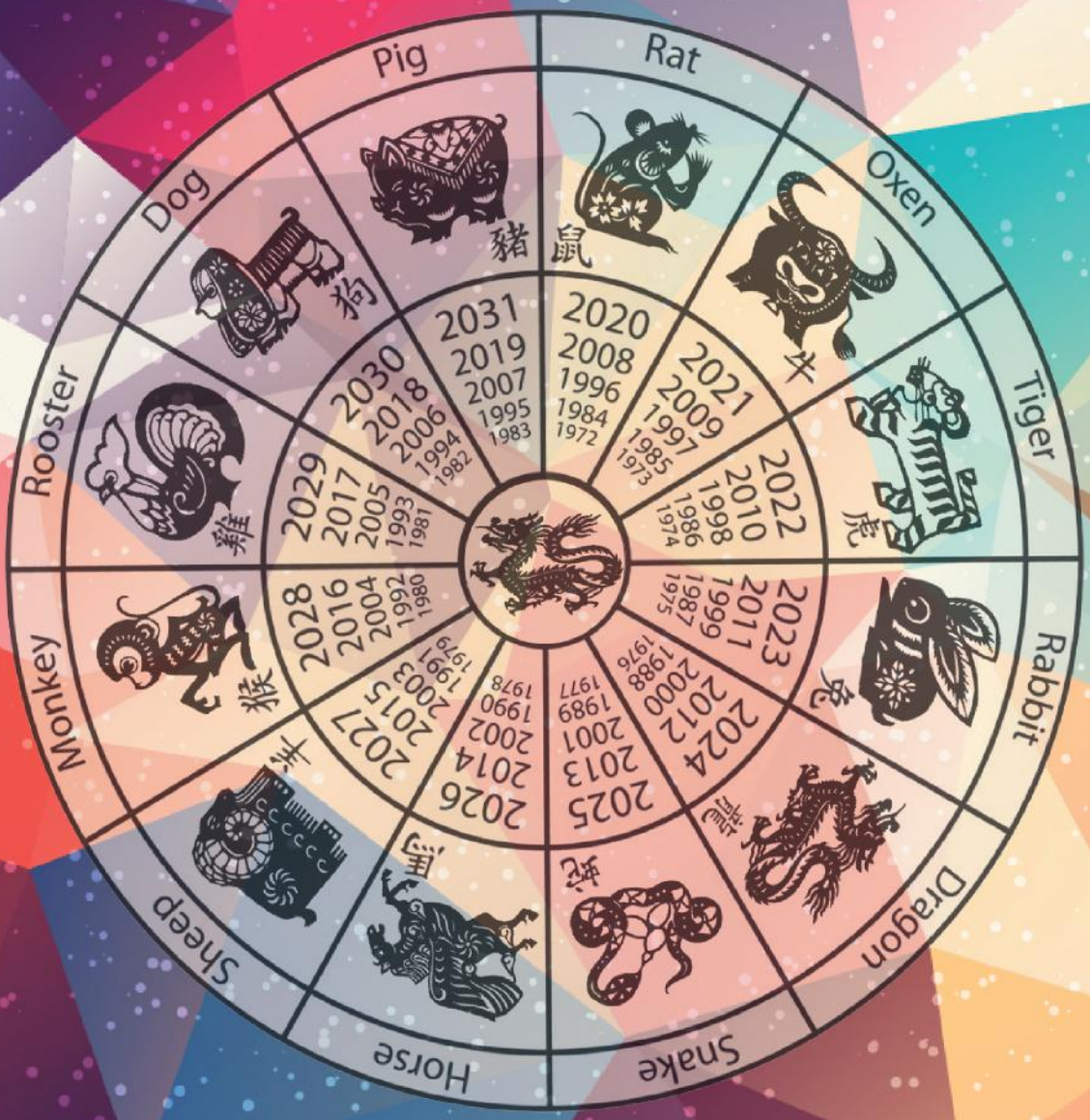
EXPLORING YOUR BIRTHDATE WITH THE CHINESE ZODIAC



INDIVIDUALOGIST

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CHAPTER ONE

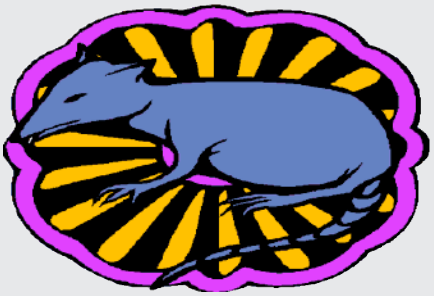
INTRODUCTION

The Chinese Zodiac consists of a 12-year cycle, each year of which is named after a different animal that imparts distinct characteristics to its year. Many Chinese believe that the year of a person's birth is the primary factor in determining that person's personality traits, physical and mental attributes and degree of success and happiness throughout his lifetime.

