

# CHINESE NEW YEAR 2021 “THE OX ON THE ROAD”

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Hour	Day	Month	Year
Stem: 6 yin earth	Stem: 8 yin metal	Stem: 7 Yang Metal	Stem: 8 yin metal
Branch: II Earth Ox <i>Ox in the Byre</i>	Branch: IV Wood Rabbit <i>Rabbit in the Burrow</i>	Branch: III Wood Tiger <i>Tiger Leaves the Mountain</i>	Branch: II Earth Ox <i>Ox on the Road</i>
Combined Fire <i>Lightning Fire</i>	Combined Wood <i>Hardwood</i>	Combined Wood <i>Hardwood</i>	Combined Earth <i>Earthen Walls</i>

Gong Hey Fat Choy Everyone!

And welcome to the year of the ‘Ox on the Road’, the White/Metal Ox. It is also known as the Iron Ox. Following on from last year, the Year of the Rat on the Crossbeam, we now come to a year where we move out of our period of impasse and indecision, represented by the Rat on the Crossbeam. Last year was indeed a crossroads experience, where various paths were chosen by nations and individuals alike, in response or reaction to the numerous challenges that were present, some of which had been growing for some time, and some for which we were caught unprepared and unawares. 2020 was a challenging year, to say the least. And now, we all want a sense of stability and a renewed sense of direction. In remembering the motto for the Rat on the Crossbeam, there were possibilities last year that may have loomed large for a select few (which we will cover later in this letter). But for the majority of us, basic decisions about even how we live our lives, especially looking to the future, were presented to us in bold relief. And for the majority of us, the following sentences from the year still hold true: “Adequate precautions will prevent future calamities. A balanced mind is the best assurance of a good outcome.” So, we look forward now with a more sober view of our world situation.

**The Iron Ox**, in distinction to the year we just had, is seen as stable, reliable, methodical, sometimes practical to the point of dullness. The Ox in general is not known to be a flashy, spectacular, or even a sexy kind of expression. That said, however over time, the methodology of the Ox can produce spectacular and lasting results. Yin Metal, as we find with this Ox, can exhibit as being inward, passive, nebulous, and cool, as well as being progressive, vigorous, strong and direct.

This particular Ox has the following mottos: **“There is much to be gained in constant movement. Attention to a good diet never goes astray, either. Though health problems might be present, a change of climate often brings a cure.”**<sup>1</sup> In addition, the combined element for the year states that **“adequate precautions prevent future calamities.”**

On top of these statements, a further motto for this year reads as follows: **Youthfulness: All things new, experience is wanting. Small-mindedness brings only small things (results).**” The latter is

from the nighttime reading for the 12<sup>th</sup> tetragram of the *Tai Hsüan Ching*, an alternative *I Ching*, the former having a particular connection with geopolitical changes. In parsing that tetragram, its Chinese name is *T'ung*, the Young Boy. The meaning is as was stated before – we have entered into a youthful phase, but experience is lacking. Young boys will typically rush forward into life, often learning painful yet valuable lessons along the way, immersed in the wonder of every new experience. However, in this particular instance there is a sense of timidity, but also of conflicting images, like a deer seeing its reflection in a rippling pond, from which it will run, confusing issues and ideas and not giving a clear reflection until ‘the water is still’, meaning emotions are calmer. This state of affairs is perhaps obvious enough in these days, when emotions run high, opinions run strong and beliefs reign implacable.

**Previous Iron Ox years:** With this background in mind and before we go too much into interpreting the portents for the present year, we need the context of the year just passed as well as the previous Iron Ox years – 1961, 1901, 1841, 1781, 1721, etc. We start with the main events in previous Iron Ox years, events in which we find echoes today.

**1721:** There was a smallpox epidemic in Boston, which resulted in the 1<sup>st</sup> public inoculation campaign. The Russian Empire replaced the Tsardom of Russia.

**1781:** America was embroiled in its Revolutionary War. [Immanuel Kant](#) published his "Critique of Pure Reason." There was a smallpox epidemic in the Mandan tribe that wiped out 90% of their population. Uranus was discovered.

**1841:** Britain occupied Hong Kong, the Canadian Act of Union was enacted, President William Henry Harrison died in office, the 1<sup>st</sup> Opium War started, there was the 1<sup>st</sup> multilateral treaty banning the African slave trade and there was the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Afghan war. [Russia created](#) its first savings banks.

**1901:** Queen Victoria died, ending the Victorian Era in the UK. There was the Panic of 1901, Iran began Western involvement in resources, Cuba became a US protectorate, Roosevelt uttered his “Speak softly and carry a big stick” mantra, President McKinley was assassinated, Teddy Roosevelt started his trust busting and ushered in the Progressive Era, and the 1<sup>st</sup> radio transmission was received. The first recorded powered flight took place. [A team was sent to Cuba](#) to find the cause for Yellow fever. The White Australia policy was introduced.

**1961:** Kennedy was inaugurated, Eisenhower gave his military-industrial complex speech, the Bay of Pigs fiasco happened, the 1<sup>st</sup> human made it into space (Yuri Gagarin), there were race riots during the Civil Rights Movement, the Berlin Wall went up and fallout shelters became vogue in the United States, and there were escalations of tensions over Vietnam, which was an earlier attempt to encircle China.

**Common themes from the past:** We see there are common themes in those other recent Iron Ox years with what is already emerging in this one in a few instances. We might list those common themes as follows:

- Epidemics and efforts to eradicate them, as well as research into their causes
- Changes within Russia, leading to social improvements
- Turmoil in the United States
- Western meddling in Chinese affairs and in Southeast Asia
- US meddling in the Caribbean

**Keeping essentials in mind:** With these points in mind we now take a look at the year that was, giving us the fuller context in what we can likely expect this year. In looking at last year there is one event in particular that needs to be parsed before we move on, and that applies to the pandemic. That in turn leads to another consideration, one that is actually essential to understand if we are to avoid a greater disaster than even the pandemic. We will see why when we examine the New Year. There is a bit to say, so bear with me here while we unpack what has happened, what is happening and where it is leading us. There is one concept to keep in mind as we go along in reviewing 2020:

We are being conditioned to accept something we would not ordinarily accept, something other than a so-called ‘Great Reset’. That ‘something’ has nothing to do with a virus, either. The pandemic is just a sideshow.

