

# Chinese New Year



A simple musical play for primary schools,  
suitable for an extended assembly lasting 20-25 mins  
Perfect for Dance/Drama Clubs

**Cast:** (M= a Male Part F= a Female Part) Unmarked= any gender

Dog..... Pig ..... Rat ..... Ox (M).....  
Tiger (M)..... Hare ..... Snake (F).....  
Horse (F)..... Ram (M)..... Monkey (F)..... Cockerel (M).....  
Dragon (several children) .....  
Gods 1, 2, 3 and 4 .....  
Dancers .....  
Peasants .....  
Narrator 1..... Narrator 2.....  
Two people to operate the “river” .....

**Evaluation**

## Suggested Props:

Masks/Face Paints for Animals and Gods  
Large dragon costume (handled by several children)  
Long piece of light blue cloth which is shaken to represent the water in the river  
12 Medals for the winners of the race.

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**Guidance:** A Performance Licence is required before rehearsals take place. On purchase, a performance licence is normally granted free of charge for one production of up to 3 non-commercial performances by a school or drama club. (Small scale school fund-raising is not commercial use.) For commercial use at very cheap rates please email first. You may adjust the script and lyrics to suit your purposes, but we retain the copyright on altered texts.

The script is supplied on the CD for you to customize.

Free Sheet music and songsheets for OHP are also on the CD.

The free sheet music is electronically generated and is only intended as a rough guide.

The CD and other materials must not be resold, loaned or passed on to a third party without permission.

**CD Listing:**

Track 1.....Gods Sound Effects

Track 2.....China Song (“Shall We Choose the Dog....?”) without vocals

Track 3.....Dragon Dance Music

Track 4.....Race Song (One Day in Ancient China) without vocals

Track 5.....China Song (“Shall We Choose the Dog....?”) with vocals

Track 6.....Race Song (“One day in Ancient China”) with vocals

**Chinese New Year**

**Narrator 1:** Our tale is based on a famous story from China. It is thousands of years old and yet it is still told today to celebrate Chinese New Year. Long ago in Ancient China, the new year was fast approaching. Twelve animals were arguing. (*Enter animals with movement as they are named.*) There was a dog, a pig, a rat, an ox, a tiger, a hare, a snake, a horse, a ram, a monkey and a cockerel. They thought the New Year should have a name. They were arguing because each animal wanted the year to be named after himself. (*Animals make loud animal noises*)

**Narrator 2:** (*Individual animal noises on cue*) What a noise there was! There was growling and barking, snorting and snuffling, squeaking and scratching, mooing and grunting, bellowing and stamping, neighing and clip-clopping, whining and bleating, chattering and shouting, whistling and crowing! In the end they disturbed the gods!

\*\*\*\*\* CD Track 1: (Gods Sound Effects) \*\*\*\*\*

*Gods appear (Peasants also appear, and later join in the singing)*

**God 1:** Whatever is the matter with those animals?

**God 2:** What a racket! Let's go and see.

**God 3:** (*to cockerel*) Why are these animals making so much noise?

**Cockerel:** The new year is rapidly approaching. They want the new year named after themselves. But of course, the choice is obvious.

**God 4:** Is it? What do you mean?

**Cockerel:** The new year should be named after me of course! It should be the Year of the Cockerel. After all, everybody knows how clever I am! I proudly announce each new day with my cock-a-doodle-do!

(*Animals disagree loudly*)

**God 1:** Quiet! Quiet! We command you to be quiet!

**God 2:** What dreadful manners you all have.

**God 3:** Bow your heads in shame for making so much noise! (*Animals comply*)

**God 4:** We like your idea. But which animal shall we choose?

**God 1:** Ram! Step forward! Why should we choose you?

**Ram:** (*Stepping forward*) My lords! Choose me! I am strong, I am dependable and everyone knows my wool is warm and cosy!

**God 2:** True! Pig! Step forward! Why do you want the New Year to be named after you?

**Pig:** (*Stepping forward*): My Lords! Choose me! I am humble! I am loyal! And everybody knows me!

**God 3:** True! Rat! Step forward! Why should we choose you? You are small and you are nothing but a nuisance and a pest!

**Rat:** My lord. I am small, but you should choose me so that the people know that the Gods value small things!

**God 4:** True! Hare! Step forward! What makes you think you are important enough to have a year named after you?

**Hare:** (*stepping forward*) My lord, I am swift and cunning. I am a true emblem of China! So choose me! Choose me!

**God 1:** Hmm, I'm not sure! (*Calls to peasants*) Peasants of the town! Who shall we choose? Who shall we choose?

\*\*\*\*\* CD Track 2: China Song: Shall we choose..... \*\*\*\*\* **(VOCALS ARE ON TRACK 5)**

**(Song sung by all, especially peasants, while individual animals parade across the stage on cue, with actions and animal sounds)**

Shall we choose the dog? What can he do?  
Shall we choose the dog? What can he do?  
He can bark! He can bark! He can guard your home!  
He is called man's best friend! You won't be alone!

Shall we choose the ox? What can he do?  
Shall we choose the ox? What can he do?  
He is strong! He is strong! He can pull the plough!  
He can work all day long! We could choose him now!

Shall we choose the snake? What can she do?  
Shall we choose the snake? What can she do?  
She can hiss! She can hiss! She can do a dance!  
She can move just like this! Let's give her the chance!

Shall we choose the horse? What can she do?  
Shall we choose the horse? What can she do?  
She can race! She can race! She can run so fast.  
She has poise. She has grace. She is unsurpassed

Shall we choose the monkey? What can she do?  
Shall we choose the monkey? What can she do?  
She can swing! She can swing! She can make you smile!  
Watch her do funny things! She stands out a mile.

