

BLUESTEIN

Teal Dragon



White Tiger

The Chinese Zodiac

Table of Contents

Cover Page

Table of Contents

Preface: A Tome for Humanity

Introduction: Fundamental Truths About
Chinese Astrology

2025: Yin Wood Snake

The Qi of Snakes

The Image of the Yin Wood Snake

Important Dates

Aligning Yourself with the Year

Hexagram

2026: Yang Fire Horse

The Qi of Horses

The Image of the Yang Fire Horse

Important Dates

Aligning Yourself with the Year

Hexagram

Preface:

A Tome For Humanity

My name is Jonathan Bluestein. I am an Israeli Jew, and an interdisciplinary scholar. My main areas of expertise are in the fields of Traditional Martial Arts, Traditional Chinese Medicine and Chinese Philosophy. I am also versed in various other areas of study, such as Middle Eastern and World History, Jungian Personality Psychology and Law.

The exciting and fascinating subject of Chinese Astrology, interfaces quite well with my other areas of study. Thus, in the year 2024, I embarked on a mission to learn more about it, via meticulous research. As I have often done with my prior learning ventures, I have found that writing about a thing makes for a splendid way to become intimately familiar with it. This book before you here, presents with the fruits of those efforts.

The tome which is in your possession, is a work-in-progress. I have intentionally and happily made it available for anyone to copy, share and distribute freely, as long as changes are not made. Newer versions of this work, shall be released periodically. Over time, I hope to include in it, dedicated chapters for a total of 60 years of astrological analysis and interpretation. Why 60 years, you might ask? That question shall be answered clearly and succinctly, in the next chapter.

This book is neither an experiment in fortune-telling, nor an instrument for gaining material or spiritual advantages. It is a deep and captivating exploration of how Chinese Astrology can be used as a practical medium for the betterment of people's everyday lives.

I would like to thank fellow scholar and Chinese Astrology expert, **Gregory David Done**, for his fine work in this field. I have often been inspired by his writings and insights, and this is reflected in the text before you here.



Introduction:

Fundamental Truths About Chinese Astrology

There is an age-old idiom and principle; a belief common to all esoteric practices: 'As Above – So Below'. The Magician in the picture to the right, points to the Heavens and to the Earth. He is therefore implying the truth of this idiom and principle with his body – as above, so below. Meaning, that Mankind follows the order of the Celestial Bodies. That is the basic idea behind any system of Astrology.

This is a book about Chinese Astrology. There are those who treat Chinese Astrology as a system fortune-telling. My conception of Chinese Astrology is not as such. The purpose of Chinese Astrology, in its relation to the passing years, is to describe what kind of 'energy' there is to each year. It is so that humans could align themselves better with how the coming year is going to be, energetically-speaking. By this, what is mean is that the Planet Earth is in a certain place in a given time frame – in a given year, and that location of our Planet creates an energetic dynamic. Chinese Astrology asserts that





we can understand this dynamic, and potentially use it to our advantage.

Now, let me be more specific about how the system of Chinese Astrology works. It is quite simple to understand, if you could bear with me for a moment.

In Chinese Philosophy, Astrology, Cosmology and religion, there are the **12 Celestial Stems** and **10 Earthly Branches**.

The 12 Celestial Stems are represented by **12 Animals**.

Every year is associated with one of the **12 Animals**.

The Snake, for example, is one among the **12 Animals**. Therefore, once every 12 years, there is 'a Year of the Snake'. The animal which follows the Snake, is **The Horse**. Thus likewise, every 12 years, there is 'a Year of the Horse'.

Every year is also associated with one of the Five Phases – Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water.

So every year has 1 Phase (among 5) and 1 Animal (among 12). For example: Fire Rooster, Earth Dog, Metal Rat, etc.

Overall, if we count all of those combinations, there are 60 unique years in rotation. Why a 60-year cycle?

Five Phases times **12 Animals** = $5 \times 12 = 60$. This is why there is a 60-year cycle of the Five Phases and 12 Animals. Every 60 years, one cycle is complete. For this reason, in China, a person's 60th birthday is the most important one.





Every year has the combined energy of its Phase and Animals. This year is the year of the Yin Wood Snake. Therefore this document shall discuss the energy of this particular year, in accordance to Chinese Astrology.

As I have noted before, the energy of the year is not a form of fortune-telling. The energy of the year describes, in our case, how Planet Earth is energetically affected between late January of 2025, to early February of 2026. This energetic trend does not determine our fate. But it does influence the boundaries of our potential and actions. It is believed that acting in accordance with the energy of the year, would make your life easier, and your wishes and actions more successful, on average, relative to yourself. Therefore, the purpose of this document is to help you understand how to better align yourself with the energies of the year.