So to start, and since this is the Chinese New Year letter, China has played a big part in this pandemic, but not in the way many people think. In fact, the East in general gave good examples on how to handle such an event, without knowing the best treatments for it, without vaccines and with simple protocols in place. With those examples in mind, and looking at the East now, we in the West could have avoided much of the misery we are experiencing at present. Page | 3

**A pandemic avoided?:** The West could have avoided a pandemic in the way we have experienced it. We looked at how and why in [the Taurus letter for last year](#). We could have adopted a uniquely Western model for handling this event. In our rich Western societies – the ones that were touted as being the best-prepared to tackle a pandemic [according to the World Economic Forum](#) (WEF) – governments could have easily paid people to stay at home for six weeks or even twelve, placed a temporary tax on capital gains wealth to support doing so, at least for that period, or adopted measures like we saw in Taiwan and South Korea (who kept running in the midst of it) and we would be in a far better situation than that in which we find ourselves at the moment. Instead, most of those nations listed as best by the WEF did far poorer than some of the nations listed as worst-prepared. [If our governments had been more sensible](#), had been prepared (they weren’t) had acted quickly and decisively and had invoked emergency measures to support their people, we would only be looking at isolated pockets of the virus in the worst affected areas, easily controlled and with confidence in government boosted instead of the protests and antagonisms we are seeing in the news these days. Keep in mind as we go along that it was the WEF that was saying we in the West would do just fine with the pandemic back in February last year, and then take into account their much-hyped talk of a ‘Great Reset’, which we will look at here later. If their predictions for their ‘reset’ are anything like their predictions for the pandemic, then we probably shouldn’t read too much into their plans.

For comparison only, of the top ten contenders for best performance in 2020’s pandemic, the US is #1, as in having the most cases, most deaths, food shortages, etc. – in other words, a good example of what *not* to do in a pandemic situation. The UK is a case in point, where [the government deliberately took the advice of the naysayers against the quick and decisive approach](#) and instead initially advocated for ‘herd immunity’ in the absence of vaccines. Here’s the real standing of the top ten, to drive home a realization later: The US (1<sup>st</sup>), the UK (5<sup>th</sup>), the Netherlands (21<sup>st</sup>), Australia (110<sup>th</sup>, and actually did well, but worse in other areas), Canada (22<sup>nd</sup>), Thailand (114<sup>th</sup>, and also did pretty well), Sweden (29<sup>th</sup> and a major fail), Denmark (57<sup>th</sup>, behind Egypt, Greece and Ethiopia, as in worse than) and then the last two of the WEF shining examples, South Korea and Finland, who actually did well in their handling (86<sup>th</sup> and 99<sup>th</sup>, resp.) This is in a scale of 1 – 221, with #1 being the worst-affected in case numbers and deaths. Here in Italy, we are at #8, just behind Germany (10<sup>th</sup>). China sits at #83 in that list, just behind South Korea (86<sup>th</sup>). I won’t quibble over the numbers, as in the wider view exact numbers are not the issue, nor is this to hold up any nation as a good example or bad. We are looking here at what worked and what didn’t and why. It is the relative performance we are interested in here.

There are several considerations to take away from the listing above: 1) a nation’s wealth, prestige and technological advancement is no measure of how it will use those assets in a time of emergency, 2) the wealth of those nations who did poorly in the face of the pandemic was not appropriated to support their people in a truly meaningful way until the pandemic had already taken a firm hold, if even then, pointing to another problem, and 3) there was a distinct lack of leadership in the nations that were supposed to be so well prepared but instead weren’t. As stated, that could have been avoided, but was instead used for domestic political gain and by the oligarchs to increase their wealth via [capital gains](#). Government performance among some of the nations listed was less

than stellar and even pathetic in a few cases and has only served to further disadvantage the public. And here is why:

The nations under neoliberalism (US, UK and EU) – free market capitalism – did more poorly in general than nations with mixed economies and/or universal health care. In the neoliberal nations, wealth was funneled to the top by pumping money into the markets instead of public health. The wealth gap widened sharply during the pandemic.

What was in evidence in the US-led West was a combination of factors, the most prominent of which was particularly in evidence in the US and UK – domestic political expediency, along the lines of “never let a good crisis go to waste.” Trump in the US was a weak leader anyway and easily swayed by his donors, hoping for re-election that year and seeking to keep his voter base rallied in support of his non-aggressive and ill-founded approach to the pandemic. We see the results of his approach there now. The same was also pretty much true of Boris Johnson in the UK. [Where was Boris](#), anyway? What we saw in those two nations was political theater instead of leadership, and misinformation spread by those very leaders, either deliberately or out of ignorance. What appears to have happened is that on the one hand, the public has been kept divided as to the effects of the pandemic and the response to it, with part of the populace believing it is a hoax or only a mild flu, another part knowing the dangers of it, [notably for people over 65](#) and with another part notably confused as to what and what not to do. What this has done is to greatly prolong a response that should have seen this disease more or less firmly under control months ago and playing havoc with economies and supply lines. And on the other hand, we observed what happened mostly in the East, who followed the WHO guidelines, more or less.

**The pandemic in the East:** Instead, what happened in the East regarding the pandemic is seen by many people in the West as authoritarian, dystopic, violations of people’s human rights – always a favorite – or worse, *communism*. Forget voluntarily putting one’s own comforts aside for a few weeks and doing something for the public good. We can’t be like the *Chinese* – or the South Koreans or Taiwanese, though we never here about them these days. We respect people’s individual rights in our bastions of freedom and democracy. The Chinese caused this mess anyway, right? If you detect a little sarcasm in these last statements, you would be correct. The lack of support people have felt and the lackluster performance of governments across the West in the nations worst affected are seen in the growing protests against COVID measures, as in Germany, France, Spain, Denmark, Belgium, Hungary, Austria, in the Middle East and North America. And **the primary reason we are seeing those protests is because of financial hardship**, precisely because emergency financial support was not instituted in our capitalist West and in poor nations who did not have the wherewithal to do otherwise, as in Lebanon, for instance. It could have been handled much better, but the vested interests in the affected nations would not agree to giving up anything for the greater good. Instead, we all watched as the 0.01% grew richer to the tune of almost a trillion dollars in the US alone.

Our leaders in legislatures and executive branches of government in the neoliberal nations basically stood by and said to the billionaires, “Do you need a little bit more? We can print more money for you. We’ll throw the peasants a bone at some point.” And as to the people who like to think the Chinese are to blame for the pandemic and caused it – well, no, they didn’t. There is not a shred of solid evidence this was a deliberate act by the Chinese, that it was a supposed bioweapon or that it escaped from a lab. All we have in that regard is inference and innuendo which would never stand up to scrutiny in a reputable court of law.

The pandemic has rocked the Western world. Are we frustrated, angry, disappointed, to mention a few emotions concerning 2020? Yes, understandably, undeniably. Could we have been more humanitarian, supported our people, mobilized our economies and even sent aid to troubled countries instead of fighting over PPE, vaccine availability and pointing fingers at everyone else? –

most definitely. Well, while we were told to put the masks on, the mask has come off the face of our respective governments. The emperor wears no clothes. We are suddenly paying a lot of attention to the ‘man behind the curtain’. Because of what has happened and the way in which it has happened, many people have begun to believe that the whole thing has been planned and there is a one-world agenda behind it all. That’s too easy, though, and it buys into another agenda that we see emerging more strongly these days.

