

January 2025

Dear Living Tao family:

## Happy New Year 2025!

And soon, beginning on Wednesday January 29th, the Chinese 木蛇 Wood Serpent\*\* Year will commence. Let us begin by contemplating the meaning of the coming Lunar Chinese New Year with these thoughtful reflections and meditations:

This New Year represents a time of growth, creativity, and personal transformation. Wood Serpents are known for their resourcefulness and adaptability with an affinity for growth, stability, and new beginnings. We will focus on self-cultivation and personal growth, fostering relationships and nurturing inner strength.

The Universal Message is one of Renewal and Hope— highlighting values of resilience, wisdom, and thoughtful progress. As families and communities come together, the New Year offers opportunities to embrace these qualities, symbolizing the beginning of a fresh journey marked by reflection and renewal.

Chinese New Year brings the warmth of family, the joy of tradition, and the hope for a prosperous future. Celebrating with color, food, and festivity— honoring heritage and fostering unity. Whether gathering around a shared meal or lighting lanterns and fireworks, the New Year encourages us all to move forward with optimism, joy, and light, welcoming the blessings and the opportunities to be embraced.

More than ever the world everywhere suffers the miseries of division, never-ending warfare, and inhumane aggressions. Additionally, the global climate changes result in natural disasters, plaguing unfortunate peoples and nations with loss, famine, and poverty. It is high time to pay attention and be aware of our good fortunes, learning anew how to share, contribute, be content and be very very grateful.

On the bright side, I want to share with you some good happenings. First, the joy of my extended “Swan Song”, having been invited to play the Taoist narrator in a performance of the opera, "Dream of the Red Chamber" produced by the University of Minnesota in collaboration with the Chinese Heritage Foundation.



More about the production, photos and a review of the performance can be found on the Living Tao website under [NEWS](https://livingtao.org/news/dream-of-the-red-chamber-review/). <https://livingtao.org/news/dream-of-the-red-chamber-review/>



*Photos by Joanna Hunter & Tysan Dutta*

Eight members of my immediate family, representing three generations, all managed to be there for the final performance--Blessings!



Immediately following that, I flew to Esalen Institute to be with many faithful international friends who reunite annually in Big Sur, with the additional bonus having younger daughter Tysan joining/assisting me there. Further blessings!



*First night power outage, improvising with endarkenment towards enlightenment!*



***At Esalen—"Another Lousy Sunset in Paradise"!***



***Wake up to Sunrise on the Tai Ji Deck!***





We will resume the Winter Zoom Series starting on February 8<sup>th</sup>, the 2nd Saturday, continuing in March and April of 2025; then, in-person seminar in the month of May in Urbana, Illinois. June and July are free for summer activities on our own, to look forward to the August weeks in-person at the River House in Gold Beach. It will coincide with my 88th year on the 8th month, also 48th year of Living Tao Foundation's inception. Many of our international Tai Ji friends share with me the excitement of this most auspicious Number 8 for a timely reunion in Gold Beach this summer! Some of you were at my 70th gathering will always remember that unbelievable festivity at that "River Town" by the sea with so many friends coming from 17 countries—once in a lifetime occasion and impossible to repeat or top again.

Instead, we will humbly hope for the return of some old friends finally able to travel and be with us. Do keep checking for updates on our website and stay tuned and in touch as much and for as long as we mutually are able to. As always, So Much to keep up and share—equally of good and bad fortunes—to continue feeling grateful.

**Chi-EERS!**

**Chungliang**

**\*\*More about the 木蛇 Wood Serpent:**

木蛇 Wood Serpent 天干 乙 木 Heavenly Branch is Wood 地支 巳 火 Earthly Branch is Fire 木生長 Wood is Growth 火熱情活力 Fire is Warm Feeling and Liveliness 蛇動如水 軟無骨 Serpent moves like water Bonelessly yielding 木火 智慧光明 Wood and Fire signify Wisdom and Brilliance 木火通明 Flowing through brightly 青蛇 Green Serpent 陰木 Yin is Wood 陽火 Yang is Fire

P.S. Recently I revisited Leonard Bernstein's operetta CANDIDE based on the 1759 story by Voltaire. These two songs are most comforting to me—You may also find it so as well.

Candide - "The best of all possible worlds" and "Make our garden grow"  
(Groves/Chenoweth/LuPone/Allen/Blumenkrantz/LaManna)