In the picture: ‘As Above – So Below’, hinted via Plato’s gesturing, in the painting ‘The School of Athens’ by the famed master-artist Rafael (Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino).

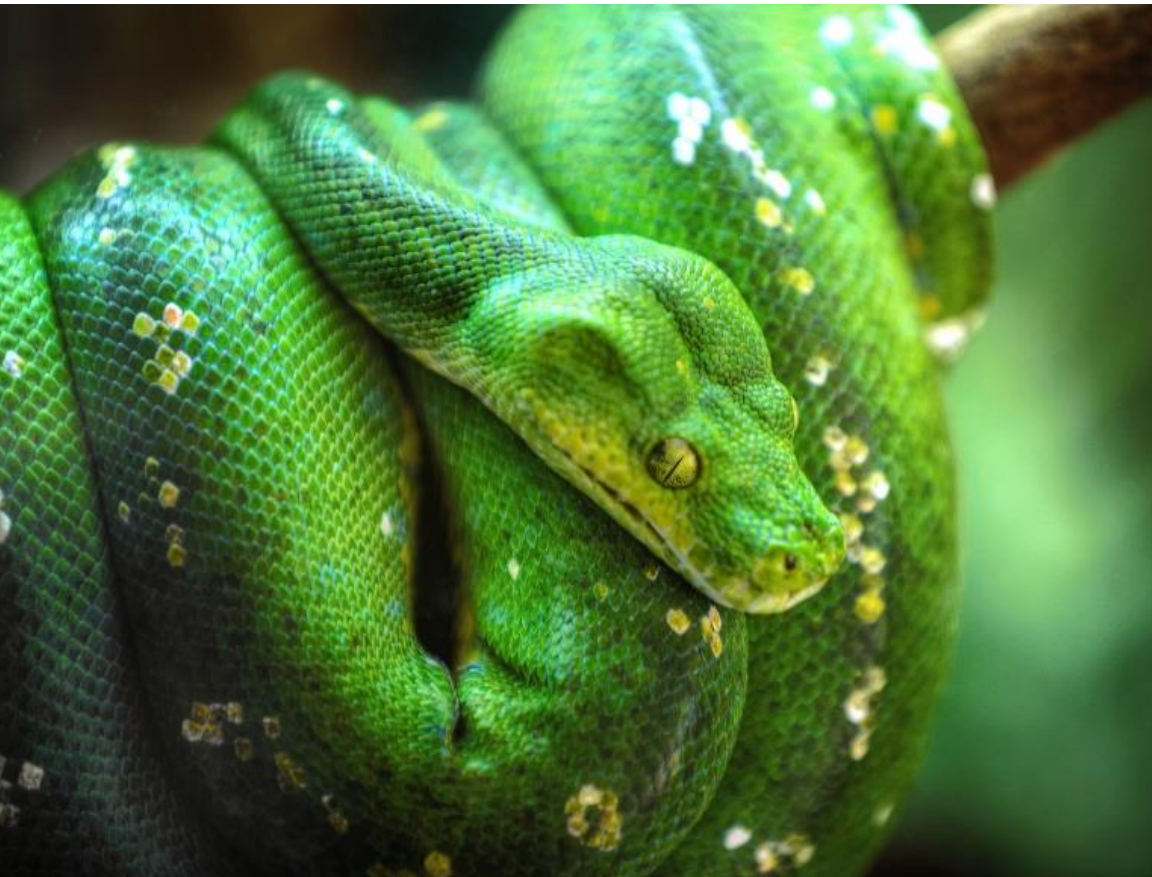




An Astrological Analysis of the

Yin Wood Snake

For the years 2025-2026





The Qi of Snakes

Each of the 12 Animals has its own unique types of Qi – a specific energy signature. The Snake is also said to have a Qi which is uniquely its own. I shall explain the Qi of Snakes (in the context of years), before going deeper into the specific characteristics of the Yin Wood Snake.

In China, the Snake is sometimes a symbol associated with Sages, because it can shed its skin. The Sage is a person who can change with the circumstances at-will, and thereby become something new or different in order to survive. The Snake is similar. It can shed its skin to renew itself, form its body to the shape necessary for survival, or match its body to its surroundings.

The Snake represents Yin and darkness. Emptiness, potential, and openness that hosts all forms. Snake Energy is the empty spoke in the center of the turning wheel. The Dao De Jing explains this – it is the empty space upon the wheel depends for its function. So snake years are like an energetic engine which is hidden at the center. Unlike say, the dragon years, during which the massive energy is clear and evident to see and feel.

The Snake is always in the process of becoming something else. Snakes can remain perfectly still and then strike, act, seemingly out of nowhere, to paralyze their prey. Snake is not gradual. Snake is the sudden and extreme flip from Yin to Yang, like the snapping of a twig.