**Our imaginary threats:** Because we see that our governments have dropped the ball and have not in reality supported us until it was too late, if at all, there is a concerted attempt by the vested interests, trumpeted throughout the media, that our present system is under threat (it is, but from inside) and that foreign actors are doing their best to keep us destabilized and want to see us fail. I have a bridge to sell you, too. It’s an old propaganda trick, being rolled out in earnest with the pandemic as cover, to demonize ‘the other’ in order to manufacture consent for a conflict that is undeserved and unwanted and to keep us distracted from what is going on right under our noses. And three countries are the whipping boys in this piece. We all know who they are by now. Does this sound conspiratorial? If so, read on. This brings us to consider something about which we should all be very wary and suspicious and which needs to be called out at every turn for what it is. It is [outlined for us in the following](#):

Many years ago, the Jewish-American political commentator [Walter Lippmann](#) realised that **political ideology could be completely fabricated, using the media to control both presentation and conceptualisation, not only to create deeply-ingrained false beliefs in a population, but also to entirely erase undesirable political ideas from the public mind. This was the beginning of not only the American hysteria for freedom, democracy and patriotism, but of all manufactured political opinion**, a process that has been operative ever since. Lippmann created these theories of mass persuasion of the public, **using totally fabricated “facts”** deeply insinuated into the minds of a gullible public, but there is much more to this story...

...Bernays [the father of American propaganda] was apparently stunned by the outstanding success of his democracy slogan and hate campaign in swaying public opinion in favor of war [WWI], and so immediately began to apply his model to peacetime enterprises. “In applying his uncle’s Freudian theories to deal with public conceptions, Bernays realised that provoking a fear of communism and then manipulating the public’s emotions toward it, could be a sure recipe for success in the widespread engineering of popular opinion and control of the population. This theory was so powerful that it became a weapon of its own during the cold war.” The term ‘propaganda’ had acquired a poor reputation so Bernays created and promoted the term ‘Public Relations’, but of course his processes were no such thing. **Bernays’ PR ethic involved psychological manipulation and control of the public mind through cleverly-devised – and thoroughly false – propaganda.**

We need to pay attention to this, because it is being rolled out ever increasingly as issues get worse in our home countries and other countries grow in strength. And there is a clear correspondence: The more exposed the powers-that-be become, the more intense becomes the propaganda aimed at alleged external influences. Such [propaganda efforts](#) were used by the Nazis against the Polish prior to the invasion of Poland, for example, and were quite effective. The same methods have been used on us:

Before the German attack on Poland on September 1, 1939, the Nazi regime launched an aggressive media campaign to build public support for a war that few Germans desired. To present the invasion as a morally justifiable, defensive action, **the German press played up “Polish atrocities,” referring to real or alleged discrimination and physical violence directed against ethnic Germans living in Poland. The press deplored Polish “warmongering” and “chauvinism,” and also attacked the British for encouraging war by promising to defend Poland** in the event of German invasion.

The Nazi regime **even staged a border incident** [false flag operation] designed to make it appear that Poland initiated hostilities. On August 31, 1939, SS men dressed in Polish army uniforms “attacked” a German radio station at Gleiwitz (Gliwice). The next day, Hitler announced to the German nation and the world his decision to send troops into Poland in response to Polish “incursions” into the Reich. The Nazi Party Reich Press Office instructed the press to avoid the use of the word war. They were to report that

German troops had simply beaten back Polish attacks, a tactic **designed to define Germany as the victim of aggression**. The responsibility for declaring war would be left to the British and French.

If we think our governments and press are too righteous to do such a thing, [think again](#). Two recent examples have been the '[babies in incubators](#)' tale prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War, and Saddam's [supposed weapons of mass destruction](#) prior to the US-led invasion of Iraq. There is actually a long [list of such efforts](#) that are used to mold public opinion [to the point where we accept invasion or intervention](#) in a foreign land in the name of 'humanitarian intervention', or as we know it now, the '[responsibility to protect](#)' doctrine that saw the destruction of Yugoslavia and Libya. And this brings us to a summation of the preceding points:

Neoliberalism, as practiced across much of the West, is at its end and is failing. Everyone can see it that has an eye to do so.

There is no more wealth to be extracted from the public by the few without the whole [Ponzi scheme](#) – which is otherwise illegal – being exposed and coming undone. In order to avoid a collapse, someone else must be blamed for it, as in nations who are strong, stable and have vast wealth, and who stand in the way of accessing that wealth.

Our modern media: When it comes to foreign policy, our mainstream media today is little more than a collection of 'news' outlets who propagate the stories the vested interests want us to hear. This is largely to be found in liberal media, though right wing media is equally complicit. Even papers like [The Guardian in the UK](#), once one of the most trusted truth-telling news services among liberal readers, has fallen into the same company of the purveyors of 'truth-telling' by intelligence services. For the Guardian, this has been the case since the middle of 2013. They were also complicit in taking down Corbyn in the UK under trumped up charges of anti-Semitism. The New York Times has long been a mouthpiece for propaganda in the US.

US media is particularly difficult to watch these days and unreliable for any reporting on foreign affairs. Even in domestic affairs it is highly polarized, with 'bombshell' reports and 'breaking news' keeping people glued to media devices in an effort to keep their ratings boosted. Clickbait is the new normal for 'news', sensationalized and frequently negative, 'Bombshells' have become '[bombholing](#)' in liberal media, while right-wing media has its efforts like the [Lincoln Project](#). The NYT had their '[1619 Project](#)' in response to the BLM protests in the US. And all along, last year there have been sensationalized stories and testimonies about the pros and cons of pandemic responses. The media in all its forms is manipulated constantly in an effort to shape public opinion.

**The propaganda list:** What follows is a quick listing of the major propaganda to which we are exposed in our mainstream media almost on a daily basis. All of these are either false, misreported to fit an establishment narrative or are amplified out of proportion. The hyperlinks take you to rebuttal or counter-narrative sites. My reason for listing these memes is twofold – firstly because we are lied to by our media on a regular basis and secondly because this sort of propaganda is intended precisely to engender fear, hatred, disgust and other negativity toward the nations in question. It is not aimed at the target countries. It is aimed at Western audiences. The reason for the negative reporting is to make it easier for an unsuspecting populace to agree to military or other conflicts with said nations. In other words, **this type of negative propaganda is aimed precisely at manufacturing consent for conflict and separating nations and peoples**. We don't have to agree with the governments (*regimes*, in Western reporting) of the target nations. We just need to know the truth so we don't involve ourselves in senseless and often bloody conflicts, ones that most often benefit only the 0.01% at the top of the food chain at the expense of misery and debt at home and abroad. The following list is a heads-up, neither for nor against nations, but rather anti-war.