The Chinese people place a great deal of faith in the Yinyang principle. This is especially noticeable during the Chinese New Year. According to reliable legend, a mythical monarch named Yao was patron to two perceptive astronomers. These gentlemen constructed a fantastic system of 10 heavenly stems and 12 mundane branches. The latter correspond to 12 animals with two symbolic functions. Each animal is mystically related to one year in a 12-year cycle. Each animal also represents two hours or one-twelfth of every day. A person's future is determined by this intriguing system.

The animal astrological chart must be understood against the background of the Chinese Yinyang principle. It is a concept of symbiotic dualism. Everything, physical and spiritual, has an opposite and corresponding condition. In other words, every Yin has its Yang, and every Yang has its Yin. Yang is the positive principle: male, light, heaven and sun. Yin is the negative counterpart: female, shade, earth and moon. Yin and Yang have their designated hours of the day, an important factor in Chinese astrology.

CHAPTER TWO
Twelve Animals As Year Designations



The Rat

If you were born in 1900, 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, your sign is the Rat.

The daily rat hours are from 23:00 until 01:00 when the power of Yin is supreme. The denizen of dark places is naturally at home in Yin. A rat person (a thousand pardons), an individual born during the year of the rat, will be endowed with traits characteristic of the rat. If his birth took place at night, he has it made, like the rat who is at his best in the dark. He will be adventurous and full of courage. But a rat person born during the day is in trouble. Such an individual tends to be cowardly and afraid of his own little shadow.

As a whole, rat people are temperamental, quick to anger, and easily perturbed. They are chatterboxes in the rodent tradition, with a touch of charm, but venal in regard to money. They are tenacious about attaining goals, letting nothing and no one stand in their way.

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The life of a rat person is divided into three alternating periods. The first phase is blessed with good fortune. Then comes a spell of bad luck, followed by a closing period of comfortable living. A rat person will be happiest with a marriage partner who is a monkey, ox or dragon person—a person of those signs, that is. If such matches are not available, he would still do well with a fellow rat, or a choice snake, tiger, dog or pig. But beware of a horse.

The Ox

If you were born in 1901, 1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, your sign is the Ox.

01:00 to 03:00 are the hours for the ox. This is when babies need maternal care, the kind given by the cow, which lavishes tender love on its calf, licking it and giving it a sense of security. A cow or ox person born at night will enjoy an easy life—— a sort of barnyard existence, with all his needs provided for. If born in daylight, he will reflect in his life the hard lot of the ox, earning his bread by the proverbial “sweat of his brow”.

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Bovine traits predominate in the life-style of Ox people. They are calm, relaxed, self-assured and stubborn. Anger is their Waterloo, because they act foolishly when enraged. They lack passion and keep their distance from family. Ox people are notable, dexterous and occasionally outspoken. Frustration can bring out an unexpected mean streak. Patience is not their ultimate virtue.

The first phase of an ox person's life is marked by happiness. The second part is marred by misfortune caused by emotional difficulties. In the third phase, he will find tranquility.

A marriage partner should be selected from the rats, snakes and cocks. A second best choice could be the rabbits, oxen, pigs, monkeys and dragons. Dogs and horses are not recommended. Beware of the sheep.

The Tiger

If you were born in 1902, 1914, 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, your sign is the Tiger.

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Tiger time is 03:00 to 05:00. The tiger is ferocious and so is the time segment when powerful Yang wrest sovereignty from retiring Yin. Daybreak is reveille for the tiger. The savage spirit of the tiger dominates the character of tiger year people. They are especially fierce if born at night. The tiger is at his savage worst on his nocturnal adventures.

