

Parallel verses for the Lunar New Year (2021) - Part 1

Parallel verses for the Lunar New Year (2021) - Part 2

Parallel verses for the Lunar New Year (2021) - Part 3

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Parallel verses for the Lunar New Year (2021) - Part 6 (Br. Phap Huu)

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2021 Lunar New Year “Parallel Verses”

Sitting in freedom on this sacred land. Walking in peace everywhere on Earth.

We are very happy to announce the new Plum Village parallel verses to celebrate the upcoming Lunar New Year – year of the Ox.

These practice phrases are a poetic gift that we can print out and post around our living quarters or at work as a reminder to practice mindfulness.

While reciting these phrases we can combine each line with our breathing. For example, we can contemplate “Sitting in freedom on this sacred land” as we breathe in, and contemplate “Walking in peace everywhere on Earth” as we breathe out. These words are not a declaration, but a living aspiration we wish to nurture.

In Plum Village practice centers all around the world, we print out these calligraphies (keeping the diamond form), paste them onto colored cards, and pin them up around the dining halls, meditation halls and living quarters in preparation to celebrate the Lunar New Year. We hang them (with the help of a little cotton thread) from early-blossoming Japonica and Plum branches that we bring in to brighten our rooms.

Ancient tradition, renewed by Thich Nhat Hanh

Poetic couplets for New Year are an ancient tradition in the East, especially in Vietnam and China. Often on red paper, they are pasted on door-frames, lintels, and even farm tools to bring good luck for the year to come. Calligraphies by spiritual masters are especially popular. The

traditional couplet written in Chinese characters is a masterful art – a kind of profound and concise “written form of counterpoint”.

Thich Nhat Hanh has established a tradition, on the eve of the Lunar New Year, of offering the sangha a simple poetic couplet in calligraphy that can inspire and nurture our mindfulness practice throughout the year. Thay’s innovation has been to offer the couplet in English, French and Vietnamese (rather than in Chinese characters). The Plum Village Community is very happy to continue this beautiful tradition.

Join us in this practice

You can print out and post the couplets on your fridge, doors or near light switches as an auspicious reminder to be mindful of their message, and renew ourselves by applying them in our daily lives. You can get creative with how and where to post and practice the phrases. You could post them on the doorframe as you step out to face your day, or even on the bathroom mirror.

In Plum Village, we always post the two complementary diamonds as a pair, near each other (above, below, beside – it doesn’t matter which) – typically on doors, windows or walls.

We hope this brand-new couplet will bring you and your loved ones inspiration and nourishment in the New Year to come. This year the calligraphy is by Thay Phap Huu.

Download English and Vietnamese verses <https://plumvillage.org/articles/2021-lunar-new-year-parallel-verses/>