We have the following propaganda memes which are constantly thrown at us, all of which are false, starting with China, since they are now seen as Public Enemy #1 in the US – [China's debt trap](#)

[diplomacy](#), China placing bounties on US soldiers in Afghanistan, the [Uyghur ‘genocide’](#) (also [here](#) and [here](#), as well as [eyewitness](#)), the [fight for ‘freedom and democracy’](#) in [Hong Kong](#), The [Tiananmen ‘massacre’](#), the [brutal suppression of Tibetans](#), China [hiding initial reports on the virus](#), the [‘China virus’](#), [horror tales about Falun Gong practitioners](#), even to the extent of [China’s interference in US elections](#). Then, with Russia we have [Russia-gate](#) and [Russian interference in US elections](#), the tragic tales of [the Skripals](#) and [Navalny](#), the [routine murder of journalists](#), Putin as [the richest man](#) in the world, [Putin as the latest ‘Hitler’](#), [Russia about to collapse](#), Russia nothing more than [a gas station masquerading as a country](#), [Russia’s ‘malign activities’](#), [Russia’s invasion of Crimea](#), [Russia as a dark and dystopic land](#), Russia placing bounties on US soldiers in Afghanistan.

Then, with Iran, we have their [rush to get the bomb](#), the brutal and [repressive regime](#), their [desire to destroy Israel](#), being a [state sponsor of terrorism](#), as [a supporter of Daesh](#), and Iran placing bounties on US soldiers in Afghanistan. Note: that very last item has been listed twice before. There were [no US deaths in Afghanistan last year](#). We probably don’t need to go on. We find very similar stories about [North Korea](#), [Venezuela](#), [Syria](#), [Bolivia](#), etc., yet almost no mention of [Israeli apartheid](#), the [brutality of the Saudi regime](#) and [other Gulf kingdoms](#), and US/UK [support for reactionary and repressive regimes](#) worldwide, and so on. Every nation produces its own propaganda, true, but we need to pay attention to our own and why. We need a good dose of truth these days now more than ever. For myself, I don’t particularly like being lied to or attempts at being emotionally coerced into bad decisions that cost a great deal of blood and treasure, and on all sides.

The propaganda campaign against China in the US has been very effective. Anti-China sentiment in the US is [the highest it has been in a long time](#), at some 70% of the population against. That is true to a lesser extent across much of the West, with Australia and the UK being close behind. Building on [what Obama started](#), Trump took tensions with China to a higher level, to the point where China expected the US to act against it militarily. The esoteric motto for China is “I indicate the way”. Well, they did indicate a way to handle the virus and their epidemic lasted just over a month, with no second wave. That was their way, being a more collectively inclined culture. We in the West chose not to take that road, and here we are, facing a bad recession at the very least, closed businesses, rental defaults, bankruptcies, food shortages and so on. But the causes of those factors in the West lie within our own borders. If these statements arouse anger for you, I’m with you, but maybe not for the reason you might feel anger.

**The bottom line** with the discussion of the pandemic and propaganda, preceding, is that next year (2022) will mark what may be a major crisis, as in military, and it is being prepared this year. We see it, for instance, in the Biden cabinet picks in the area of foreign affairs, populated now with people known for their Russia/China hawkishness – [Blinken](#), [Austin](#) and [Haines](#) – to point out a few. Now that we have this background, we can move on to a consideration of the year ahead, the Year of the Iron Ox.

### The Year of the Iron Ox

**Looking into the Void:** This year the Aquarius new moon, which marks the start of the lunar New Year, takes place in the Chinese lunar mansion called ‘The Void’, which in general is considered to be unlucky. The Jupiter ‘station’, as it is called (where the ‘Year Star’ – Jupiter – is located) for this year is called ‘Nu’, the ‘Weaving Maiden’. It, too, is considered to be unlucky. Venus (the Metal Star) and Mercury (the Water Star) are also in Nu, “presaging disputes and quarrels among the family”<sup>2</sup> Applied to foreign relations, this is not difficult to see. Biden has already called both Putin and Xi and laid out his tough line about the various domestic issues within those nations with which the United States takes issue. He has also issued what are essentially empty threats about a tough stand on territorial issues. This year will be a double-blind year (having no *li chun*), too, which is generally seen to be unfavorable, meaning plans will be more difficult to push forward.

There was a very interesting prognostication from the ancient Chinese Imperial astrology regarding the Jupiter/Saturn Great Conjunction, setting the tone for this year, which we had last year at the Capricorn solstice: “When the Wood Planet (Jupiter) is in conjunction with the Earth Planet (Saturn) there are interior problems (i.e. problems within the State) and famines. The leader will wage war unexpectedly and will be vanquished.”<sup>3</sup> Well, this is what we saw with the United States at the time, with long queues for food, with Trump being vanquished, with internal turmoil, talk of civil war and a riot at the Capitol. The conjunction took place in the lunar mansion ‘*Tou*’, the ‘Southern Ladle’, a.k.a. the ‘Head of the Tortoise’, since it is the 1<sup>st</sup> lunar mansion in the quadrant of the Black Warrior (Tortoise), the northern quadrant. This is the ladle shape we see in the constellation of Sagittarius.

*Tou* is said to be very fortunate,<sup>4</sup> though, and for the US, it may turn out to be so, or perhaps not. Time will tell. But, that lunar mansion is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> house for the US (finances) and now we are seeing relief measures being pushed through Congress, much to the consternation of Republicans – karma, we might say. Biden is not repeating Obama’s mistake of not taking advantage of having a full sweep of a Democratic-controlled House, Senate and Executive. For the East, the conjunction followed the more positive indicators for the Great Conjunction and *Tou*, and solidified its gains, with the RCEP, closer cooperation between China and Russia, and the ASEAN nations generally having a little economic growth during 2020 in spite of disruptions to trade and economies. We also saw the deposing of another leader, in Myanmar, which also has *Tou* in its 2<sup>nd</sup> house.

For the West, the lunar New Year began while still in the Iron Rat year, meaning decisions are still to be made about how to move forward. This harks back to what was described earlier about the tetragram for the Iron Ox year, in that this will be a year for gaining experience once decisions have been made. The lunar New Year for the East, including Oceania, began at 03:06 CST (UTC +8:00).

