the noodles should never be cut for fear that it may shorten one's life. Chinese New Year eve dinners traditionally would also feature 6 or 8 dishes in total as both numbers are symbolic of good luck. At the same time, you would perhaps notice that many dishes served in restaurants will feature lucky and prosperous names to add to the festivities.

Pyrotechnics and a breeze to welcome the New Year

It is encouraged to light up firecrackers on New Year's Eve as a way of sending out the old year and welcoming the new. Also, at the stroke of midnight, all doors and windows of the house should be opened as a way of allowing the old year and all its misfortune to leave while welcoming the new year and all the good luck and fortune that comes with it.

Paint the town red

From red clothes to red packets, the colour red is significant during Chinese New Year. The reason behind this is that red is believed to symbolise good luck and is supposed to ward off evil spirits. Red is also considered a bright and vibrant colour and it is said to bring the wearer a brighter and happier year ahead.

Settle your debts

If you're in debt, it would be a good time to pay people off and settle the score before New Year's Day. It is believed that if you start the New Year in the bad books, you will finish it the same way.

Mind your language

Avoid using foul language or unlucky words during Lunar New Year. These would include words such as 'four' because in Chinese the word sounds like the word for death. Negative terms and references to death, dying and ghosts should never be uttered. It is also discouraged to make any references to the past year as the focus should be placed on the New Year.

Will the predictions and superstitions really tie with your fortune and wealth? Only time will tell. But observing and understanding the traditions can add more meaning to your celebrations. Also, while some superstition might just be fun to adhere to, others like paying off your debts is certainly a good habit to practice.

Standard Chartered Bank would like to wish all our faithful Money Matter\$ readers Gong Xi Fa Chai and a very prosperous and lucky Year of the Dragon ahead!

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