

Happy New Year

(Taiwan/China)

The original Chinese name of this dance is Gong Xi Xin Nian (or “Gong Hsi Hsin Nien” as an alternative notation of the pronunciation), which means “Happy New Year!” The song is usually sung on Chinese New Year’s Day. It is popular to most people in Taiwan, as well as Hong Kong and China. In the lyrics, “Gong Xi” means “congratulations,” “Gong Xi Ni” means “congratulations to you,” and “Ya” is just an exclamation.

Legend says that there was a beast called “Nian” (or “Nien”) in ancient times. This beast would come out on New Year’s Eve and devour human beings. Some Chinese mimic lions or dragons in trying to scare off the beast. They found that the beast, Nian, was afraid of loud noises, so they played loud drums in their lion dances and dragon dances. After they invented gunpowder, they used firecrackers to make noise. On New Year’s Day, people would congratulate those who were still alive.

This dance was presented by Yang Chang Shong at the 2011 East-West Folk Dance Workshop, Cerritos, California. The following dance description is written based on the Chinese version prepared by Mr. Yang.

Choreographer: Yang Chang Shong

Formation: Circle of cpls facing LOD. Ptrs hold inner hands.

Steps and Styling: Running Schottische: Run three steps (cts 1-3), hop on the lead foot (ct 4).
Chinese bow: M makes a fist with one hand, covers the fist with the other hand, holds his hands breast level and bends at the waist. F makes the same covered fist at her left waist and bends her knees.

Meas 4/4 Meter Pattern

INTRODUCTION No action.

DANCE Begin the dance with singing.

- 1 Starting outside ft, take a running schottische step fwd (4 cts).
- 2 Take a running schottische step bkwd (4 cts).
- 3 Run three steps fwd (cts 1-3); hold (ct 4).
- 4 Point inner ft fwd (ct 1); hold (ct 2); and bkwd (ct 3); hold (ct 4).
- 5 Starting inner ft, release hands, make a $\frac{3}{4}$ outward turn in four running steps and end facing ptr (4 cts).
- 6 Chinese bow to each other (4 cts).
- 7- 8 Ptrs hold both hands and circle left (CW) all the way around in eight running steps starting L (8 cts).

Happy New Year – continued

- 9-10 Ptrs face each other, release hands, both M and W hold fists as in M's Chinese bow and bend at waist four times (8 cts). Sing along, "Gong Xi, Gong Xi, Gong Xi Ni Ya" in time with the four bows.
- 11-12 Step L to face a new ptr and repeat the action in meas 9-10 (8 cts). End facing LOD and hold inner hand with new ptr.

Sequence:

Introduction (30 cts, no action)

Begin the dance with singing.

Repeat the whole dance for a total of five times.

Notes by Wen Chiang, June 29, 2011
Presented by Sue Chen & Wen Chiang