**The general element count** for the year is as follows:

**Wood:** 4 - Inventive, very creative, very artistic

**Fire:** 1 - Quiet, domestic

**Earth:** 4 - Expansive, bold

**Metal:** 3 - Sportive, astute

**Water:** 0 - Secretive, cautious, tentative

On the whole, then, this year will be quite creative for the East, expansive, bold and astute. The focus will be on domestic issues in the East, as we are seeing in Myanmar, and in China’s domestic policy. There are already bold plans in play in Russia to [develop its far eastern territory](#), focusing on foreign investment and further engagement with China. Russia is moving rapidly now toward realizing its soul motto, “I link two ways”, and it is doing this firstly because it sees the EU these days as being incapable of keeping its agreements and as an unreliable partner and secondly because of Russia’s growing relationship with China, which is spurring her interest in developing its vast resources and infrastructure in her far east. As [Pepe Escobar recently pointed out](#), for these reasons, Russia is driving the Western powers crazy. Russia is disengaging with the West, probably to return its attention when the Western nations have sorted through their growing problems.

The secretive side of the year, indicated by the lack of Water, will lie in efforts at regime change by the West towards our favorite ‘adversaries’. Overt conflict is not indicated this year to a great degree. That is likely to show next year and will be built up behind the scenes this year, as in rebuilding alliances that have suffered during the last four years, efforts at building blocs that can (the US hopes) push back against and stall China’s progress. And this brings us to why China is seen as Public Enemy #1 in the US. It is not because of any military threat. China has no interest in conquering nations militarily. Wherever the West loses influence, it is the Russians who step into the void, not the Chinese. Instead, it is the Chinese economic behemoth – economic competition, including technological advancement – that so threatens the economic dominance of the US. Added



to this is the steady bypassing of the US SWIFT system and [de-dollarization that a growing number of nations are starting to embrace](#), and we see why the propaganda against ‘belligerent nations’ is becoming so intense these days. The US is losing its dominance, and that simply cannot be tolerated by the regime in Washington, or their controlling oligarchy.

Given the growing animosity coming out of the Beltway, we can probably expect some sort of crisis next year. It will come probably in straits – the Taiwan Strait, the Strait of Hormuz, the Bosphorus, or perhaps even the Bering Strait. These are economic and shipping choke points and have enormous strategic significance. China is beginning to ship more across the Arctic routes via the Bering Strait that Russia is developing, increasingly bypassing the Malacca Strait. The Strait of Hormuz will remain important because of the failure of the war in Yemen to open a pathway to the Red Sea for the shipment of oil. The Bosphorus is the only transit route for the Russia Black Sea fleet into the Mediterranean. And if there are any attempts at independence for Taiwan or Western interests seeking to control the area, China has flatly stated there would be war in the Taiwan Strait. The latter is the most likely place possible for a major standoff between major powers, along the vein of the Cuban Missile Crisis we saw in 1962. The same remains true for the Strait of Hormuz, based in the 60-year cycle.

**Reviewing last year’s forecast:** In the forecast from last year we had the following:

- An important election in the US. Presidents elected in Metal Rat years have all died in office. We hope that is not the case this time, or maybe some people will, but it suggests that tensions within the US will be high. Two of those deaths were by assassination.
- Important treaties are signed, and important domestic legislation passed. (Civil Rights Act, Treaty of Waitangi, Panama Canal ceded to the US, Convention of London treaty, Treaty of the Hague, ICJ is founded at the Hague, OPEC is founded, torture banned in France)
- Important financial initiatives are implemented, and crashes occur (the gold standard is implemented, the South Sea bubble and market crash)
- Important rebellions are seen (Boxer rebellion, Gordon riots in England)
- Further setbacks for Turkey and crises in the Mediterranean (Oriental Crisis of 1840, the Damascus affair)

In order through the bullet points preceding, tensions in the US were indeed high, as we saw with the election partisanship, the Capitol riot, the plans to impeach Trump a second time and the Black Lives Matter riots. Important treaties were signed, as in the RCEP, the normalization process between Arab states and Israel, the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, and the Brexit agreements with the EU. The major financial movement we saw was due to the pandemic, with the US very close to Great Depression troubles, but also experiments with [national digital currencies](#). We also saw important rebellions, especially related to the national lockdowns and again, the BLM protests in the United States. And lastly, the Turks did see further setbacks this year, especially financially, and growing tensions with the United States. Where does this leave us?

It is clear, looking at the protests across the world, that economics will be a big focus in the year ahead. The Ox is endowed with financial acumen – the slow, steady process of building wealth and infrastructure. [Both Biden and Trump](#) in the US had vowed to rebuild American infrastructure. [Boris Johnson in the UK had said the same](#) for the UK. The Russians and Chinese are doing so, apace, while [Europe’s infrastructure](#) either stagnates or crumbles. Again, the failure of the West in the past two decades to address problems with infrastructure and economy goes back to the basic economic policy of Western nations and oligarchic control of finances and influence in national governments. This brings us to the economic changes that will be needed in order to rebuild all that lost or declining infrastructure and thus jobs and better prosperity for the West. It also brings us to our consideration of the so-called 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution and the WEF’s Great Reset.

**What exactly is the WEF?** It was founded on 24 Jan 1971, of interest the same year we saw a real economic reset – the Nixon Shock. This is the Davos crowd. [Their annual meeting](#) “brings together some 3,000 business leaders, international political leaders, economists, celebrities and journalists for up to five days to discuss global issues, across 500 sessions.” There are two items for thought here. Firstly, the [Nixon Shock](#) was a real great reset of world monetary policy. It was originally intended [to reform the Bretton Woods system](#), but failed to do so, after which world currencies became fiat currencies, based on trust rather than real value. Then, looking at the quote preceding, we see it is essentially a think tank, and a corporate think tank at that. Its members/funders include 1,000 corporate entities with a turnover of \$5 billion or more. Keep in mind, there were no banking crises during the Bretton Woods years (1945 – 1971). After the fiat currencies became the norm and trade barriers came down, we began to see bank failures and stock bubbles again along with the large-scale globalization of the world economy, which has had mixed results. But the one thing it has done, noticeably, has been to shift Western economies from being primarily industrial to being service economies. Industry and jobs got moved offshore, building infrastructure overseas and raising living standards in the developing world. For a while, globalization increased the wealth of Western nations, too, but since the 1990s we in the West have seen a definite tendency to stagnation, loss of services and less purchasing power. The WEF has played a role in that.