People with a ‘Snake Character’ like to reflect, mirror, question, and peak behind the curtains. Snake Energy is sinking, gathering, descending, internalizing, coiling, seeking stillness and silence. Like snakes in the wild, Snake Energy



seeks to be hidden, unseen, to blend in with the environment. Therefore, Snakes have a natural inclination to “disappear”, to hide, and to recede from the world by blending in with the surroundings. A snake might look like a vine on the tree, so it is there, present in the world, but it is not the vine, not what it appears to be. Snake Energy is not what it appears to be; it is unknowable and ineffable. They make great actors and can become anyone, like method acting. They can sometimes learn quickly from another person, by ‘becoming’ the teacher – adopting his mannerisms, dress, body language, etc. Monkeys have this capacity, too. Rather than learn the language, this person just became someone who already knew it. The Monkey imitates, but the Snake more so, takes on the external shape – the outlines.

Thereby, the Snake can pretend to be a bit like any of the other 11 animals, yet not become defined by that mimicry. Snakes can become anything and anybody without getting too attached. That sort of quality, of being ‘unknown’ and yet very approachable, can exude much charm on others. They are a mystery even to themselves. Their instinct is to hide, but they can hide in a crowded room because they are inwardly unknowable. You can “know” a Snake for years and still not know who they are. There is no deception therein – only the truth of what the ‘Snake Person’ is really on the inside. This embodies again, ideas from the Dao De Jing: ‘by not being known, all know you’; by not becoming attached, you may attach to anything’.

In so being, the Snake is synonymous with wisdom. This wisdom arises from observation, but also a connection to the beyond. They wait, and this patience reveals much to them. It is by waiting and being passive that they learn, and not through excessive activities.



Snakes are opposite to herd animals. Unlike Sheep, Snakes cannot afford to be gregarious. They live in a world where one of theirs can eat them, and competes with them over scarce resources. This is why they only interact when necessary.

Unlike Pigs, Snakes cannot indulge in gluttony. They can only consume a limited amount of material, before becoming too full to move. The Tiger also has that difficulty, but it digests its prey far faster than the Snake. The Tiger therefore, can look for new opportunities sooner, while the Snake must take its time between hunts. Yet accordingly, the Snake can be content with its catch for a long time, while the Tiger's hunger is soon to nag it again.

Rabbits and Rats quickly multiply their deeds. The Snake has no such ability. It can produce many eggs at once, but only very seldom, and after much has been accumulated for that end to manifest. This does not mean that the Snake is 'less productive', but that its produce is condensed to singular significant achievements, with longer spans of time between them. This is also the manner in which the Snake hunts, of course.



The Image of the Yin Wood Snake

The Yin Wood Snake is one of Five Snakes in the grand, 60-year cycle of the Chinese Zodiac. The others being the Metal Snake, Water Snake, Fire Snake and Earth Snake.

The Wood Snake is the first of the Five Snakes. Among the Five Snakes, the Wood Snake is the most honest, shy, gentle and calm. It is secretive and still. Since it does not have the venom or striking force of the other snakes, so it hides and becomes invisible. Its energy, then, is just that – docile and unseen. It is the ‘least-assuming’ of all of the 60 animal zodiac combinations, and hides from sight. It can take on two very different appearances:

The first type of wood snake is a small, mild and gentle snake. It can also be thought-of as a ‘baby snake’. The second wood snake is the medium-sized, Green Tree Python (*Morelia viridis*). It is much bigger, with larger fangs, which are nonetheless not too dangerous to humans. It kills by suffocating its prey. But it is also mostly chill. Both those types of snakes are non-venomous and typically not aggressive. But they can certainly bite if provoked. Therefore the Yin Wood Snake is not the type of snake which is going to chase you, or seek you out to cause damage. But it will defend itself if provoked.

Despite being a patient and hidden creature, the Wood Snake specifically is still a climber. It goes around obstacles, and its direction is upward and to the sides in all directions – following the growth pattern of trees. The slow and methodical climb is progress, even if it is accomplished in intervals.



Important Dates

The Wood Season: Spring

The Snake month is: May 5th to June 4th

Yin Wood days are: May 15th, May 25th, June 4th

The Snake Hour of every day is: 9AM to 11AM

Thus, between 9AM and 11AM on May 15th and on May 25th of 2025, these would be the Snake Hours in the Yin Wood Days in the Wood Season (Spring) in the year of the Yin Wood Snake. These are the hours and dates when the energy of the year would be strongest. Mark your diaries for those dates and times.

Also, consider applying the type of advice and ideas presented on the following pages, during those days and times. These are suitable for the whole year, but on the particular hours and dates mentioned, they might work even better.



Aligning Yourself With the Year

How should we change our lives and behaviour, in order to ‘best ride the energy’ of the Yin Wood Snake year?