Tiger people are quick-tempered and sensitive. They are fearless but cautious, sometimes overly hesitant when action is necessary. They are egoistic, somewhat penurious and affectionate towards their beloved. Tiger people are often bright and respected by their fellows. The respect human life, guarding it against the three traditional disasters: Thieves, fire and evil spirits.
The first phase of a tiger man's life is sweet. The second phase is beset of problems which can be handled with wisdom. The third phase follows the same routine.

When it comes to marriage, tiger people do best with horses, dragons and dogs. Snakes and monkeys spell trouble. Also acceptable in matrimony are rats, rabbits, sheep, pigs, cocks and fellow tigers.

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The Rabbit

If you were born in 1903, 1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, your sign is the Rabbit.

Rabbit people are nice to have around. Moderate in their ways, they trop-or-hoe—— the middle path in matters of sex, social relationships and work. They are very popular because they don't step on toes. Their mood is tranquil and they prefer 05:00 to 07:00.

Rabbit year individuals are considerate of their loved ones, though, like tigers, they tend to avoid close relationships with family. Their equanimity inspires confidence. They are bashful, moody and easily moved to tears. Rabbit people can evaluate a situation with keen insight and choose the right time to act. Surprisingly, they are also known to be conceited. Rabbit people need not concern themselves with "phrases" of their lives. Their entire existence is a continuum of unblemished tranquillity.

Rabbit people find good marriage partners in the sheep, pig and dog. They should avoid dragons, and have nothing to do with rats and cocks.

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The Dragon

If you were born in 1904, 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, your sign is the Dragon. This year is Dragon Year!

The legendary dragon is a versatile master of change. Therefore, he is associated with the hours of 07:00 to 09:00, when Yang is in the ascendancy. It is the time of transformation. Dragons are objects of veneration in this part of the world. Whether great or small, they are a symbol of blessing. They are considered harbingers of harmony, power and riches, as well as talismans of longevity. As for character, dragon people are honorable, brave, healthy, intelligent, and full of vim and vigor. But they are also temperamental, stubborn and “touchy”. Dragon people tend to be worrywarts, with no apparent ill effects. They are compassionate, but due to a congenital candor, they do not buy friends with flattery.

Dragon people would do well to marry a snake, cock, monkey or rat. For second choice, they might consider tigers, sheep, horses and pigs. The rabbit, ox and fellow dragon should be avoided. Beware of a dog!

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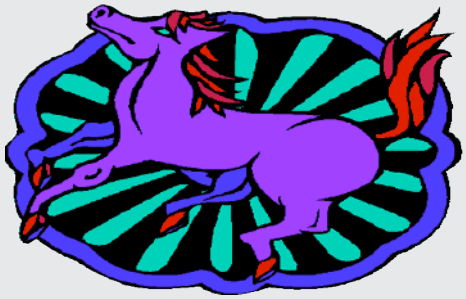
The Snake

If you were born in 1905, 1917, 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, your sign is the Snake. The power of Yang increases ever more from 09:00 to 11:00. The sly snake, capable of countless masquerade roles, belongs to this period. Snake people are poor communications, unable to win the trust of others. They are egotistical, conceited and philandering. They pursue their goals with singular dedication, which does not win them friends.

They are also tight in the wallet department. Yet, snake people are not altogether hopeless. They tend to be intelligent, wealthy, sensual, handsome (or beautiful) and well groomed. The first two phases of a snake person's life are rather good. As for the final phase, the less said the better!

A snake year person seems to fare best with an ox or cock marriage partner. Rabbits, rats, horses, sheep, dogs, dragons and fellow snakes are not bad either. Monkeys are sheer poison, and the worst spouse is a pig or a tiger.

CHAPTER TWO
Twelve Animals As Year Designations



The Horse

If you were born in 1906, 1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, your sign is the Horse.

Yang reaches its apex between 11:00 and 13:00. The stately horse is connected with this time slot. A horse year person born in the daytime will be spirited, his life activate and burdened with work. If born at night, his lot will be comfortable and pleasant. Freedom is vital to horse people, and they prefer the open spaces. Horse people are very sociable with a facility for speech——both quantity and in flattery. They lead happy lives, liking people and being liked by them in return.

Concerning women, it's a horse of another color. Horse people are like putty in the hands of the opposite sex. For them, blinders or not "Love is blind". Occasionally their quick temper creates social problems for them. Generally, horse people are calm and collected. They are recognized for their "horse sense", which reflects intelligence, good humor and general competence.

