

BLUESTEIN

Teal Dragon



White Tiger

The Chinese Zodiac

Astrology is a knowledge of Timing.

When is the time to act,
when is the time not to act,
and when to wait for the vector of action to reveal itself.

By knowing timing, destiny may be enhanced.

When destiny is enhanced, fate can truly be understood.

DISCLAIMER: This book contains discussions of psychological and medical topics. However, this book is not meant to replace the expert advice of qualified and certified psychologists, medical doctors or practitioners of Traditional Chinese Medicine. The author of this book shall not assume responsibility for any intentional or accidental damage or wrongdoing associated with following psychological or medical discussions in this book. This book addresses theories and interpretations, and not an exact science, and should not be viewed or conceived as such. This tome is a broad and expansive work on Astrology, Culture, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology and Geomancy. It is not intended to be understood as a custom-tailored manual for people's behaviours, actions or choices. The topics of Fate and Destiny are specific and particular to every single individual, and cannot be accurately described in a book written for the general population, such as this one before you.

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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 Thai Massage, Middle Eastern and World Histories, 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 topic 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. Such a book cannot remain a static tome. As the world changes, this kind of commentary must change with it as well.

Over time, as newer editions are published, I hope to include in this book, 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. This work belong with the 'lineage' of Chinese thinkers who treated astrology not as prediction, but as energetic forecast of the celestial bodies, within which human agency remains strong and valuable. The text is coherent and accessible, but also demands that you think for yourself. Meet my ideas half-way, and you shall become the better of me, by adding from your own wisdom.

I would like to thank fellow scholars and Chinese Astrology experts, **Wang Chong 王充 (27–97 CE)**, **Gregory David Done, CT Holman** and **Shelly Wu**, for their fine work in this field. I have partially been inspired by their writings and insights, and this is reflected in the text before you here. Nevertheless, as you shall see, my own interpretation of Chinese Astrology often drastically differs from theirs.

Introduction:

Fundamental Truths About Chinese Astrology

There is an age-old idiom and principle; a belief common to all ancient esoteric practices and traditions: '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 book concerns Chinese Astrology, and is specifically focused on the Chinese Zodiac. Originally from Greek, Astro-logia simply means: 'The Study of the Stars'. Zodiac, originally 'zōdiakos kyklos' in Ancient Greek, means 'Circle of Animals'. The gist of the idea is quite simple to comprehend then. Chinese Astrology is the attempt to study how the movement of the stars may influence human life, while using metaphors from the animal world. The stars are what is 'above', and the animals are what are 'below', hence the connection made by the magician.

How do the stars influence us? How are animals related to all of that? I shall answer those interesting questions momentarily, already on the next few pages. But first, an important statement of intent:



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 meant 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 go back to our pertinent and fascinating questions. I shall begin with addressing the stars. Are the stars merely a shiny decoration for us to view in the night sky? Many of us have never considered them to be much more than that. Yet that is an uninformed point of view. Is the planet Earth akin to mere tapestry, from the perspective of the moon? Is the Sun only a shiny ball of light, and not the thing directly responsible for enabling all life on our planet to exist via the donation of its immense energy? Such are things you can recognize and agree with, I am sure. The people of ancient times, throughout the continents, did take such ideas a few steps further. What they realized was, that the movement of our planet in space, as well as of other planets and stars relative to it, created all sorts of dynamics, that affected human lives and societies. They first observed this, by noting that certain great personal and social occurrences, happened to correlate with the planets and the stars being in certain positions. Surely, at times those were entirely coincidental observations. As an astute reader would know, 'correlation does not mean causation'. But over the centuries, people have come to develop systems of Astrology in order to try and explain such correlations, and have been successful at it. The following is the kind of logic that they all rely on, manifested in what can be called '**The Cosmic Clock**'.