The biggest stakeholder in the WEF is the United States. Of the 3,000 attendees at the 2020 meeting, almost a quarter were from the US, followed in numbers by the UK, Switzerland, Germany and India. Russia does not attend to any great degree, nor does China. The main theme of the WEF is Western capitalism. The WEF is primarily an Atlanticist project. The ‘W’ in WEF might as well be rebranded and the organization called the ‘Western Economic Forum’. The main shtick the WEF is promoting these days is a concept they call [‘stakeholder capitalism’](#), which is yet another face to corporate capitalism and globalization. Stakeholder capitalism, like some of our governments, [did not get a very good report card](#) during the pandemic. Corporations are still guided by the whims of their shareholders, with profit as the bottom line. The world doesn’t appear to be ready for a true Aquarian version of stakeholder capitalism, which would take in the concerns of all parties – communities, employees, shareholders, suppliers and so forth. Then, there is the Great Reset. From what I can see, Schwab’s idea of a Great Reset is a lot of wishful thinking instead of anything of real substance. The wider world will not accept it, and it is doubtful much of the Western public would accept it. We covered the topic in [the Scorpio letter](#) last year. Of Klaus Schwab and the WEF [it has been said](#):

**The influence of Schwab on world affairs is of course grossly overestimated.** The WEF does not control its members and participants; however, it supports them, **serves as a consensus machine and confronts them with societal issues like climate change and social inequity.** Schwab co-authored a book published in July 2020 entitled 'Covid-19: The Great Reset'. I've read this book and - to be honest - in the book I didn't find anything that substantiates the Great Reset Conspiracy Theory. Schwab and his co-author, Thierry Malleret, simply voice their concern about the economical, political and societal impact of the virus. They warn for incremental measures and ad hoc fixes. They fear the climate and social crises will deepen and that measures taken to contain the virus will leave the world even less sustainable, less equal and more fragile. To prevent this from happening the authors call on the world community to put into motion a Great Reset.

"It's about making the world less divisive, less polluting, less destructive, more inclusive, more equitable and fairer than we left it in the pre-pandemic era," the authors clarify. In essence **there's nothing new here. Schwab has been expressing idealistic ideas like these for at least two decades now.** Naomi Klein, a well-known WEF critic, describes The Great Reset as "a coronavirus-themed rebranding of all the things Davos does anyway, now hastily repackaged as a **blueprint for reviving the global economy post-pandemic by seeking a better form of capitalism.**" As editor Andrew Stuttaford of the National Review puts it: "**COVID-19 is just the latest excuse for Schwab to renew his longstanding campaign to replace free market capitalism with stakeholder capitalism.**"

**There is no grand conspiracy** in the Great Reset. The conspiracy is that there *is* a grand conspiracy. From the same article:

Some think that it refers to global financial elites and world leaders that planned the pandemic, deliberately letting loose a coronavirus to cause conditions that will allow a restructuring of the economy, the financial system, politics and society. They refer to the pandemic as a 'plandemic'. Others refrain from any opinion about the cause of the pandemic and merely think the elites are just taking advantage of the virus. Many believe the main goal of the Great Reset is to take global control by instituting a totalitarian regime, and by extension, a so-called new world order. Such a regime would abolish personal ownership and property rights, send the military into cities, impose mandatory vaccination, and create isolation camps for people who resist.

I have another bridge for sale as well. The pandemic in all its inglorious presentations across society has been a mix of factors, human and environmental. We won't know where it came from maybe for years, if ever, but prevailing investigations reveal it to be zoonotic (from animals). This type of virus has been studied for years in bio-labs across the world. Different cultures responded to the disease differently as to how they confronted the infection. Various naysaying experts, apparently not experts in virology, have been giving their opinions on it, some of them hawking their own 'cures' or treatments. A few of those may have merit. Not being a medico, I am not in any position to say, aside from exercising common sense. This goes back to a quote in [the Aquarius letter](#) regarding specialists, in that specialists could stand to be more open to new approaches and come down from their ivory towers, while alternative therapists need to stop saying they have 'the cure' or 'the answer' to this virus and look at what the medicos on the ground are doing. Then, there are moneyed interests, corporate and individual, who have their own vested interests in the medical system, as well as the establishment in each nation that is always slow to change. Our political leaders, too, are much like the general populace (from which they come, after all), some of whom embrace some of the theories in the previous quoted paragraph and others who will follow the advice of professional physicians and scientific experts. And finally, there are the oligarchs (the 0.01%) behind the scenes who have made certain their interests have been looked after via their influence over political leaders and the media. There is not any one monolithic 'Cabal' running the show hoping for a one-world order. If there were, they are being increasingly disappointed, which we will get to shortly.

**Reading the riot act:** In closing out the consideration of the WEF, Vladimir Putin ([speech transcript](#)) and Xi Jinping ([transcript](#)) both addressed the latest virtual Davos crowd. Their message was plain enough. They spoke of multilateralism as the way forward instead of hegemony. The West can try to go ahead with their reset, but the greater part of Asia will not be participating. And no, China does not wield influence over the WEF. The WEF has tried to pull them into their orbit over the years, but without much success. Both China and Russia have state control over their essential infrastructure, are mixed economies, and having watched the West for years, want no part of our system. In fact, [Sergei Lavrov has just told the EU](#) if they want to slap more sanctions on key sectors of the Russian economy, they can all jump off the Kerch Strait Bridge. [The German Foreign Minister is 'disconcerted'](#) over Lavrov's remarks in a marked moment of cognitive dissonance.

Putin's speech was even more pointed than Xi's, rivalling his 2007 Munich speech. The attendees sniggered at him in 2007, thinking Russia to be weak. They aren't laughing now. After his Davos speech [80 of the attendees at the virtual meeting immediately signed up for private conferences with Putin](#), realizing the direction the world is headed. As well, [Xi's speech has been misinterpreted](#) as aligning with Schwab's ideas. Instead, Xi emphasized multilateralism, much as did Putin, in solutions to our pressing challenges – in other words, working from a place of consultation, embracing differences instead of challenging them: "To beggar thy neighbor, to go it alone, and to slip into arrogant isolation will always fail." In a word, forget the Great Reset. There is a growing groundswell against it worldwide, and Asia-centered nations are actively going their own way, a way about which the Global South is taking notice and increasingly embracing. This brings us to consider the year ahead.

**The outlook for 2021:** Looking back at the common themes for Iron Ox years and starting with epidemics, we will see intensifying efforts to nail down where the COVID-19 virus originated. [A new study](#) has found variants of the COVID-19 virus in bats and pangolins from across East Asia, specifically in Japan, Thailand and China. The latest news out of Wuhan, where a WHO team has been conducting investigations, has [largely ruled out the theory of a lab leak](#) causing the outbreak in China. A very similar virus has been found in horseshoe bats from Cambodia, [captured in 2010](#), which throws another interesting twist into theories and investigations. These other findings point to why virologists keep insisting the virus is zoonotic in origin instead of being manmade. If the Cambodia find proves to be a root variant of the current virus variants, then it will add weight to the current theory that the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 has been with us for some time and has mutated naturally over time. The search for the index patient ('Patient Zero') continues, while suspicions about and accusations against China will continue unabated. That was amply illustrated in [the latest NY Times piece saying the Chinese refused to hand over important data](#) from the Wuhan investigation over the last month, when in fact two of the scientists on that team quoted in the Times article have refuted the Times' claims, saying in fact the Chinese had been quite open and frank with the team. It is yet another example of narrative-steering against China.