Shall we choose the tiger? What can he do?

Shall we choose the tiger? What can he do?  
He can roar! He can roar! He is so well known!  
But do not stroke tiger cubs! When they're fully grown!

Narrator 1: The gods thought it over, but they couldn't decide who to choose. The animals began to argue again. *(Each animal quickly says "Choose me!" and makes their animal noise)*

Narrator 2: Suddenly there was a huge roar. *(Dragon roars and enters, accompanied by dancers)*

\*\*\*\*\*CD Track 3: Dragon Dance\*\*\*\*\*

God 2: We still cannot decide who to choose.

God 3: *(To animals)* I've got an idea, so listen very carefully. Can you see that big river? Why don't you have a race across it. Then we can name the New Year after the winner of the race."

God 4: That's a good idea!

Narrator 1: The animals agreed. Each one wanted to be the winner. They all hurried to the river and lined up for the race. *(Peasants and dancers stay on stage to cheer their favourite animal. "River" is brought onstage ready to be operated)*

God 1: Are you all ready?

Animals: Yes we are!

God 1: Ready, steady, go!

For

Narrator 2: With a mighty splash the animals leapt into the river and started swimming as fast as they could towards the other side. *(Note- Do swimming actions in slow motion)*

Evaluation

\*\*\*\*\* CD Track 4: The Race \*\*\*\*\* (VOCALS ARE ON TRACK 6)

One day in Ancient China the animals had a race.

A race across the river to try to win first place.

Oh, Swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it) Swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it)

Swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it) Swim! Swim! Swim!

The dog he did the doggy paddle he did so much splashing!

The tiger wore a stripey swim suit! What a lovely fashion

One day in Ancient China the animals had a race.

A race across the river to try to win first place.

Oh, swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it) Swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it)

Swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it) Swim! Swim! Swim!

The dragon swallowed water and he lost his flames and fire!

The hare he went right under and he wanted to retire!

One day in Ancient China the animals had a race.

A race across the river to try to win first place.

Oh, Swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it) Swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it)

Swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it) Swim! Swim! Swim!

The horse she swam so well of course keeping out of trouble.

The pig he had a lot of fun blowing lots of bubbles!

One day in Ancient China the animals had a race.  
 A race across the river to try to win first place.  
 Oh swim! swim! swim! (You can do it) Swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it)  
 Swim! Swim! Swim! (You can do it) Swim! Swim! Swim!  
 The ox he was the strongest swimmer he thought he would win!  
 The rat he jumped upon his back! Cheeky little thing!

Narrator 1: The animals were tired after the race, so they lay down for a rest until the results were announced. As you just saw, the ox was the strongest animal in the race. The rat wasn't the best swimmer but he was the cleverest animal. He saw the ox was going to win the race and thought, "He's not going to beat me. I know what I'll do." He climbed up the ox's tail and onto the ox's back. The ox felt something strange but he thought it was the water tickling him. The rat jumped on to the opposite bank of the river and won the race.

God 1: Well done. We will name a year after each of you, in the same order that you finished the race. We will announce the winners in reverse order. Come and collect your medals.

God 2: *(Announcing the winners. Each animal is presented with a handshake and a medal)* Here are the results of the great race! Congratulations, Rat! You were the winner! Ox, you came a close second! Tiger- you were third. Hare was fourth, dragon was fifth, snake was sixth, horse was seventh, ram was eighth, monkey was ninth, cockerel was tenth, dog was eleventh, and pig was twelfth and last.

Narrator 1: And that's the end of our show! The animals were happy at last and didn't argue any more. Rat was especially pleased because the first year was the Year of the Rat.

Curtain Calls: Replay CD Track 4 at low volume and applaud the cast in reverse order of the cast list

Replay CD Track 2: Dragon Dance- Dragon and dancers leave the hall.

The end

Notes:

According to Chinese legend, these are your qualities according to the year you were born:

- Rats:** are cheerful, charming and welcome everywhere
- Oxen:** are hardworking and patient
- Tigers:** have a forceful personality and are adventurous and confident
- Rabbits:** are home lovers, peaceable and sociable
- Dragons:** have strong personalities, love their freedom and hate routine
- Snakes:** are sensitive with a strong sense of responsibility
- Horses:** are hardworking, admirable and ambitious
- Rams:** are gentle, caring and achieve what they want by kindness
- Monkeys:** are charming, cheeky and clever
- Roosters:** are faithful to family and friends
- Dogs:** are loyal and caring with a fearless streak
- Pigs:** are peace loving, trusting and strong

These are the animal years: e.g.2007=Year of the Pig 2008=Year of the Rat 2009= Year of the Ox

<b>Rat</b>	1960	1972	1984	1996	2008
<b>Ox</b>	1961	1973	1985	1997	2009

<b>Tiger</b>	1962	1974	1986	1998	2010
<b>Rabbit</b>	1963	1975	1987	1999	2011
<b>Dragon</b>	1964	1976	1988	2000	2012
<b>Snake</b>	1965	1977	1989	2001	2013
<b>Horse</b>	1966	1978	1990	2002	2014
<b>Ram</b>	1967	1979	1991	2003	2015
<b>Monkey</b>	1968	1980	1992	2004	2016
<b>Rooster</b>	1969	1981	1993	2005	2017
<b>Dog</b>	1970	1982	1994	2006	2018
<b>Pig</b>	1971	1983	1995	2007	2019

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