First of all, pay attention to the hours. The Snake Hours, every day of every year, are 9AM to 11AM. Those are the hours of the Spleen. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Spleen and Stomach are key to the health of your digestive system, and your levels of energy. This year then, one must pay attention not to ‘abuse’ the Spleen. For this, you must make a special effort to avoid refined sugars and preservatives. You would also benefit the Spleen by eating or drinking soups made from root vegetables, especially those which are orange or yellow.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Spleen is said to take the food digested by the Stomach, and produce energy from it. For this reason, it is best not to eat during the hours of the Spleen, which are also the hours of the Snake – 9AM to 11AM. During those hours, food should already be in your belly, from earlier meals. That being said, the next-best time-frame for having a meal is at 12 Noon.

All of this also implies, that the energy of the Snake this year is more powerful than usual during those hours – 9AM to 11AM. Thus, it is during those hours that you should try your best not to act in opposition to the yearly energy of the Yin Wood Snake. What that entails, I shall now explore in greater detail.

The previous year, that of the **Yang Wood Dragon**, was marked by boundless expansion in all directions. It is akin to a massive explosion. This year of the **Yin Wood Snake**, is like



the mesmerizing silence following that great explosion. Things are still moving, but they do so as an expression of ‘the aftermath’; often building on the previous inertia. You can still make use of that inertia, even if it was created by others. ‘The Dragon flaps its wings, and the Snake can ride the wind’. So for example – if someone started a project, a company, or similar – you may ‘hop on that boat’. The Snake, by himself, will not travel great distances. But it can quietly rest on another’s moving wagon, can it not?

The energetic direction of the year is ‘upward and sideways’, like the growth of a tree. Although progress is had, its rate is considerably slower than that of the mighty and fierce Dragon. The year moves and stops. Sits. Awaits. Charges, bites and envelopes with tremendous intensity, for a few moments. Then advances slowly again.

Within the 60-year cycle, this is the year with the least outside energetic influence on our behaviour or fate. It is because the Yin Wood Snake does not seek to coerce its agenda. This lack of influence may bring out or exaggerate everyone’s innate character traits, because everyone is free to be themselves, for we are neither bolstered nor inhibited. We have the unique opportunity to find out what we truly are. For some, this may be empowering and healing, and for others, it may be confusing and disappointing. We can be like the small, hidden Wood Snake and slither unseen between the cracks, disappearing unnoticed. We can rest and do nothing. Or, we can simply get to work without interference...but also without much wind in our sails from an external source, unless we join-in with another’s venture.



Can you recall how the Snake attains its wisdom? It is via patient observation, more so than the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, in the year of the Yin Wood Snake, it is better to learn from uninitiated experiences, and through looking at our surroundings, than trying to run around and collect all of the facts and details. It can appear and feel counter-intuitive. It is quite a 'Daoist approach'. But sometimes when we shut our mouths, and stop forcing our views on the environment, we actually see and learn much more.

As noted before, unlike other years, this year itself – the Yin Wood Snake, does not lend much energy for action, but allows room for personal interpretation. It is like the hidden snake in the tree, which allows you to pass. You would not harass it, because you could hardly detect its presence. As long as it is not harassed, then it would not harass you. Accordingly, do not push the limits of other people. Be like the Yin Wood Snake – live and let live. Those who push their luck, might end up being like the snake's prey – the poor bird or mouse which gets too close, or the foolish human who attempts to annoy a snake with a stick.

A snake can definitely slither. But a green tree snake is more stable when coiled around a branch. 'Less movement, more stability', is a good motto to go by this year... unless one is in need of changing, transforming and grabbing an opportunity. In those cases, make haste, but only for a short duration.

To be like a Snake means to be flexible and adaptable; to change your shape or character to match the circumstances. To be like the Yin Wood Snake also means to be hidden from sight. To conceal one's intentions. To be still and docile until



the right opportunity arise, before pouncing it, biting in order to grasp, and finishing the job by strangling it. Then, resting once more.

In the context of human society, the ‘Snake’s prey’, should be thought of as opportunities. You need to ambush the opportunities, like the Green Tree Snake ambushes a bird whilst on a branch. The biting action – the grabbing of the opportunity, must be very quick and determined. You need to wrap yourself around it also, immediately thereafter, to ensure it would be yours.

Snakes hunt Rats; and the Rats, in the Chinese Zodiac, are often associated with **Money, Wealth** and **Prosperity**. It is expected and known, based on non-astrological reasons, that 2025 would be rough financial year in the global markets. This calls for caution. Behave not like the mighty Dragon or the rushing Horse, but rather like the patient and calculated Snake.

