

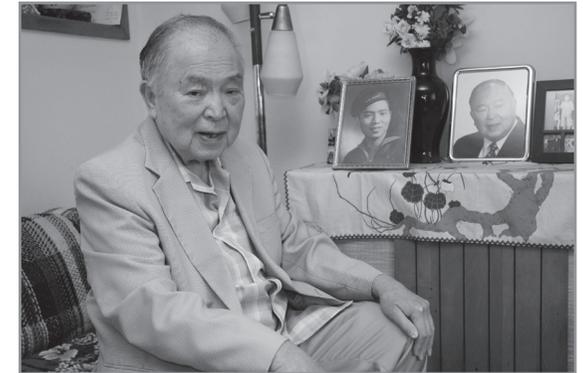
Journey with Newspapers In Education and Wing Luke Museum to Celebrate the New Year!

Asian Americans bring with them many holidays from their ancestral homelands. One of the most important celebrations is the New Year.

Learn about Chinese New Year from Jimmy Men Yem Wong, who came to Seattle in 1939 at the age of 19. Jimmy served in World War II and raised his family in the U.S., including his daughter Chris Chinn, who relates his stories about his childhood in China.

NEW YEAR TRADITIONS

As a kid, Jimmy remembers feasts on New Year's Eve which included special foods like goose, taro, tofu soup, oysters, lettuce and tay (sweet pastry.) New Year's Day started with a bang. "They have fireworks," Jimmy recalls, "at 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning!"



Jimmy Wong. Photo by Dean Wong, Wing Luke Museum Collection.

Parents and grandparents also gave children red envelopes with money inside, along with a traditional greeting of good luck and prosperity: *gung hay faat choy*.



Historic Lion Dance Circa 1920. Photo courtesy of Willard Jue.

In China, the new year is based on the lunar calendar, which follows the phases of the moon. Chinese New Year falls on the second new moon after the winter solstice, which occurs between mid-January and mid-February.

In Jimmy's village, the celebration lasted for days. Family members took time off work to be home for the holidays. On the second day of the year, a lion dance was performed to scare bad spirits away and bring prosperity to local businesses. The holiday often ended with a parade led by a dragon, one of the 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac. The dragon is believed to bring wisdom and good fortune in the coming year.

BEING UNIQUELY AMERICAN

When Jimmy came to the U.S., he joined the Wong Family Association, a social network that helped Chinese immigrants adapt to their new country. The group hosted an annual New Year's Eve banquet on December 31, and celebrated again for Lunar New Year.

Jimmy continued many traditions from his village, which he celebrates to this day. In 2014, Chinese New Year falls on January 31. Jimmy looks forward to spending it with several generations of his family, including his great-grandchildren, and handing out lots of lucky red envelopes!

LOOKING AT YOUR OWN FAMILY TRADITIONS

What family traditions do you celebrate? Next time you observe a family tradition, make sure you ask your parents or an elder in the family about the history and meaning behind the celebration!



ANIMALS OF THE CHINESE ZODIAC

The Chinese lunar calendar is divided into 12-year cycles, with an animal representing each year in a cycle. Find the year you were born and the animal that matches that year.

Rat	1984, 1996, 2008
Ox	1985, 1997, 2009
Tiger	1986, 1998, 2010
Rabbit	1987, 1999, 2011
Dragon	1988, 2000, 2012
Snake	1989, 2001, 2013
Horse	1990, 2002, 2014
Sheep	1991, 2003, 2015
Monkey	1992, 2004, 2016
Rooster	1993, 2005, 2017
Dog	1994, 2006, 2018
Pig	1995, 2007, 2019



Kick off Lunar New Year in the Chinatown-International District

10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Opening Celebration – Saturday, Jan. 25
Wing Luke Museum
8th Avenue South and South King Street
wingluke.org

11 a.m.
11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Lion Dance
Lunar New Year Fair with zodiac scavenger hunt, crafts, games and more!

Celebrate Year of the Horse with a private tour. Customized for families, students and other groups, experience New Year traditions through cultural art activities and interactive storytelling. For more info, contact tours@wingluke.org or 206.623-5124 ext 133.

