Chinese New Year 2013 - Year of the Snake

Chinese New Year is the longest and most important celebration in the Chinese calendar. Chinese months are reckoned by the lunar calendar, with each month beginning on the darkest day. New Year festivities traditionally start on the first day of the month and continue until the fifteenth, when the moon is brightest. In China, people may take weeks of holiday from work to prepare for and celebrate the New Year.

Legend has it that in ancient times, Buddha asked all the animals to meet him on Chinese New Year. Twelve came, and Buddha named a year after each one. He announced that the people born in each animal's year would have some of that animal's personality. People who are born under the Year of the Snake are “deep thinker” individuals. They are very analytical when it comes to results, and they do not jump to conclusions. Your Chinese Zodiac is Snake if you were born in the following years: 2013, 2001, 1989, 1977, 1965, 1953, 1941, 1929, 1917.

Fireworks and Family Feasts
At Chinese New Year celebrations people wear red clothes, decorate with poems on red paper, and give children “lucky money” in red envelopes. Red symbolizes fire, which according to legend can drive away bad luck. The fireworks that shower the festivities are rooted in a similar ancient custom. Long ago, people in China lit bamboo stalks, believing that the crackling sounds would frighten evil spirits.

The Lantern Festival
In China, the New Year is a time of family reunion. Family members gather at each other's homes for visits and shared meals, most significantly a feast on New Year's Eve. In the United States, however, many early Chinese immigrants arrived without their families, and found a sense of community through neighborhood associations instead. Today, many Chinese-American neighborhood associations host banquets and other New Year events.

The lantern festival is held on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. Some of the lanterns may be works of art, painted with birds, animals, flowers, zodiac signs, and scenes from legend and history. People hang glowing lanterns in temples, and carry lanterns to an evening parade under the light of the full moon. In many areas the highlight of the lantern festival is the dragon dance. The dragon—which might stretch a hundred feet long—is typically made of silk, paper, and bamboo. Traditionally the dragon is held aloft by young men who dance as they guide the colorful beast through the streets. In the United States, where the New Year is celebrated with a shortened schedule, the dragon dance always takes place on a weekend. In addition, many Chinese-American communities have added American parade elements such as marching bands and floats.

FEBRUARY 2013 CALENDAR

American Heart Month
January Calendar

1 - Wear Red Day (US)
2 - Groundhog Day (US)
1-7 - Women’s Heart Week (US)
4 - World Cancer Day
10 - Chinese (Lunar) New Year
11 - Losar (Tibetan New Year)
12 - Lincoln’s Birthday
13 - Ash Wednesday (Western Christianity)
14 - Valentine’s Day (International)
14 - Nirvana Day (Buddhist)
18 - Presidents’ Day (US)
21 - International Mother Language Day
22 - Washington’s Birthday
23-25 - Purim (Judaism)
African American History Month
2013 Theme: At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality

The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington

Dr. Carter G. Woodson realized the importance of providing a theme that would focus the attention of the public when he established Negro History week in 1926. The ASALH dedicates the 2013 Annual Black History Theme to celebrating the anniversary of two important African American turning points - the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation and the 1963 March on Washington.

The Emancipation Proclamation, decreed by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1st, 1863, declared slaves in all confederate states then at war with the Union “forever free” and made them eligible for paid military service in the Union Army. Although it did not end slavery in the nation, it did transform the character of the war. After the proclamation was made, every advance of Federal troops expanded the domain of freedom and black men were allowed to serve in the Union Army and Navy. By the end of the war almost 200,000 black soldiers and sailors had fought for freedom.

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom took place on August 28th, 1963 in Washington D.C. More than 200,000 demonstrators took part in the walk. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, noting that the Emancipation Proclamation gave hope to black slaves. The following year Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as a concrete step towards fulfilling the promise of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Tips for Working with Healthcare Interpreters

- Greet the patient first, then greet the interpreter.
- Focus on and speak to the patient, not the interpreter.
- Speak at an even pace and pause often to allow the interpreter to interpret.
- Pay attention to the patient’s body language.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Use plain English, avoid slang, jargon, technical terms, and acronyms. These can be difficult to interpret.
- Remember that humor is very difficult to interpret!
- Pay attention to cultural issues.
- Assume that everything you say and everything that the patient says will be interpreted.
- If you need to talk directly to the interpreter about an issue of communication or culture, tell the patient first what you’re going to be addressing with the interpreter.
- Do not hold interpreter responsible for what the patient does or does not say; the interpreter is the medium of the message, not the source.
- Understand that in some languages the interpreter may need to “paint word pictures” of some of the terms you may use; this may take longer than your original speech.
- Many concepts you express have no linguistic or conceptual equivalent in other languages.

- If your patient is focusing excessively on the interpreter, you can use the following techniques to get the patient to focus on you:
  - Use the patient’s name;
  - Move your chair closer to the patient;
  - Make eye contact as often as possible;
  - Use facial expressions and body language that communicate interest and attentiveness.
- Make no assumptions about the patient’s education level. A patient’s inability to speak English does not necessarily equate with a lack of education.
- When working with the telephonic interpreter, remember that the interpreter is “blind” to whatever is happening in the room. Narrate for him/her what is necessary about what’s happening in the room.