



Lunar New Year

A book on Asian Culture from 1-StopAsia

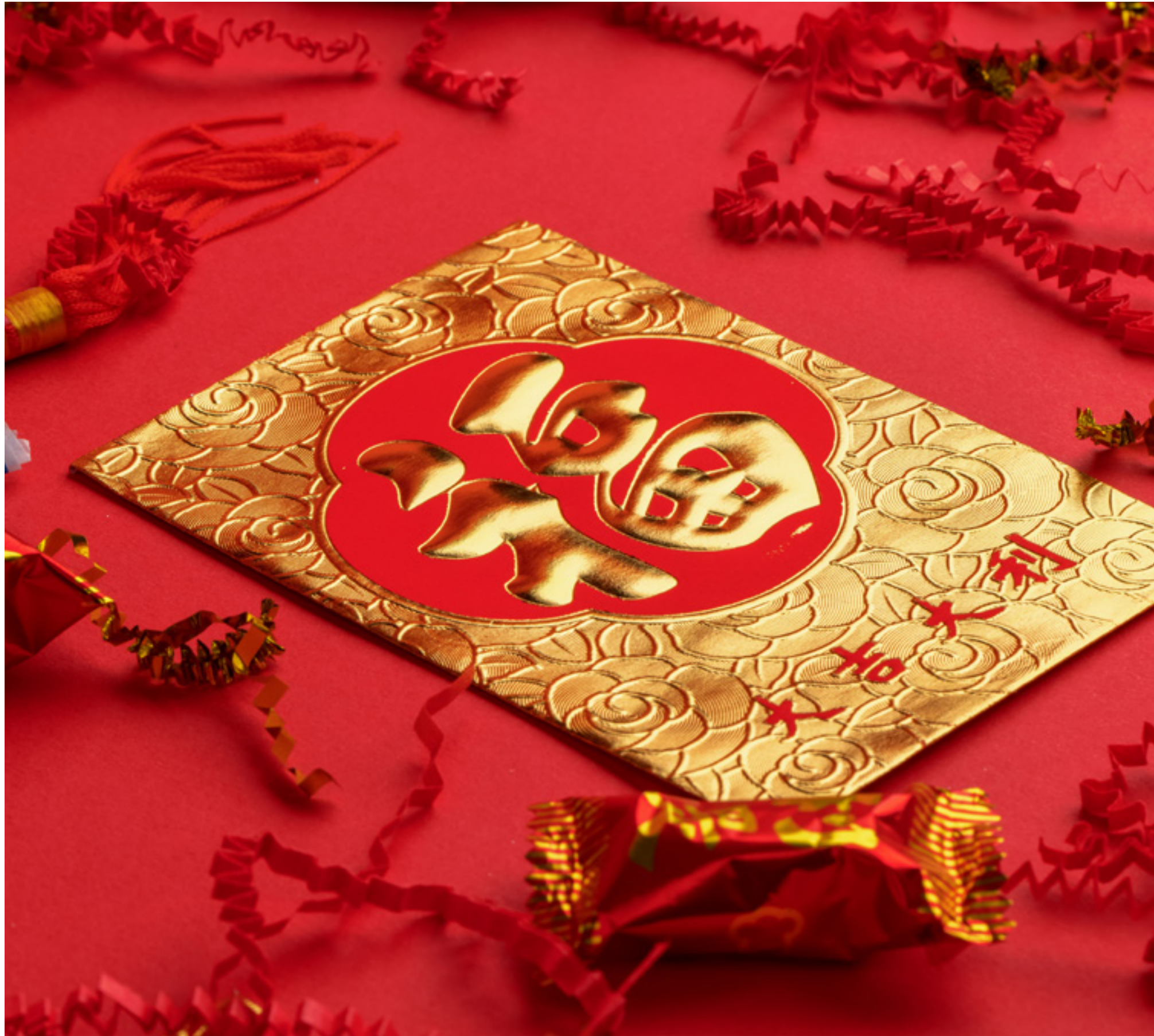
Introduction

Asia has always been a source for inspiration for us and this time we got inspired by one of the holiest periods of the year all around the world - New Year. And while we already celebrated and welcomed 2022 about a month ago, in some Asian countries it just started now. In this mini ebook we picked up only a few of the countries that celebrate the Lunar New Year according to the lunar calendar. Showcasing just a few traditions, greetings and some language peculiarities we hope you will enjoy it.

Happy New Year!