Finally, this year – can you transform into something else? Something new? Feel free to ‘shed your skin’. Perhaps, more than once. But do not do so in an outlandish and spectacular manner. Do it quietly, behind the scenes. You are green and bright. People would notice... eventually. The snake that stands-out, ends-up in the pet-aquarium, or worse.

The next year, 2026, would be that of the Yang Fire Horse. It would bring a tremendous energy, somewhat violent even, much more dramatic than that of 2025. It is therefore good to employ 2025 for the purposes of resting, digesting, recovering and renewing, prior to the burst that is sure to come.



Hexagram

The Hexagrams are 64 symbols that originate from the Book of Changes (Yì Jīng 易經). This is an ancient book from China, dating back over 2500 years. In the Book of Changes, the 64 symbols called 'Hexagrams', are used to describe all possible types of energetic transformations in the world. The Hexagrams describe the 'energetic trend' of a given time period.

This is the hexagram associated with the year ahead:



Reform

The image contained in this symbol, is that of fire under water, or a fire inside of a marsh. Why is there a fire inside of a marsh, you might ask? To explain, I need to provide a little background.

In the Book of Changes, the Marsh is a place where things constantly change and transform. One thing turns into another. There is ceaseless growth. Think of water, atop of which there is a floating log, on which there is a turtle, and on it there is a colony of moss, from which grows a mushroom, and on the mushroom stands a dragonfly. Things climb and grow on each-other, and continue to change their location and appearances.



Then as noted before, inside of the marsh there is a fire. What a strange thing, indeed. What is a fire, something which burns, doing inside in a marsh, which is inherently wet? It is a special transformation. A revolutionary spark. Something that ordinarily does not belong in that place. Like a traveler who sets up a fire at the banks, to cook the animals he caught. It is also a fire which transforms the water, evaporating the murkiness of the marsh. Hence the name of the hexagram: 'Reform'. Some people also translate it as: 'Revolution'.

This hexagram is likened to molting - the shedding of skin, as in the action of the snake. Molting is the process of reformation. Transformation. A metamorphosis. One thing changing into another. Adaptation to new circumstances. Old ways are discarded in favor of new ideas or lifestyles.

Remember that the name of this hexagram is often also translated as 'Revolution'. A successful revolution requires timing. The text of the Book of Changes says, in relation to this hexagram: **"The virtuous person makes order in in calendar, so that he can see clearly the times and seasons"**. This message is about planning. While the Dragon can go anywhere it wants at all times, the Snake has its limitations. The Wood Snake does not always advance, and though it can make haste when the opportunity arises, briefly so, it is still immobile much of the time, and calculates its trajectory with caution. It awaits the correct timing. This is benefitted by planning. We would do well to plan ahead this year.



What is 'Reform' combined with 'Planning'? It can mean: Travel. So while the Snake does not move a lot, it may make a few great leaps in distance. Tree snakes can sometimes even leap from the tops of trees to far branches below, falling and then immediately grabbing onto their landing place, coiling around it. Therefore, a possible interpretation for this year is that planning, combined with a reform in one's life, can lead to travel. This is true for any year, of course. There is nothing special about it. The statement implies that such a combination of planning and reform leading to occasional, specific and transformative travel, is more in-line with the energetics of the Year of the Yin Wood Snake. Keep in mind though, that a distance traveled may be physical, emotional or spiritual.

The transformations made in the context of this hexagram, must not be enacted too quickly or hastily. Those changes should be made in accordance to what others can tolerate. This again, matches with the agendas of 'the Libertarian Wood Snake'. It seeks to live and let live. It transforms, but his change is of no hindrance to its surroundings, or to other animals. Nonetheless, it moves, grows and makes progress. The grabbing of opportunities is an instrument to allow change, but its rapid action should not be the norm.

The hexagram describes a metamorphosis that is like that of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. No one would believe that the first creature can turn into the second, until the metamorphosis is complete. Thus, it is wise to avoid announcing the changes, until they have come to full fruition. Also, as noted before, the changes must be timely. Organizing one's calendar and planning ahead, can ensure this.

Are you enjoying this book?

Author Jonathan Bluestein has published many beloved works, which are available on all Amazon-affiliated websites.

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To learn more.

Shifu Bluestein is also the head of Blue Jade Martial Arts International. He offers classes and seminars in the rare system of Li Style Southern Shaolin. Reach out if you are interested:

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An Astrological Analysis of the

Yang Fire Horse

For the years 2026-2027





The Qi of Horses

Every one of the 12 Animals has its own unique types of Qi – a specific energy signature. The Horse is also said to have a Qi which is uniquely its own. I shall explain the Qi of Horses (in the context of years), before going deeper into the specific characteristics of the Yang Fire Horse.