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Horse year people should not be concerned with difficulties during the first two phases of their lives. The quality of the third phase will more than compensate for their initial tribulations. Matrimonially, a horse person should look for a tiger, dog, or sheep. If such are not available, he can do well with a dragon, snake, monkey, cock, or pig. The rabbit, ox and fellow horse should be shunned, and the rat must be avoided like the plague.

The Sheep

If you were born in 1907, 1919, 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, your sign is the Sheep.

Sheep year people make excellent spouses. They are so gentle. A suckling lamb bends its knees when it takes milk from its mother. This suits the hours between 13:00 and 15:00, a time of simplicity and orderly tranquillity, when the power of Yin is still rising to be associated with the sheep.

CHAPTER TWO
Twelve Animals As Year Designations

Sheep people are paragons of virtue. They are scrupulously honest, calm, compassionate, dedicated, aesthetic and fashionable. Since they are trustworthy, people trust them with money. Their concern for others could make them gullible. However, they have a cynical streak and a tendency to act reserved, which counterbalances the inherent weakness of sheep with people's "snow jobs". As expected sheep prefer to be shepherded. They are extremely dependent.

The first phase of a sheep's life is fine. The second is marked by emotional problem. Luck awaits them in the third. Sheep match well with a horse, a pig, or a rabbit. Also acceptable are the monkey, cock, snake, dragon, tiger and fellow sheep. The rat is not acceptable. Stay away from a dog and an ox.

The Monkey

If you were born in 1908, 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, your sign is the Monkey.

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With the monkey, the power of Yin takes over. The hours are from 15:00 until 17:00. Monkey-business includes vanity, lack of respect for others, irritability, slyness and a lack of ability to pursue their goals with enthusiasm. But monkeys, like all people, are not without redeeming virtues. They are creative and successful in a wide range of endeavors.

A monkey should settle down with a dragon or a rat. When such partners are unobtainable, a sheep, dog or rabbit is not bad. Snakes and pigs are bad news, and a tiger is worse than spinsterhood.

The Rooster

If you were born in 1909, 1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, ,2005, 2017, your sign is the Rooster.

The cock takes over during the first period of the moon, from 17:00 to 19:00. Cock year people born at night are introverts. Their self-effacing humility makes them easy prey for bullies. On the other hand, those born in the daytime are independent, diffident, rash, even insolvent.

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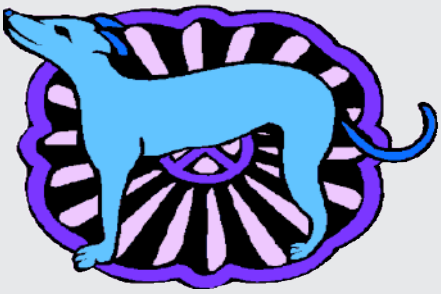
Cock people are spendthrifts, ourspoken, energetic and “cock-sure”. They are clever, opinionated, and suspicious. They are always busy, though their many ambitious projects end in frustration. Friends find them full of zest and fun. A cock should marry an ox, snake or dragon. A pig, tiger, monkey, horse or sheep are so-so. A dog, rat or fellow cock spells trouble. Rabbits are out.



The Dog

If you were born in 1910, 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, your sign is the Dog.

A “watchdog” is needed to protect the power of Yin in its waning hours. The dog is ideal for the job. His time is between 1900 and 21:00. Born during the day, a dog year person will live in the lap of luxury. But the one born at night will “work like a dog” for his livelihood.

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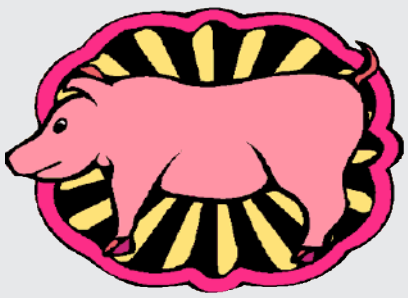
Dog people have a good reputation. They are faithful, honest responsible, trustworthy, righteous and doggedly dedicated to a task. They avoid crowds and do not get along with everyone. One would expect them to be obstinate. Surprisingly, they tend to occasional erratic behavior.

The best marriage partner for a dog is a rabbit, tiger, or horse. Second best would be a snake, pig, dog, rat, or a monkey. The ox or cock make bad marriage partners; and the living end would be a dragon or sheep.