The Cosmic Clock



The Sun tells the Time

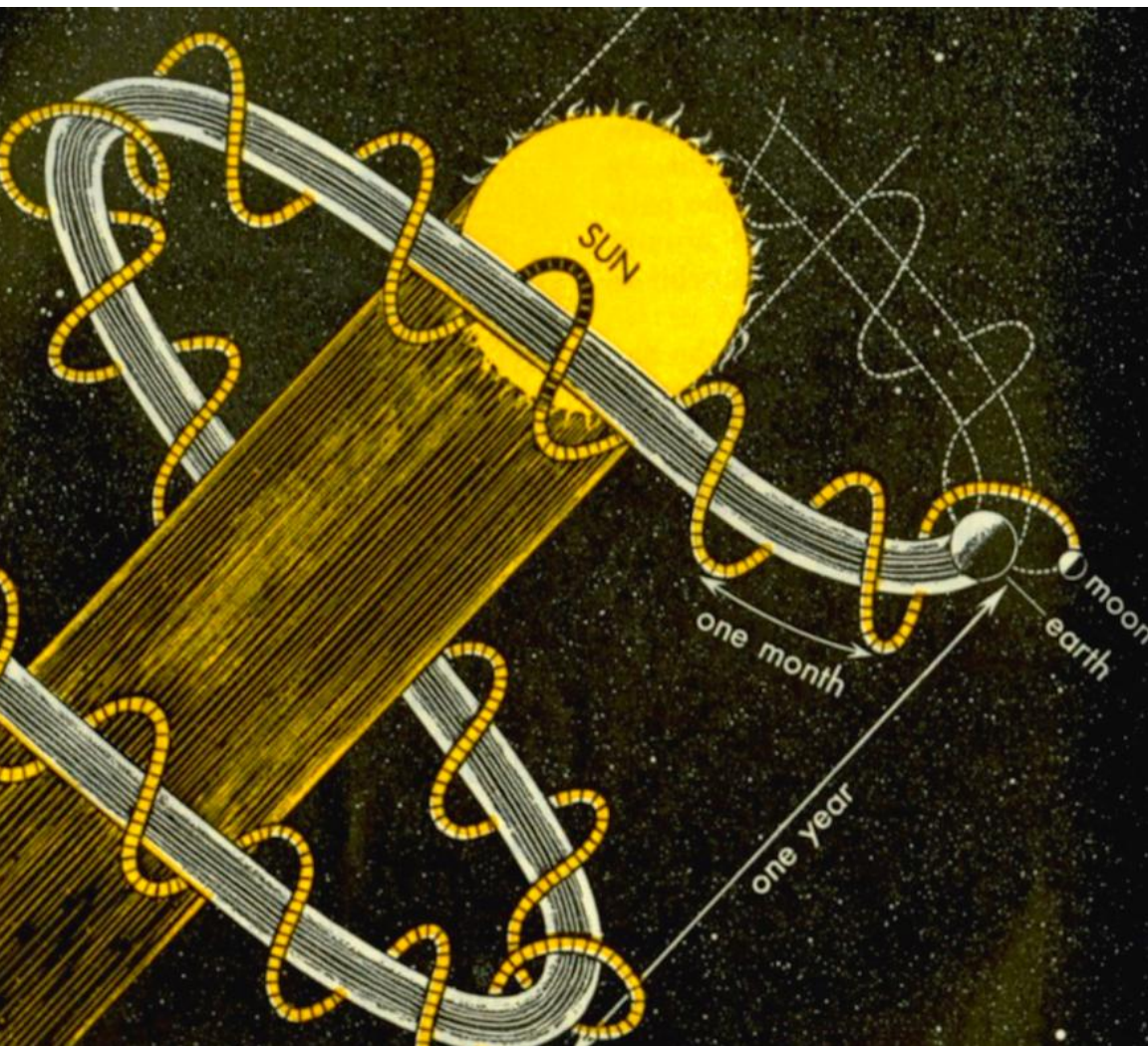


The Moon tells the Day

The Stars tell the Month

The Cosmic Clock is an expression of 'As Above – So Below', as in the image of the Magician that I have discussed beforehand. We are not simply watching the Cosmic Clock – we are a part of it. In that way, humanity is not truly separate from Time... We humans are, ourselves, mechanisms within the clock. A most peculiar thought, indeed.

As you can vividly comprehend from this page and the previous one, we humans are tremendously affected by our relations with the stars and planets around us. This is not a controversial statement, but rather a widely-accepted one. Astrology takes this idea a step further, in proposing that this paradigm of 'As Above – So Below', could have more nuanced interpretations.



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, as I explain the basics.

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

The 12 Celestial Stems are symbolically represented by **12 Animals**. Every year we humans go through, is associated with one of those **12 Animals**. I am sure that by their image portrayals below, you could recognize all of them. Even a young child could do so.



[Note above that the Rabbit, traditionally used by most Chinese, was replaced by a Cat, which is commonly used in Vietnam. That is not a mistake, and shall be explained later in the book]

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, after the ‘Year of the Snake’, comes the ‘Year of the Horse’; and so on, and so forth.

The 12 Animals of the Chinese Zodiac, are essentially twelve cultural archetypes. Each has a unique ‘character and personality’, which is used to make sense of the passing years. Every one of the 12 animals is a metaphor for a year, in the total cycle of 12 years. When a year that is associated with an animal arrives, the ‘energies’ of that year are interpreted in correlation with the metaphorical ‘character and personality’ of its related animal.