The transition between the Snake and the Horse is an interesting one. The Snake is a solitary predator. The Horse is a herd animal, which can sometimes become prey. Yet among the various domesticated animals of the Chinese Zodiac, the horse is the most vigorous, and is capable of both outrunning many of its enemies, and of defending itself if necessary. The Snake and the Horse both do not seek conflict purposely, but often do not shy away from it either, if the circumstances require that they stand their ground. However, while the Snake fends only for itself, the Horse will protect others from within its group. This is therefore the inherited dynamic between the Snake and Horse years – the right for self-defense is preserved, but is given a different context.

Notably, a horse is diligent, stubborn, charismatic, energetic and optimistic. People know that ‘horses have character’. They like movement, and live in the world of positive action. They advance to new places, and dislike being caged. They may not be the smartest of animals, but they are quick to react to circumstances, especially with their bodies. Their fast-paced lifestyle makes them prone to suffering from boredom, and they could be impatient, impulsive and temperamental. A horse will look for new pastures by itself, without need for incentive from others, especially when it feels mistreated.



Horses can sprint, and in doing so, they are much faster than most other land animals. Among the 12 Zodiac Animals, only the Tiger and the Dragon can match their speed. But unlike the Tiger, they cannot use their natural weapons – their hooves, while they sprint. Unlike the Dragon, they lack stamina. Horses became human pets and food, because we were able to figure-out, that although fast at first, the horses do eventually tire. Over long-distances, a horse will have to stop running, or it would collapse from fatigue, and may even die from exhaustion. All the while, a human can casually jog, and take the horse down when it has lost its strength.

This teaches us a valuable lesson about the Qi of horses. It can be employed well for short-sprints, and occasionally in medium-length runs. But it will fail miserably at long distances.

Horses live and thrive in troops. As happens to many herds animals, the lone horse becomes an easy target for predators or exploiters, while the horse which is a part of a troop, can survive. Horses are smart enough to make up their own minds about things, and act on those decisions. But although horses do not follow their troop as blindly as sheep, they do rely on its fellow members, and they care for them, too. Sheep typically do not consider other animals as a part of their troop, with the rare exception of some dogs. But the horse is often willing to accept another animal, such as a human, as an worthy member of its group, and treat it accordingly.

Some animals are less susceptible to suffer from their mistakes. Monkeys for example, are famous for being able to somehow get out of difficult situations. Not so for the Horse. When horses make a mistake, whether it was a bad step or a wrong thing eaten, it is often disastrous or fatal. While horses



do not seem troubled by this much, they should be. They lack ‘mistake-resilience’ which other animals possess. A rat will even eat a whole meal full of poison, and survive. A horse will nibble on the wrong fruit and die quickly, because it can neither vomit nor detoxify an otherwise mild substance.

Humans enjoy horses which are tame, but the natural state of a horse is that it is wild. Therefore, the horse can learn to excel within a ruleset, but unless there is a structured framework for it to apply itself to, it would tend to do as it pleases.



The Image of the Yang Fire Horse

The Yang Fire Horse is one of Five Horses in the grand, 60-year cycle of the Chinese Zodiac. The others being the Wood Horse, Earth Horse, Metal Horse and Water Horse.

The Fire Horse is the second of the Five Horses. It can also be called 'The Alpha Stallion', 'The Race Horse', 'The Horse of Summer' and 'The Horse of the Sun'. It is the horse that is most eager to sprint, get ahead, break boundaries, take charge and achieve its goals.

More so than the other types, the Fire Horse will sprint in straight lines. It possesses a singular focus, and can see things through to completion. It may be faster than the other horses, but can also tire quicker; for the season of Summer is hot, indeed.

All of the typical qualities of horses, are exaggerated in the Fire Horse. It is more passionate, rebellious, impulsive, impatient, temperamental and charismatic than the rest.

Passion burns in its veins; a passion which can make many things happen, and also burn itself and others. It may be likened to a horse which runs across the field, with a large torch in its mouth. Will it light and show the way for others, or set the whole region ablaze? Whichever path is chosen, the troop will more easily look to the Fire Horse to lead the way. He may not always be the most suitable leader, but he is the one which most desires that role, and will not hide its intentions in that regard.



In this, we see a major difference between the Yin Wood Snake and the Yang Fire Horse. The former is unassuming and seeks to be invisible to others much of the time. The latter puts itself in the front and center, and demands that others follow.

This attitude is also what endangers the Fire Horse. Because, although it may not like it, all horses are targets for predators and exploiters. While the Fire Tiger will appear too intimidating for most to tackle, the Fire Horse may come across as simply being ‘a worthier thing to hunt or tame’ than less prominent specimens. No one wants to be eaten by a fierce tiger, but many would have liked to have ‘the honour’ of having subdued the unruly stallion.

