

Use the word given in capitals to form a word that fits the gap.

## TABOOS AND SUPERSTITIONS OF CHINESE NEW YEAR



### House Cleaning

The entire house should be cleaned before New Year's Day. On New Year's Eve, all brooms, brushes, dusters, dustpans and other cleaning (1) \_\_\_\_\_ [EQUIP] are put away. Sweeping or dusting should not be done on New Year's Day for fear that good fortune will be swept away. After New Year's Day, the floors may be swept. Beginning at the door, the dust and rubbish are swept to the middle of the parlour, then placed in the corners and not taken or thrown out until the fifth day. At no time should the rubbish in the corners be trampled upon. In sweeping, there is a superstition that if you sweep the dirt out over the threshold, you will sweep one of the family away. Also, to sweep the dust and dirt out of your house by the front (2) \_\_\_\_\_ [ENTER] is to sweep away the good fortune of the family; it must always be swept inwards and then carried out, then no harm will follow. All dirt and rubbish must be taken out the back door.

### Bringing In the New Year and Expelling the Old

Shooting off (3) \_\_\_\_\_ [CRACKER] on New Year's Eve is the Chinese way of sending out the old year and welcoming in the New Year. On the (4) \_\_\_\_\_ [STRIKE] of midnight on New Year's Eve, every door in the house, and even windows, have to be open to allow the old year to go out.

### New Year Activities Set Precedent

All debts have to be paid by this time. Nothing should be lent on this day, as (5) \_\_\_\_\_ [ONE] who does so will be lending all the year. Everyone should refrain from using foul language and bad or (6) \_\_\_\_\_ [LUCK] words. Negative terms and the word "four" (Ssu), which sounds like the word for (7) \_\_\_\_\_ [DIE], are not to be uttered. Death and dying are never mentioned and ghost stories are totally taboo. (8) \_\_\_\_\_ [REFER] to the past year are also avoided as (9) \_\_\_\_\_ [THING] should be turned toward the New Year and a new (10) \_\_\_\_\_ [BEGIN]. If you cry on New Year's Day, you will cry all through the year. Therefore, children are tolerated and are not spanked, even though they are (11) \_\_\_\_\_ [MISCHIEF].

### Personal Appearance and Cleanliness

On New Year's Day, we are not supposed to wash our hair because it would mean we would have washed away good luck for the New Year. Red (12) \_\_\_\_\_ [CLOTH] is preferred during this (13) \_\_\_\_\_ [FEST] occasion. Red is considered a bright, happy colour, sure to bring the (14) \_\_\_\_\_ [WEAR] a sunny and bright future. It is believed that (15) \_\_\_\_\_ [APPEAR] and attitude during New Year's sets the tone for the rest of the year. Children and (16) \_\_\_\_\_ [MARRY] friends, as well as close relatives are given *lai see*, little red envelopes with crisp one-dollar bills inserted, for good fortune.

### More New Year Superstitions

For those most superstitious, before leaving the house to call on others, the almanac should be consulted to find the best time to leave the home and the (17) \_\_\_\_\_ [DIRECT] which is most auspicious to head out. The first person one meets and the first words heard are significant as to what the fortunes would be for the entire year. It is a lucky sign to see or hear songbirds or red-coloured birds or swallows. It is considered unlucky to greet anyone in their (18) \_\_\_\_\_ [BED] so that is why everyone, even the sick, should get dressed and sit in the living room. Do not use knives or scissors on New Year's Day as this may cut off fortune. While many Chinese people today may not believe in these do's and don'ts, these traditions and customs are still practised. These traditions and customs are kept because most families realize that it is these very traditions, whether believed or not, which provide (19) \_\_\_\_\_ [CONTINUE] with the past and provide the family with an (20) \_\_\_\_\_ [IDENTIFY].