

# StirFry Seminars

February 2007

## Black History Month



Mary Church Terrell was the daughter of former enslaved Blacks. She was one of the first African-American women to receive a college degree, graduating from Oberlin College in 1884, and later became the first African-American woman appointed to the District of Columbia Board of Education. She spoke four languages, was a teacher, a principal and fought for years to end segregation laws in D.C. and the United States. She was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP) Executive Committee and was the creator of an annual celebration of Frederick Douglass's birthday on February 14, 1900.

A decade later, Harvard scholar Dr. Carter G. Woodson, moved to D.C. and witnessed the celebrations. He had noticed, in his own studies, the lack of information about Blacks in history books. Negro History Week was created to spread the news of the numerous contributions Black Americans have made to the United States. It was observed for the first time during the second week of February, 1926, to encompass the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, who had both greatly impacted the lives of Black Americans. He believed that Black History was American History and hoped that, eventually, as the contributions of Blacks became more commonly known, Black History would be studied every day of the year. How far have we come in the last 100 years? How many sides of American History were you taught? How diverse is the American History your children are learning?



*Worldwide Celebrations: This is also the month of Imbolc (Wiccan), Tu B'Shvat (Jewish), Nirvana Day (Buddhist), Lantern Festival (Taiwan), Carnival (Brazil), Flag Day (Mexico), Ayyam-I-Haand (Baha'i), and Mardi Gras*

## Chinese New Year



The Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival or the Lunar New Year, begins on February 18, 2007, ushering in The Year of the Boar. The beginning of the year marks a time to celebrate a fresh start, to sweep away bad luck and clean house, making space for good things to enter. Thinking about the traditional attributes of the Boar can help us focus on some of the challenges we may have before us in the coming year.

The Boar type is usually an honest, straightforward, modest person who doesn't want to take center stage or rock the boat too much. They want to do everything right according to social norms. While the Boar may be tolerant and peaceful and not afraid to allow others their freedom of expression, they will steer away from confrontation or argument. They are not weak, however, and if the situation forces them to fight these people will rise to the occasion, whether it is to defend themselves or those close to them. People of the Boar type are the most admired by others.

In our own work, we know that honesty is one of the greatest tools we have to work with. When we are honest and straightforward, with ourselves and with others, we move ahead much more quickly, though not always painlessly. Sometimes, our fears keep us from expressing our own truths in situations where they may cause ripples, waves or even tsunamis. Learning the power of honesty - using it to challenge complacency and injustice where we find it - is part of the struggle for all of our communities. Choosing our fights carefully, knowing our own power, recognizing and honoring all of our truths: these are the lessons we gain from the Boar. *Gung hei fat choi!*