Moving to East-West tensions, the British have decided in their wisdom to send a carrier flagship to the Taiwan Strait 'to ensure freedom of navigation' and to counter "[Beijing's 'increasingly threatening and aggressive' behaviour](#) towards the island of Taiwan. [The US has sent a carrier group](#) into the area as well. [The leadership in Taiwan do themselves no favors](#) by inviting Western intervention in what Beijing sees as an internal matter. It would appear that the [One-China policy](#) is about to be scrapped. The United States is now particularly hawkish on China, with an anonymous official having just published a piece called 'the longer telegram', which is little more than regurgitated wishful thinking and at worst, [a recipe for disaster](#). Taiwan has decided it has the leverage to force nations to concede policy due to its singular position as the nation that can produce the highest-end silicon chips, and has outlined a plan to build such a factory in Arizona. The US is of course happy to oblige. But it sets a dangerous precedent. China has flatly stated that any moves toward independence by Taiwan will be met with immediate invasion by China. It would be a last resort.

But the window on the West being able to coerce any change in mainland China and to secure Taiwan's tech against Chinese equivalency is fast disappearing. China is pouring billions into building the capacity to equal Taiwan's chip-making abilities, [though it would take close to a decade to do so](#). No doubt, China will soon succeed. This has the US very worried, because China's independence in that area marks a major strategic defeat for the US, in that it loses a significant leverage in trade relations with China and opens yet another market – a big one – for Chinese manufacturing and influence, not to mention home-grown chips that will not have Western [backdoors](#) in-built. This would represent a significant security hurdle for the Western powers to overcome. Such an outcome lies into the near-future, but it outlines a tech race that has military implications for Taiwan and increases tensions across the Strait. The outcome of any war over Taiwan is a foregone conclusion – Taiwan would be reabsorbed into China. There is no way feasible for Taiwan to be defended against China, for reasons outlined in [the Capricorn letter](#) (the section, "War, Anyone?"). The Chinese would rather do so via trade and cross-cultural exchange, thus ending an old cultural schism and ending [the Chinese civil war](#), which has not really ended. But as has been the norm for over a century, the West would rather see China under the Western thumb. This year will mark a profound change in East-West relations due to US/UK intransigence over China. The conflict is economic. Then, there is the Russian bear that the West would also like to see cowed.

Looking from the outside in, one has to wonder if the neoliberals in Washington and the technocrats in Brussels are either stupid, insane or both when it comes to Russia. (See [the latest Russia sitrep](#).)

[Considered opinion from the States](#) affirms that most members of Congress are just stupid when it comes to foreign policy. Who decides policy in Washington, which also carries on into Europe, Japan and Australia? [An interview a couple of years ago with Col. Larry Wilkerson](#) gave us some answers, in that it is really America's oligarchy that pushes US foreign policy. It was very easy to see with Trump, whose biggest donor was Sheldon Adelson and who pushed Trump in his Middle East policy. It is less obvious with Biden, but oligarchic influence still holds true, and the oligarchy controls Western media, which is also largely centered in the US when it comes to foreign policy. The legacy of American dominance in Europe and Japan since WWII is still powerful, though cracks have begun to appear.

To put the recent statement of Lavrov, mentioned before, in context, the EU wants to put additional sanctions on Russia over Navalny's supposed poisoning and the recent crackdown in Russia over protests calling for Navalny's release. This story will give an example of how 'evidence' is fabricated against alleged adversaries. Firstly, there have been violent crackdowns over the past couple of years in Western Europe and the US over numerous protests. The *gilets jaunes* protests in France have drawn heavy criticism for the [violent suppression methods used by police](#). Granted, there have been provocateurs on the yellow vests' side, too. But protesters have been severely injured, lost eyes and even been killed by police. The Russians [prepared a video of police violence](#) in Western nations against protesters. In Russia, police methods were comparatively tame at the recent protests. There were [stories about how police harassed and 'targeted'](#) (feel the propaganda hook?) [schoolchildren at the protests](#), while neglecting to mention that those children [were egged on to go to the protests via social media](#), while it is illegal for minors to go to such protests in Russia.

The calls by Western media and governments for Navalny's release ring with hypocrisy, while Assange rots in Belmarsh, for instance. Navalny is no hero. He is not even an opposition figure of any significance in Russia. He is certainly [not a prisoner of conscience](#). An Assange, Mandela or Manning he is not. He is, in the real world, a [convicted fraudster](#) and [purported CIA operative](#) who skipped bail, having spent months living lavishly in Berlin while he recuperated, supported by a Russian neoliberal oligarch. He is Russia's [equivalent to Juan Guaidò](#). The protests have gone, at least for now. Navalny will be gone for the next few years, [now enjoying his accommodation](#) in one of Russia's notorious (the emotional propaganda hook, again) prisons. [Navalny barely registers](#) on most Russians' concerns, yet to hear the Western press, he is a major figure in Russia and a real threat to Putin. Bridges, anyone?

In fact, the [Trump administration had been harder on Russia](#) than any administration since the end of the Cold War, putting the lie to the story that Trump was 'Putin's puppet'. That looks likely to continue under Biden. So, while the Europeans look to be intent on further alienating Russia, under baseless claims, the Biden administration, via the US-led NATO, and under the guise of supporting the Ukraine militarily has added more fuel to the fire. In a recent meeting between Jens Stoltenberg and Ukrainian PM Denys Shymhal, both men at a press conference were upbeat about the Ukraine joining the NATO. If it happens, it will be [the NATO road to perdition](#), as mentioned in a recent editorial. Keep in mind, the Russians lost around 25 million people fighting the Nazis in WWII, and now the NATO wants to include the Ukraine, which has [a very significant neo-Nazi contingent](#) and is strongly anti-Russian in the Western half of that nation. Russia will not take kindly to the Ukraine being a NATO member. The Ukraine is a red line for the Russians, much as Taiwan is for China. Georgia (the nation, not the state) is of the same nature of red line for Russia. Unfortunately, predictions from many commentators on foreign policy regarding the Biden administration are starting to appear true, in that this administration will be more hostile toward Russia and will continue the same foreign policies as the Trump administration, just [with a rainbow face](#).

Then, there is Iran. There was excited talk before the election in the US about Biden taking the US back into the JCPOA. That will not be happening now, since [Biden has declared Iran must stop enriching uranium before there will be any talk of dropping the sanctions](#). Enrichment will continue.