The Pig

If you were born in 1911, 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, your sign is the Pig.

Tranquillity is the hallmark of the declining power of Yin. The calm pig is associated with this period, 21:00 to 23:00. A thin line of demarcation separates “calm” from “lazy”. At the risk of semantic impropriety, it should be said that pig people are supposed to be lazy. They are also said to be short on brains and long on tenacity.

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Twelve Animals As Year Designations

Though gentle, pig people can be easily provoked. Unlike the cock, a pig stumbles on to complete a project. Pigs observe the seventh commandment and conduct themselves in a courteous manner. Pigs are reliable friends when they get over their congenital shyness. They can try the patience of a saint in the process. Pig year people have a special predilection for learning, though they are not particularly endowed with an abundance of perspiration.
Best marriage prospects for a pig are sheep and rabbits. Also good is a dragon, tiger, cock, dog, horse, ox or rat. Monkey and fellow pig are bad. Worst of all is the snake.

CHAPTER THREE
Actual History of the Zodiac

The actual history behind the Chinese zodiac is much less fantastical and much harder to find. It's known from pottery artifacts that the animals of the zodiac were popular in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.), but they were also seen much earlier from artifacts from the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), a period of disunity in ancient Chinese history, as differing factions fought for control.

It's been written that the animals of the zodiac were brought to China via the Silk Road, the same central Asian trade route that brought the Buddhist belief from India to China. But some scholars argue that the belief predates Buddhism and has origins in early Chinese astronomy that used the planet Jupiter as a constant, as its orbit around the earth took place every 12 years. Still, others have argued that the use of animals in astrology began with nomadic tribes in ancient China who developed a calendar based on the animals they used to hunt and gather.

The zodiac became a popular way to determine a person's birth year during the North Zhou Dynasty [557-581 A.D.] and is still very commonly used today. The zodiac is calculated by a cycle of sixty years in which each animal signifies a different year.

The lunar calendar paved the sequence of the Chinese zodiac animals. This calendar can be traced back to the 14th century B.C. Myths say that Emperor Huangdi, the first Chinese emperor, in 2637 B.C. invented the Chinese lunar calendar, which follows the cycles of the moon.

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The zodiac was based on Chinese astrology and was used as a way to count years, months, days, and hours in the calendar. It was formed from two components: the Celestial Stem and the Terrestrial Branch. Each of the 12 animals stands for a year in a 12-year cycle, a day in the a 12-day cycle, and for every two hours in a 24-hour day. These were used to name each year along with the animal signs, but now they mainly just use the dates.

The scholar Christopher Cullen as written that beyond satisfying the spiritual needs of an agrarian society, the use of astronomy and astrology was also an imperative of the emperor, who had the responsibility for ensuring harmony of everything under heaven. To rule well and with prestige, one needed to be accurate in astronomical matters, Cullen wrote. Perhaps that is why the Chinese calendar, including the zodiac, became so entrenched in Chinese culture. In fact, reforming the calendar system was viewed as appropriate if political change was eminent.

There exists a story, in Chinese mythology, of a great race that decided which animals made it into the Zodiac and in what order.

Two main variations of the myth exist. In one variation the Jade Emperor, the ruler of all gods within Chinese mythology, hosted the race. To finish the race and become one of 12 animals in the calendar, the animals had to cross a river. Here's our interpretation of this story!

CHAPTER THREE
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The Great Race

The great race loomed just on the horizon and the Cat and the Rat were best of friends. Together, the two of them hatched a plan to ride the Ox across the river together. They knew the large and hardy Ox was accustomed to crossing rivers and would likely finish first.

At the start of the race, the two animals slipped atop the Ox. Being rather thick-headed, the Ox was oblivious to the two animals atop him. But, as the Cat and the Rat rode atop the Ox, the Rat jolted abruptly forward. The sudden force sent the Cat flying off the Ox and into the river. The Cat let out a piercing hiss directed at the Rat, but by then, it was too late, and the Ox, with the Rat atop, was already too far ahead of the Cat.

Even to this this day, Cat still holds a grudge against Rat. This is why Cat hates water and hunts Rat every time he sees him!

The Ox lumbered towards the finish line. The Ox was going to come first. Suddenly, the Rat leapt from Ox's back and crossed the finish-line first. The Ox crossed the finish line a moment later. However, the Ox was too composed a sort to make a big fuss.

