



bird, is a harbinger of good and happy things. “Happiness comes when the magpie sings” is a folk saying. Magpies perched on plum trees are painted in New Year pictures to represent a homophonic metaphor of radiance with happiness.

According to legend, on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month the cowherd Niu Lang and his lover, the weaver girl Zhi Nv, go to the Milky Way for their once annual meeting. To assist them in making their way there, a group of magpies form a bridge so they can be reunited.

As a result, the idiom 鹊桥相会, meeting at the magpies’s bridge, was created to mean the reunion of a couple or lovers after a long separation. For some reason, swallows also enjoy a similarly favorable status in Chinese culture. If swallows nest in the roof of a Chinese family’s house, the hosts will never disturb them, because it’s believed that it will bring luck to the family.

In Chinese fortune is a homophone for the word bat. Likewise, deer is a homophone of 禄 lù, which means something like official rank and salary. The crane was thought to be divine and represent longevity. In the world view of Chinese tradition, one cannot aim higher in life than to have fortune, high rank, good salary and a long life.

The peacock is also admired in china, for both its beauty and auspicious implications. By way of contrast, in the UK it was believed to be unlucky to have the feathers of a peacock in one’s home. The peacock’s beauty and carriage led its name to become synonymous with vanity and the expression “as proud as a peacock”.

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