The Fire Horse holds promise in its wild potential. Few could tame it. Which is exactly why it must have at least some rules or guidelines to restrain it, else it might get itself in danger.



Important Dates

The Fire Season: Summer

The Horse month is: June 5th to July 4th

Yang Fire days are: June 7th, June 19th and July 1st

The Horse Hour of every day is: 11AM to 13PM

Thus, between 11AM and 13PM on June 7th, June 19th and July 1st of 2026, these would be the Horse Hours in the Yang Fire Days in the Fire Season (Summer) in the year of the Yang Wood Horse. These are the hours and dates when the energy of the year would be strongest. Mark your diaries for those dates and times.

Also, consider applying the type of advice and ideas presented on the following pages, during those days and times. These are suitable for the whole year, but on the particular hours and dates mentioned, they might work even better.



Aligning Yourself With the Year

How should we change our lives and behaviour, in order to 'best ride the energy' of the Yang Fire Horse year?

The brave can have an easier time this year, while the timid can learn to better express themselves. The character of the Fire Horse is out there for everyone to see. It is not shy. It is outgoing and dramatic.

As was the previous, Yin Wood Snake Year, this Yang Fire Horse year is appropriate for making changes. The Snake changes itself. The Horse moves forward, changing by abandoning what once was.

The Fire Horse is committed to this change. This Racing Horse, once it starts running, can look neither left nor right, and must continue to move forward, towards its goal and destination. The path is charted, and then followed. This linear zeal leads to great achievements, if applied correctly.

This year thrives on the balance between being adventurous and not becoming a target. It is a thing that successful competitive athletes understand well. Pushing forward and getting ahead, while not attracting people who want to take advantage of us, or bring us down. This is the dilemma of the Fire Horse – how do I lead and advance, while not signaling to others that they could hunt me?

The key to this is found in paying attention to the inherent strengths and weaknesses of the Fire Horse. It is fast, but it lacks long-distance stamina. Thus, tremendous progress can



be made for short periods of time, but one must not be overly greedy. For if the sprinting is had for too long, this will exhaust physical, energetic, spiritual or financial resources, leading to calamity by the hands of predators and exploiters. To pause and rest is essential, before sprinting again.

Lead, you may indeed. But for this, you require the troop. Else, who will follow? Gathering or building the troop, is important prior to sprinting ahead. The lone horse is always more vulnerable. You must therefore ensure that your troop goes along with you, and then actually moves in at least the general direction in which you are heading. There is no point in trying to go far, if you cannot do so safely, as part of a coherent group.

Of the two primary dangers for horses – predators and exploiters, the latter are actually more of a problem for the Fire Horse. A predator will tend to prefer weaker horses, or other animals that are easier to overwhelm. But the exploiters are especially attracted to the Fire Horse, because of its rebellious nature. In human terms, this often translates to the relationship between a single person who excels with his bold actions, and a large organization or a government. “The nails which protrudes gets hammered down”, is an idiom which describes that dynamic quite well. Bureaucrats envy those who are free, and their vile feelings corrupt their hearts, and make them eager to try and ‘tame’ or punish such people. Such bureaucrats become more serious of a threat in a year of a Fire Horse, for those who attempt to align themselves with the natural energies of that period. The more the Fire Horse has pushed beyond the acceptable boundaries, the bigger its punishment may be, if it is caught in the net of the wicked.



Horses are already susceptible to the effects of their mistakes, and the Fire Horse, even more so. Therefore, the year of a Fire Horse is one in which it is wise to tread cautiously and make astute choices, even if it appears that the path ahead is clear, and that there is ample strength to act.

The maximization of Fire Horse potential is paradoxically linked to the adoption of restraint. Yang which is entirely unbound and untethered will lead to destruction. In this year, although ‘the leash must be loose and long’, it should still be attached. The ‘borders of the manor’, have to be erected, at a distance. Movement should not be hindered, but ought also not be limitless.

The caution advised in the previous paragraphs, must be especially considered with relation to the Heart. The Horse coincides with the hours of the day when the Heart is most active – 11AM to 13PM. Much as with the case of the Fire Horse, this means that those are hours when the heart – the inner Fire, is at its peak. But it is also precisely because of this, that one would want to avoid overexerting the Heart at such a time. This reasoning should apply to the year as well. To exercise the Heart is quite proper, generally speaking and even more so in the year of the Fire Horse. But fatiguing the Heart, can be more dangerous than usual. When operating properly, it is already leaning towards passions this year, and passions can consume, and lead to disease.

Those more at risk during such a year, are people who suffer from the TCM syndromes of Heart Heat or Heart Fire. Such people must consume bitter foods and herbs, in moderation and appropriate to diagnosis, to mitigate the excessive temperature with which they are already dealing. Otherwise,



the strong fiery drive of the year could drive them into erratic behaviour, and rarely even to madness. It is definitely a more dangerous year for those who suffer from Heart Disease, High Blood Pressure, Bipolar Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, and similar conditions.