Gergana Toleva
(Global Marketing Manager)





China

We chose to start this book on Asian culture and in particular the Lunar New Year celebrations with China, which is probably the most well known country that celebrates it. Check out a few facts about it:

- Asking someone about their sign is a polite and sophisticated way to inquire about their age
- Usually, Chinese people would use the name of the animal in their well-wishes, so this year you may hear them say: “Hit the tiger’s luck” or “hold the tiger’s years” rather than just the standard greeting.
- One of the meanings of the word 虎 (tiger) is “brave without wisdom”

We’d like to send out wishes to everyone who celebrates this week - colleagues, friends and partners...Happy Year of the Tiger!

The Year of the Tiger: An Insider's View on the Semantics

Legend has it that a Chinese emperor, hundreds or thousands of years ago, gathered all the animals together and told them that if they were to complete his challenge, they would make it on his zodiac list. These animals had to compete with each other and only 12 would win. Much like the 12-character zodiac in Western culture. So, what happened in the end? Well, the rat, due to his cunning nature, snuck on top of the ox's back who carried him across the river. Once they were on land, the rat jumped off and was the first animal to make it to the zodiac. The second animal was the ox, while the third animal was the tiger. You may already know that 2022 in the Chinese zodiac is the year of the tiger. Being born in such a year means that the individuals born then will have a ferocious, magnetic, and strong nature, much like the animal itself. But we wanted to do something more original this year and what better way to do it than asking our colleagues in China to share some insights.

Meet & Greet with a Tiger

You most likely wouldn't have a problem with asking someone about their age might be to go around it the "Chinese" way by simply asking 你属什么? (Nǐ shǔ shénme?) which means "What sign are you?". This is a very delicate way to ask "How old are you?" and it is typical for the subtle and different approach Chinese culture has infused in their speech and communication.

But besides this we have a few curious and very cool facts to share with you on the way Chinese people will celebrate this year and with a little glimpse into their language, too.

The 虎 in Chinese culture symbolizes strength and is regarded as a very dangerous animal but at the same time it has another side, which considers their strength their weakness.





In fact, there is a very well-know Chinese idiom that says 骑虎难下 (qíhǔ-nánxià) and translated into English it means “If you ride a tiger, it is hard to get off”. In reality, it reminds us of the fact that once you gain speed, it might be difficult to stop halfway.

Another typical feature of the Chinese language is that sometimes a character can mean a few things based on the way it is used. And you can clearly see in the simple word 虎 (tiger), which if you use as noun means the animal tiger, while if you use it as an adjective means “brave without wisdom”. And who doesn’t want to be associated with such a wonderful sign from the zodiac, right?

Animals & New Year Greetings – why not?

A very fascinating feature we discovered from one of our colleagues, Darcy, is that actually in China when people greet each other for New Year, they often use the animal of the year in their greetings. If it is the year of the Rat it will be some expressions related to the most typical features of the rat. And because this year is the Year of the Tiger, we found out that locals will use expressions which include the tiger’s qualities in their greetings. So here is a special selection of a few expressions you can use if you have some Chinese friends and you want to greet them properly:

虎气冲天 /Tiger is soaring/ – Be powerful and successful in the Year of the Tiger

鼓足虎劲 /Gallop up/ – Wish you have the bravery and strength of Tiger

冲天虎气 /Soaring to the sky/ – May you have the strong power of Tiger

Now that we’ve equipped you with some nice well-wishes for your friends in China, it is time to go and celebrate.

But before we go...

There are a lot of ways to showcase the differences in languages and the Chinese New Year is a typical example of how Chinese language and culture are different from others. All these small nuances of a character changing its meaning or an expression hiding another meaning deep inside can be found in simple daily life examples. The thing is one’s eyes should be opened before looking for them because if you don’t know what you are looking for it is easy to miss it. Which would be a real pity because languages are such a beautiful universe everyone has to touch...

执个虎耳 – Hold a tiger ear...



