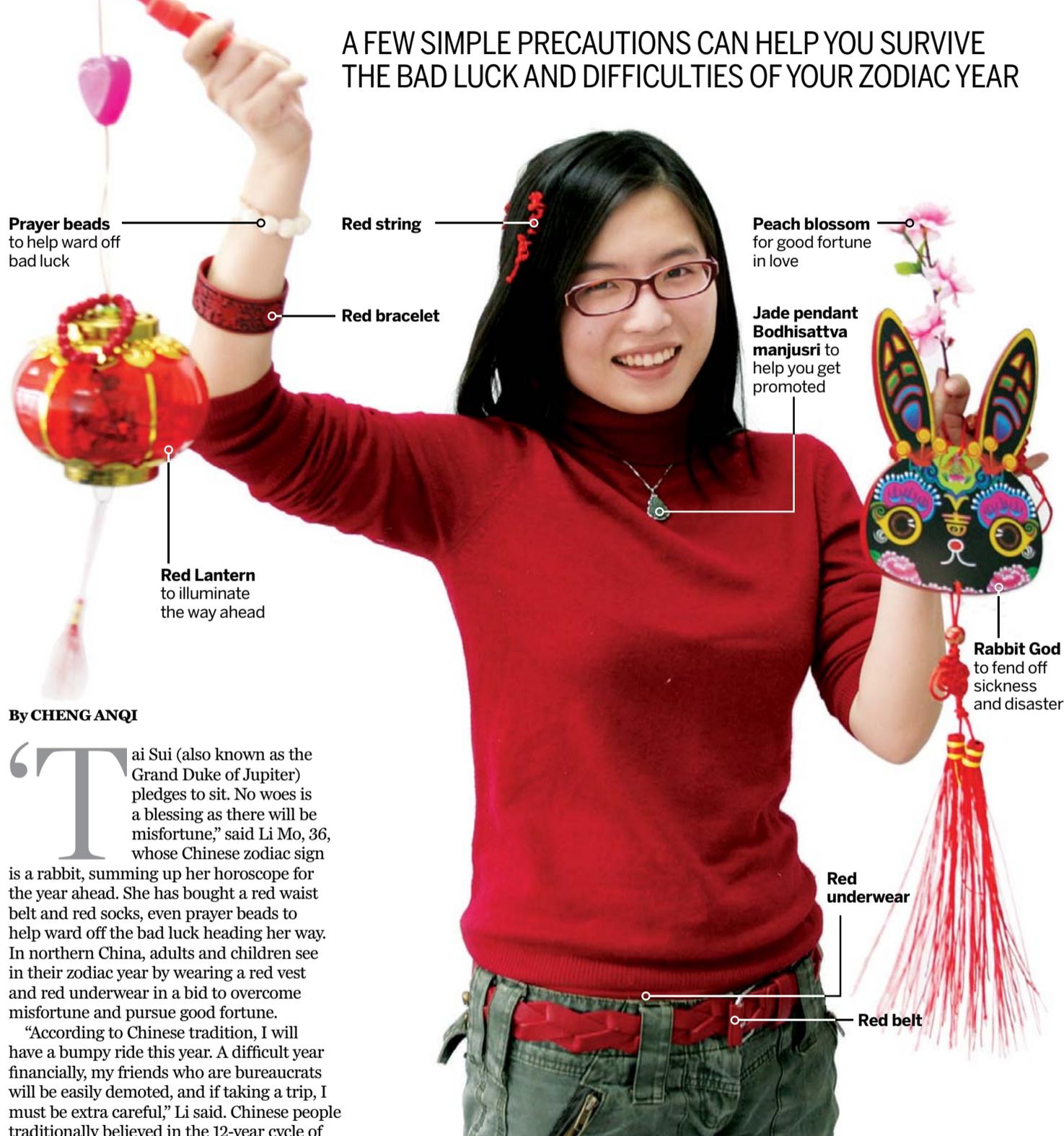


A DATE WITH FATE

A FEW SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS CAN HELP YOU SURVIVE THE BAD LUCK AND DIFFICULTIES OF YOUR ZODIAC YEAR



Prayer beads
to help ward off bad luck

Red string

Peach blossom
for good fortune in love

Red bracelet

Jade pendant Bodhisattva manjusri
to help you get promoted

Red Lantern
to illuminate the way ahead

Rabbit God
to fend off sickness and disaster

Red underwear

Red belt

By CHENG ANQI

Tai Sui (also known as the Grand Duke of Jupiter) pledges to sit. No woes is a blessing as there will be misfortune," said Li Mo, 36, whose Chinese zodiac sign is a rabbit, summing up her horoscope for the year ahead. She has bought a red waist belt and red socks, even prayer beads to help ward off the bad luck heading her way. In northern China, adults and children see in their zodiac year by wearing a red vest and red underwear in a bid to overcome misfortune and pursue good fortune.