This leads us to the consideration, that this year would be a wilder one, because there would be many ‘crazed horses’ running around and doing excessive things. You would have to take many deep breaths, in order to be able to properly and calmly deal with the amount of unhinged behaviour, which is coming.

It is a most fantastic year for jewelers, flower vendors, chocolate makers and divorce lawyers, too. Whoever is directly or indirectly involved with a business that makes money from romance, or the destruction thereof via the finding of fresh passions, can capitalize on the dynamics of this year. This does not mean that by necessity, the statistics of human romantic behaviour, shall differ from other years. It simply means that there is more potential for the astute professional in those areas, to make the most out of the circumstances.

Coincidentally, the year 2026 would mark the 250th Year for the founding of the United States of America. The yearly date for the celebration in question is, as always, July 4th. It is the last day of the Horse Month in the Fire Season of the Fire Horse Year. Due to the political climate in the United States at this time, it is expected that the entire market economy of the country shall be stirred through the preparations and



execution of said celebrations. This in turn, will send financial shockwaves internationally, as ripples. The whole month of June would be 'set on fire', even more so in North America than elsewhere. That would be a good time to join-in with the momentum, and make things happen in your life and career.

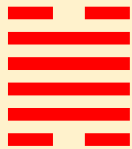
Like the Yin Wood Snake, the Yang Fire Horse benefits from planning. The Wood Snake needs only to chart the course. The Fire Horse, being unable to change its own frame like the Wood Snake, must also see several moves ahead. The Snake is more adaptable, but the Horse can see further. The Fire Horse should therefore put to use, this higher vantage point.



Hexagram

The Hexagrams are 64 symbols that originate from the Book of Changes (Yì Jīng 易經). This is an ancient book from China, dating back over 2500 years. In the Book of Changes, the 64 symbols called ‘Hexagrams’, are used to describe all possible types of energetic transformations in the world. The Hexagrams describe the ‘energetic trend’ of a given time period.

This is the hexagram associated with the year ahead:



Great Exceeding

Beautifully, the name of this hexagram also translates as “Great Celebration”, “Great Living” and “Great Mistake”. All of those various translations match well, different facets of the energetic potentialities of the Fire Horse Year.

The Snake and the Horse both share the Marsh trigram at the top, because it reflects constant change. This is a commonality between Snakes and Horse. They both are in the process of becoming. The Snake sheds its skin, and takes on the shapes of other things. The Horse keeps moving forward.



What is the meaning of the complete hexagram?

The literal image is of Wind, being inside of a Marsh, or underneath its waters. The notion is that inside or below something which is constantly changing, there is something else which is flowing, blowing and unstable. The great weight of a large body of water, is held by a moving and shifting platform, which can adjust to the circumstances, but only to some degree.

The traditional explanation given, is that this hexagram is like a wooden beam upon which one must tread carefully. The beam is large and strong, but because much weight is placed upon it, breakage can occur at any moment.

In everyday terms, you can view this as the wooden floor of the second story of a house, over which too many people are dancing, in celebration. How many people exactly, and how much dancing really, could the floor endure, before disaster occurs? No one knows. That there would be a big fuss and a large commotion, is almost inevitable, and called for by the circumstances. By some cautious moderation is advised. This is the need for the Fire Horse to tread carefully.

From the perspective of TCM, this reflects the manner in which too much movement generations an evil wind. When the emotions stir too much, internal wind will wreak havoc on the psyche. When the body moves too much, an exhaustion of blood can lead to internal wind causing trouble. The challenge is to reach the near the height of Yang, and stop just short of your own uttermost climax. Truly, not an easy feat.



The traditional commentary on the hexagram further specifies: **“You may be in some danger for a short time. Only through letting go of the old and embracing the new can success be attained. A gentle strength is required here”**. The danger lurks in the interim between bold actions, when the Fire Horse is exhausted. The more action, the greater the exhaustion, and the lengthier the period of relative danger. The horse pushes forward not in forcing its will, but by the power of its determination. It does not coerce, but rather continues through obstacles, leaping over them if necessary.

Another point in the traditional translation for the description of this hexagram is that “it is good to have a direction to go (or somewhere to go) in order to succeed”. That the Fire Horse can run fast, is a feature. But unless the ability is directed, what is the point to it all? Running around aimlessly is madness. Running towards a goal, yields results.

The traditional commentary recommends, that when ‘the beam is about to break’, one should stand alone fearlessly. Although the Horse benefits from the presence of the troops, when too many Fire Horses amalgamate, this calls for danger. He who stands aside the group at that point, will not fall.

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