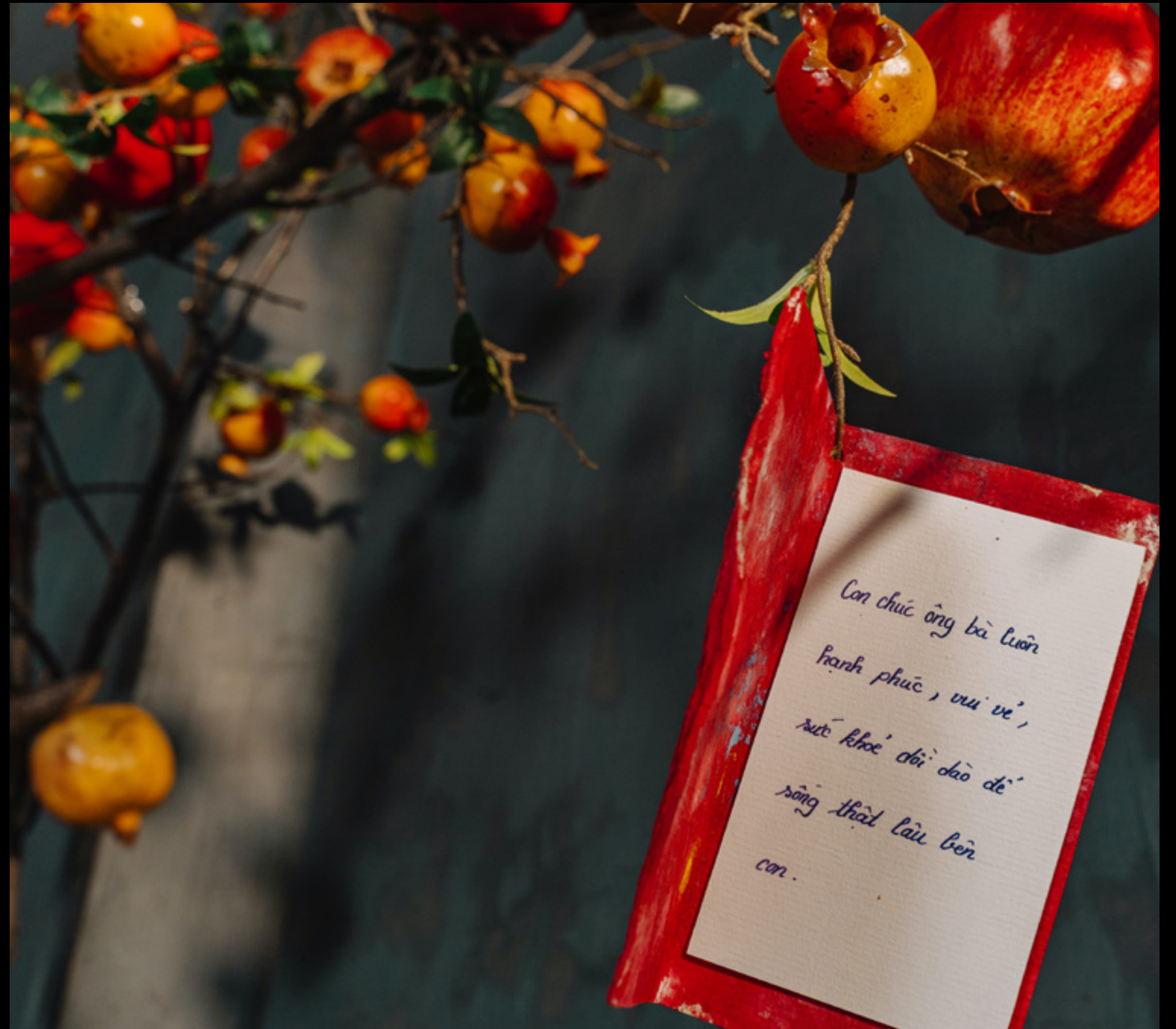
Vietnam

Next in line for our Lunar New Year week is a very interesting country with a language floating like a song—Vietnam. We've picked up a few curious habits of how Vietnamese people celebrate and honor Tết Nguyên Đán or Spring Festival as they call it:

- Vietnamese new year is based on a lunisolar calendar which is a calendar that uses the motion of Earth around the Sun and the Moon around the Earth
- Sweeping during Tết is taboo, as you may sweep your luck away

- Another common transition is to pay your debts before the Vietnamese New year, so they stay in the previous one.

And if you are still in the mood for some more traditions and curious facts, just flip to the next page, where you will see the next country we picked up.





South Korea

In South Korea the Spring Festival is called Seollal and it is time for being with your family. The celebrations include paying respect to the elderly in the family and a number of rituals are performed.

Koreans use many different ways to call the Spring festival along with its main name and we picked up three examples to show you in addition to Seollal 설날.

A curious thing about it is that in the past there were different dates for celebrating New Year all for various reasons. However, in 1989 the country administration accepted the strong public opinion and since then New Year in South Korea is celebrated according to the Lunar calendar as it was a long time ago.

And if you've been following us, you'll know that it is time to eat Teoguk and try out our original recipe! You can find the recipe [here](#)—free to download!



The first morning

원단 Wondan

The first new

원신 Wonsin

The head of the year

연수 Yeonsu



Mongolia

The New Year in Mongolia, called the Tsagaan Sar (Цагаан сар), is also known as the White Month and is celebrated for 3 days. But if you think that “White Month” refers to snow and lovely winter, here is a surprise for you. It actually symbolizes the upcoming Spring and the fact that products like milk, cheese and other dairy products become easier to have.

Tsagaan Sar is one of the most important and cherished holidays in Mongolia and the traditions vastly differ from one region to another. One of their traditional ways of greeting elders during the White Moon festival is by performing zolgokh (grasping the elder by the elbow for support).

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