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Water splashed forth from the river. The Tiger had burst from beneath the water, his coat sopping wet. The water had weighed the proud Tiger down, but the well-muscled Tiger pushed forth in spite of the burden, hind legs rippling with tense firmness. His huge paw prints bore down on the damp muddy shore and with one final fierce stride, the Tiger claimed the third spot in the Zodiac.

The Jade Emperor watched as the trio of Rat, Ox, and Tiger crossed the finish. He applauded them. They would be the first three animals of the Zodiac.

The Rabbit stood perched upon a rock in the river. He was only lagging slightly behind the Tiger. River water lapped up at his paws. The Rabbit let out soft huffs and heaves. He had been trying desperately to keep up with the Tiger. Despite the Rabbit's small stature, he had kept pace, leaping from one rock to another so he could quickly cross the river. A long trail of rocks jutted up from the river bed. As worry overtook the Rabbit, the Rabbit hastened his motions, pulling back hurriedly on his strong hind legs.

The Rabbit feared that if he did not pick up his pace, another animal might seize the fourth spot from him. Suddenly, the Rabbit slipped, tumbling back-first into the murky waters of the river. The Rabbit's thoughts began to race. Would he even be able to finish in time?

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A moment later the Rabbit's eyes widened. A log was floating slowly by. Nearly leaping up from the river, the Rabbit sped into a wild paddle, water flying up around him. He pressed both paws to the log, clinging on as tightly as he could muster.

Alas, the log was barely moving, bobbing complacently in the water. A sudden gust stirred thickly in the air, sending the log hurdling down the river. The Rabbit's heart throbbed in slow motion as the log drifted towards the shore where the finish line was. The Rabbit's pulse gradually slowed, seemingly one beat at a time, as he neared the shore, a deep-seated feeling of relief overtaking him. The Rabbit peered backwards as he floated closer to shore. No other animals were in sight. The Rabbit hopped right across the finish line

The Rabbit did not stop as he passed the Jade Emperor. The Emperor was smiling at the Rabbit with a generous grin. The Rabbit passed rice paddies as he made his way towards the forest. Reaching a shaded and secluded thicket the Rabbit collapsed into a tiny heap of white fur. A mix of relief and exhilaration had seeped through his being, replacing the disappointment he had felt about only getting fourth place.

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Over the finish line the Dragon soared swiftly, moving in a majestic aerial stride as it shimmied through the clouds, his long tail streaming and lashing about the placid sky, wind racing past him. As the Dragon made his rapid descent, the clouds seemed to part. The Jade Emperor stood awaiting the great creature. Why has the Dragon not come in first place? he wondered. When the Jade Emperor addressed the Dragon, he began to explain the circumstances that had befallen him.

“Exalted Jade Emperor ~ on my way I saw several villagers that were in trouble. A fire had ignited amidst their crops and they had been surrounded in a circle of blaze. I knew that my spot in the Zodiac was on the line, but I could not stand by and watch. To put out the flames, I used my breath to extinguish the blaze, snuffing it out like a flickering candle. I had to be careful though. I did not want to also sweep the villagers up in this gale of my own creation. I also saw a tiny Rabbit in the river clinging to a log, so I used my breath to push it to shore.”

The Jade Emperor smiled again. He was well acquainted with the Dragon’s nature. He was not disappointed in him.

As the Dragon and the Jade Emperor spoke, the Horse was in the midst of galloping across the river, splashing up water as her hooves moved like beating pistons through the ankle deep water, beads of mist silhouetting her strong equestrian form.

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The Horse burst from the river. Only a few strides separated her from the finish line. Something slithered through the grass. From the grass the Snake surged out, approaching from behind the Horse's hooves. Overtaken by shock the Horse recoiled, leaping backwards. A high nay exited the Horse's mouth, hooves thrown up towards the sky. With a quick slither, the Snake crossed the finish line.

The Jade Emperor watched the snake move past the finish-line, still smiling. He did not judge the Snake. The Snake had merely been clever.

The Horse lowered her long-face, a tinge of shame lingering in her dark beady eyes as she stepped slowly across the finish line. Fear had cost her the sixth spot. Her legs, which moments ago had carried her in an untamed gallop were now locked in slow shaky steps, which barely left imprints upon the dirt.