"According to Chinese tradition, I will have a bumpy ride this year. A difficult year financially, my friends who are bureaucrats will be easily demoted, and if taking a trip, I must be extra careful," Li said. Chinese people traditionally believed in the 12-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac. Each year of the 12-year cycle is named after an animal. Each animal has a different personality and different characteristics that are believed to be the traits of a person born in that year and which determine their success, and happiness.

In this way a person's fate is determined at birth, so their zodiac year is considered their year of fate.

Bai Yansong, a prominent Chinese news anchor, known for his articulate and confident style, recalled a year of fate he endured when he appeared as a guest on a TV talk show in Shanghai.

"I had a very tough time during my last zodiac year of birth," said the 44-year-old, who disappeared from public view for a year after achieving huge success in the live telecast of 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

"I was 36 years old then and I suddenly seemed to see the finishing line. Before that, I would seldom think of death. But during my zodiac year of birth, I suddenly thought that half of my life had passed. I felt depressed and gradually understood what a mid-life crisis was."

Bai admitted that he suffered from serious insomnia during the year and his weight dropped from 80 to 55 kilograms. He communicated with his wife by writing notes.

"But fortunately, I got over the difficulties without taking a single sleeping pill. Everyone will meet their low point in life. You just have to stay strong," he said.

According to *Hurdling Barriers in the Year of Fate*, an essay by China's noted writer Liu Xinwu, after experiencing the five barriers,

which are repeated once every 12 years, people become increasingly calm.

In the Chinese zodiac, the first year of fate is reached at age 12, when a person leaves childhood and starts to become an adult. If they are expected to conform to a rigid identity or excessively hedged in by rules and regulations, they are likely to behave badly, becoming angry and restless.

At the age of 24, people encounter another wave of difficulties as they try to make their way in society. They can easily experience confusion or go to extremes as they try to find their path in life.

The third and fourth phrases may be generalized as a period in which people mature and achieve their position in society, but are apt to make mistakes due to self-aggrandizement.

TIPS

THREE POPULAR WAYS TO WARD OFF BAD LUCK IN THE YEAR OF THE RABBIT

- Wearing red is a traditional way to fend off bad luck during a zodiac year of birth, as red is the color of happiness and prosperity in China.
- Tai Sui is the deity in charge of the current year, based on the Sixty Cycles, He rules over all the deities. People try to avoid offending and seek to pacify the Tai Sui of the year by hanging a Tai Sui tips bag, which contains items to exorcise evil spirits and counteract evil forces. These can include wormwood, a five emperors' jade pendant with mantra, a seven-gem stone, and five-elements fate-changing beads, and an individual's date of birth, eight characters of a horoscope and name on a red "prayer card for good fortune".
- Paying one's respects to Tai Sui is a common method for mitigating disasters in the zodiac year of birth, which is generally carried out on the eighth of the first lunar month. Doing this at a Tai Sui temple is slightly different from doing so in another temple. You should first prepare a small Tai Sui bag before entering the temple. You should put your name, age and birth date on it to notify Tai Sui whom he will bless. Then, offer incense to the statue of Tai Sui and finally burn the bag.



LI XIAO GUO / XINHUA

Wearing red in a zodiac year of birth is believed to bring good luck.

By age 60, while indulging in the past, people may become set in their ways and hate to see any changes.

Lu Yue, a psychological consultant at PKU Boss Psychological Consulting Center compares the years of fate cycle to the Buddhist concept of samsara, or continual flow.

"It is like snake sloughing its skin, meaning that growth is often connected with dangers and renewal."

"The year of fate reminds people to always be in awe of nature and the mysterious. We need to know there are things out of our control," she added.

No matter whether you wear red underwear or make a Tai Sui tips bag, the best way to live your year of fate is by being active and optimistic.