Biden looks to be continuing the same failed policy of maximum pressure against Iran that previous administrations have tried, and which has failed to produce any change in the Iranian state – this, after 40 years. US leadership has a real problem with history and learning from it, as Wilkerson stated in a previously linked interview. The Europeans are [starting to fall in line behind Washington](#), saying it is Iran who is making diplomacy more difficult. The solution is very simple. Washington must re-enter the deal, since it left unilaterally. But the hubris in Washington is such that to re-enter without Iran stopping enrichment is seen as weakness on the part of the Beltway. We may well see a repeat, but in another area of the world, of what we saw in 1962 (following our 60-year cycle) of the Cuban missile crisis. This brings us to the last point regarding a forecast based on past Iron Ox years – turmoil in the United States.

Two separate commentators have voiced the same concept but in different ways regarding US foreign policy. One of those commentators was Wilkerson, who called American policy one of ‘scramble’ as opposed to ‘blueprint’. [The other was by Sharmine Narwani](#), who put the matter in terms of efficiency. Both said the same thing, which is the Asian powers – namely the three main ‘adversaries’ in Washington’s books – have efficiency and a blueprint, a clear vision ahead for the future. The US and Western powers instead use ‘scramble’ and are inefficient. That ‘inefficiency’ applies also to the Gulf kingdoms and Israel. The basic meaning here is that the Asian powers will prevail in the long term. They have a clear plan, they act steadily in realizing it, and they are efficient in doing so. The results speak for themselves. The other powers, conversely, are adept at sowing discord and are reactive to the long-term plans of the other Asian powers. The West scrambles to keep its dominance, all the while its problems increase. The Asian nations, aside from India, show increasing stability. Iran is a strong, stable regional power, much as we are told otherwise. If events continue as they have been, it will remain the main regional power into the future. Both China and Russia view Iran in several respects as a reliable partner, as in keeping terrorism off their doorsteps, as an energy supplier, as a strong ally against Western meddling and encroachment and as a stabilizing force in the region. This is the view from outside the West. It is also increasingly the view among the Gulf States. Only Israel refuses to see Iran in any positive light.

All that said, a rather concerning development is that tensions with all three nations are being increased, mainly by Washington, the UK and Israel, which may lead us into dire straits, pun intended, as in the Malacca Straits, the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el Mandab Strait, the Bosphorus, the Taiwan Strait, the Kerch Strait and maybe even the Bering Strait, as mentioned before. All of these areas are growing world hot spots and need to be watched carefully. We can be certain that as the propaganda rises, there will be a focus on one of those areas. I don’t really expect anything this year in those places, but planning, as in ‘Iron Ox’ planning, is going on this year, to be executed in the next year, the Year of the Black Tiger.

Ending here with the United States, which we will address more in another letter, do we expect turmoil there? It probably goes without saying, but yes. There will be restiveness in the US. And foreign adversaries are just the ticket to distract from internal problems. Wealth inequality, lack of public support, cuts to social programs, cuts to regulations, lack of internal revenue, plummeting educational standards, racial and minority issues, immigration issues, environmental issues to address, corruption in government, the liberal stranglehold on the public narrative, lack of universal health care, political polarization, the tech behemoths (which we will address elsewhere), media manipulation and misinformation, the steadily surging surveillance state – why would there be any restlessness or need for change? Facetiousness aside, Biden would do well to focus solely on internal challenges rather than seeking to enforce a dying agenda overseas. It would be better for the US to let its empire collapse. That is my opinion, true, but it is shared by many.

The American empire can collapse by slow attrition or by a spectacular event that really drives the aforementioned issues home and causes a much needed introspection for Americans, saying that as an American. I fully expect the latter, and it can come in any of a number of ways – like a natural

disaster, a major military defeat, a financial collapse that requires pulling and pooling efforts back home, a significant enough number of the international community finally saying enough is enough or civil unrest of the type we saw rising 60 years ago, or perhaps a combination of the above. It is not that I wish for calamity. I don't. We just need smart people to come to positions of leadership and show the common sense that many Americans do actually have, believe it or not. It only takes a significant minority, focused and with a plan, to effect the needed changes. And it usually takes a crisis to bring those people forward.

As we move toward 2025 – there's that year again – if there is to be a softer rhythm after than point without much augmentation, then we don't have much time to affect it. We see that our world is at a turning point, which is clear enough, and that our economics of the past 40 years are failing us, at least in the West. With America's Pluto return coming next year, and in the US 2<sup>nd</sup> house, financial reform is on the way. And for those readers who were disappointed with Trump's acquittal on impeachment charges, that event signals a split in the Republican Party, the one that has primarily led our financial woes in the last decades, meaning they will not be the once formidable political bloc they have been. Hope springs eternal. The Democrats have followed suit, too, with the economics of the Republicans. Politics in the US is about to see a major shakeup. And if the [recent Game Stop event](#) gives an indication, the oligarchs in the US, also represented by Pluto have been shown that Americans are on to their game. Yes, change is coming to the US. Watch for it. Be ready for it.

Yes, the Iron Ox is a steadier expression than the Iron Rat, but that carries another meaning, too, as in there is planning going on behind the scenes to implement the directions chosen in the Iron Rat years. That is not always something to be welcomed, though it can be. In all, the Ox is steady, stable, persistent, creates momentum, has a plan and produces results. It is the slow, steady path that leads to success. Metal can cut, as well as bend and be used to create objects of great beauty. Yin Metal produces discourse, breathes life into plans (Yin Metal rules the lungs) and brings durability to the planning of the Ox. Big plans have been made in Iron Ox years. Kennedy started making plans to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade. He announced that plan the next year and it eventually became a reality. Teddy Roosevelt famous big stick quote produced changes in US foreign policies at his trust-busting efforts. [Famous first flights took place](#) and started the races to conquer the air and later space. Yet, we need to be aware, too, where those plans in Iron Ox years will lead us. Will they lead us to peace and prosperity, or to war and penury? It is up to us to be aware and to lead as we make our own plans going forward. The Iron Ox can become the Golden Ox if we think outside our current narratives and limited thinking, and lead us onward to the heights of achievements. We need a change of climate in our thinking, going back to the motto of this Ox, all the while taking care and realizing that adequate precautions prevent future calamities. Happy New Year, All! May this Iron/Gold Ox brings us a more peaceful and prosperous future!

New Year blessings,

Malvin

15 Feb 2021

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<sup>1</sup> Walters, Derek, *The Secrets of Chinese Astrology*, London: Octopus Publishing Group (2003) p.67

<sup>2</sup> Walters, *The Complete Guide to Chinese Astrology*, London: Watkins Publishing (2006), p. 102

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 205

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.99