Back in the river, the Monkey, the Rooster, and the star of 2015, the Sheep, all floated atop a raft, which the Rooster had found resting by the opposite shore – unclaimed by anyone.

Together, the three of them worked furiously, using lengthy branches as makeshift paddles.The sticks would often get caught in tangles of unwieldy underwater weeds, which weaved up from the riverbed, but the three of them did not stop paddling, severing the leafy binds with forceful branch strokes. When the Rooster, the Monkey, and the Sheep reached the river's shore, they let the Sheep cross first – claiming 8th place.

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The Sheep had been so comforting and formed such harmonious bonds with them, that the others felt it was only right to let the Sheep claim the 8th place. If the sheep had helped foster these bonds, they may not have all made it to the finish-line.

The Monkey claimed the ninth place and the Rooster took the tenth place.

Coat sopping wet, the dog scrambled across the finish line next, panting as he did so, canine tongue flapping from his open mouth. The dog was an adept swimmer, but because he had not bathed for some time, he had over indulged in the river, frolicking without a care in the water. The sun sat high in the sky today and had heated the water, making it pleasant to bathe in. And, thus, the dog claimed the eleventh place in the race.

By the finish line stood the Jade Emperor. Eleven animals had already crossed. There was only one spot remaining in the Zodiac now. What animal will conclude the race? the Jade Emperor wondered.

Over the horizon, a loud exhausted oink sounded. The Pig waddled towards the finish line, pink skin caked in dense layers of dirt, sniffling snout pasted brown with mud. Yet, the Pig moved at a surprisingly swift gait, little feet locked in a tiny cyclical gallop.

The Jade Emperor gave the pig a sharp glance as he crossed the finish line. “How has one such as you who possesses such surprising speed fallen so far behind?” he asked.

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The Pig snorted as he readied himself to speak. “Sorry, Exalted Jade Emperor – I was hungry and couldn’t resist stopping to gobble something up. I felt sleepy after eating, and couldn’t help myself.”

The Jade Emperor smiled again as he peered down at the dirt covered Pig. The race had concluded. The Pig collapsed onto his side, lapsing back into sleep. Snorts that sounded like snores sounded from the Pig’s rotund heaving form. The 12 animals of the Zodiac had been decided and so concluded the great race.

CHAPTER THREE
Actual History of the Zodiac

The Chinese Zodiac Today

At first, the Chinese zodiac was used as a convenient way to count the years and keep track of one's age. During the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, the 12 animals were linked to the year of a person's birth. Then and today, when a Chinese baby is born, his or her animal sign is said to reveal his or her character. A person's Chinese zodiac sign is also used to figure out his or her fortune. Marriage partners' compatibility is also determined by their animal signs.

Find Your Animal Sign

Here's how birth years correspond to Chinese zodiac signs:

Rat: *2008, 1996, 1984, 1972, 1960*
Ox: *2009, 1997, 1985, 1973, 1961*
Tiger: *2010, 1998, 1986, 1974, 1962*
Rabbit: *2011, 1999, 1987, 1975, 1963*
Dragon: *2012, 2000, 1988, 1976, 1964*
Snake: *2013, 2001, 1989, 1977, 1965*
Horse: *2014, 2002, 1990, 1978, 1966*
Sheep: *2015, 2003, 1991, 1979, 1967*
Monkey: *2016, 2004, 1992, 1980, 1968*
Cock: *2017, 2005, 1993, 1981, 1969*
Dog: *2018, 2006, 1994, 1982, 1970*
Pig: *2019, 2007, 1995, 1983, 1971*

FINAL THOUGHTS

The belief that everyone and every animal has a role to play in society translates well with Confucian beliefs in a hierarchical society. Just as Confucian beliefs persist in Asia today alongside more modern social views, so does the use of the zodiac.

It's been written by Paul Yip, Joseph Lee, and Y.B. Cheung that births in Hong Kong regularly increased, bucking declining trends, to coincide with the birth of a child in a dragon year. Temporary fertility rate increases were seen in the dragon years of 1988 and 2000, they wrote. This is a relatively modern phenomenon as the same increase wasn't seen in 1976, another dragon year.

The Chinese zodiac also serves the practical purpose of figuring out a person's age without having to ask directly and risk offending someone.