

Shou Sui

守岁(守歲) (*Shou Sui*) occurs when members of the family gather around throughout the night after the reunion dinner and reminisce about the year that has passed while welcoming the year that has arrived. Some believe that children who *Shou Sui* will increase the longevity of the parents.

一夜连双岁，五更分二年 means that the night of New Year's Eve (which is also the morning of the first day of the New Year) is a night that links two years. 五更 (*Wu Geng* – the double hour from 0300 to 0500) is the time that separates the two years.

Symbolism

During these 15 days of the Chinese New Year one will see superstitious or traditional cultural beliefs with meanings which can be puzzling in the eyes of those who do not celebrate this occasion. There is a customary reason that explains why everything, not just limited to decorations, are centered on the colour red. At times, gold is the accompanying colour for reasons that are already obvious. One best and common example is the red diamond-shaped posters with the character 福 (pinyin: fú, Cantonese and Hakka: Fook), or "auspiciousness" which are displayed around the house and on doors. This sign is usually seen hanging upside down, since the Chinese word 倒 (pinyin: dào), or "upside down", sounds the same as 到 (pinyin: dào), or "arrive". Therefore, it symbolizes the arrival of luck, happiness, and prosperity.

Red is the predominant colour used in New Year celebrations. Red is the emblem of joy, and this colour also symbolizes virtue, truth and sincerity. On the Chinese opera stage, a painted red face usually denotes a sacred or loyal personage and sometimes a great emperor. Candies, cakes, decorations and many things associated with the New Year and its ceremonies are coloured red. The sound of the Chinese word for "red" (紅) is "hong" in Mandarin (Hakka: Fung; Cantonese: Hoong) which also means "prosperous." Therefore, red is an auspicious colour and has an auspicious sound.

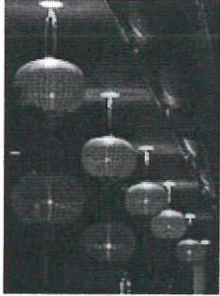

Flowers

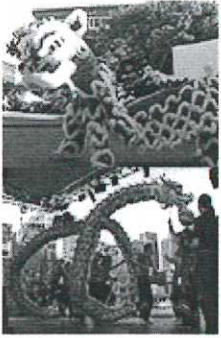

The following are popular floral decorations for the New Year and are available at new year markets.

Floral Decor	Meaning
<u>Plum Blossom</u>	symbolizes luck
<u>Kumquat</u>	symbolizes prosperity
<u>Narcissus</u>	symbolizes prosperity
<u>Chrysanthemum</u>	symbolizes longevity

<u>Bamboo</u>	a plant used for any time of year
<u>Sunflower</u>	means to have a good year
<u>Eggplant</u>	a plant to heal all of your sickness
<u>Chom Mon Plant</u>	a plant which gives you tranquility

Icons and ornamentals

Icons	Meaning	Illustrations
Fish	The <u>Koi fish</u> is usually seen in paintings. Decorated food depicting the fish can also be found. It symbolizes <i>surplus</i> or <i>success</i> .	
<u>Lanterns</u>	These lanterns differ from those of <u>Mid Autumn Festival</u> in general. They will be red in colour and tend to be oval in shape. These are the traditional Chinese paper lanterns. Those lanterns, used on the fifteenth day of the Chinese New Year for the Lantern Festival, are bright, colourful, and in many different sizes and shapes.	
Decorations	Decorations generally convey a New Year greeting. They are not advertisements. <u>Chinese calligraphy</u> posters show <u>Chinese idioms</u> . Other decorations include a <u>New year picture</u> , <u>Chinese knots</u> , and <u>papercutting</u> and <u>couplets</u> .	

<p><u>Dragon dance</u> and <u>Lion dance</u></p>	<p>Dragon and lion dances are common during Chinese New Year. It is believed that the loud beats of the drum and the deafening sounds of the cymbals together with the face of the dragon or lion dancing aggressively can evict bad or evil spirits. Lion dances are also popular for opening of businesses in <u>Hong Kong</u>.</p>	
<p>Fortune gods</p>	<p><u>Cai Shen Ye</u>, <u>Che Kung</u>, etc.</p>	

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_New_Year)