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?

5 Phases times 12 Animals = $5 \times 12 = 60$. This is why there is a larger, 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.

The 60-year cycle of the 12 Animals and 5 Phases, is an ancient concept. The Chinese People have been dating this cycle back at least 4600 years or so. But it is safe to assume that such influences over our planet probably go back many millions of years, consistently. Irrespective of human history, the planetary years have always had their unique energies. It was merely that over the past few thousand years, we humans have found original ways to describe and analyze them.

For the people of our era, the ultimate achievement is the completion of 120 years of life. Have you ever wondered why? It is because 120 years mark the fulfillment of two 60-year cycles of completion.

We are not conscious of the energies of the year in which we are born, or even the following years, for we were too young to comprehend the world around us in those times. We only truly begin to have a stronger intuitive feeling of 'the currents of the world' as adults. I was born, for example, in the year of the Yin Fire Cat (1988CE). But I shall not live through another such year of the Yin Fire Cat, until I am 59-60 years old, upon the completion of a cycle. The person who has lived 120 years, is the fortunate sage who has experienced himself through all 120 energetic transitions of the Planet, and have also known all of them as an adult. He or she, have truly passed through all potentials that could have been. Humanity on the whole, is the same. Certain currents and trends in our history only fully express themselves within the scope of 120 years, rather than only 60.

As I have noted before, the energy of the year is not a form of fortune-telling. This was put very well, in the words of my intellectual ancestor in Astrology, **Wang Chong 王充 (27-97 CE)**: “The Heavens (celestial bodies) provide conditions, not instructions; time shapes tendencies, not destinies”.

The energy of the year, named after an animal, describes how Planet Earth is energetically affected in a given year. Energetic trends do not determine our fate. But they do 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. As Above – So Below. Therefore, the purpose of this document is to help you understand how to better align yourself with the energies of the year.

To receive such advice, does not mean that you would always be able to follow it. When a given year yields itself better for an entrepreneurial spirit, some people are stuck in situations when they cannot begin something new. When a specific year is mellow and slow, certain people might be at the peak of acceleration of their career. When certain years benefit the union between family members and friends, some people are lonely nevertheless. As **Wang Chong 王充** put it: “The year may be good for harvest, but poor farmers still starve”. A year has its energetic potential. It does not imply that everyone would know how to take advantage of it, or would be able to.

To reiterate, the 12 Animals, and their total cycle of 60 combinations, do not represent biological animals, personality types or lucky symbols. The 12 Animals of the Chinese Zodiac are rather, cultural archetypes that are used

to describe the different energetic currents that are extant with the passing of the years. Those energetic currents of the years, represented by 60 animal combinations, do not predict the future. They instead, describe the energetic potentials expressed on our planet, in specific periods of time. Humans can take advantage of those energetic potentials, ignore them, or go against them. Much of the time, the choice is ours. That is why in Judaism we say: "All is known, and yet permission is granted". The created universe operates with laws already laid out, but humans are given a choice, to a degree, within certain limits.

After another brief set of explanations, the next chapters now include a few clarifications, and following them, shall begin the fascinating and enlightening discussion of each astrological 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).



The 60 Animal Years

	Dragon	Snake
Wood	Teal Dragon	Green Tree Snake
Fire	Dragon of Fiery Skies	Snake of the Lamps
Earth	Virtuous Dragon	Snake of Desert Sands
Metal	Hoarding Dragon	Bronze Snake
Water	Hidden Dragon	Wetlands Snake
	Horse	Sheep
Wood	Horse of the Plains	Meadow Sheep
Fire	The Stallion	Lonely Sheep
Earth	Stable Horse	Pen Sheep
Metal	Stubborn Horse	Goat of the Mines
Water	Cloud Horse	Rain Sheep
	Monkey	Rooster
Wood	Jungle Monkey	Pasture Cock
Fire	Independent Monkey	Prime Cock
Earth	The Gorilla	Coop Chicken
Metal	Determined Monkey	Golden Rooster
Water	Elegant Monkey	Pool Rooster

	Dog	Pig
Wood	Guard Dog	Farm Pig
Fire	Dog of Passion and Dreams	Wild Boar
Earth	Mountain Dog	Glutton Pig
Metal	Dog of the Temple	Pig of Fine Jewelry
Water	Hunting Dog of the Marsh	Filthy Pig
	Rat	Ox
Wood	Chewing Rat	Relentless Ox
Fire	Field Rat	Bull
Earth	Granary Rat	Cow
Metal	Wealthy Rat	Rigorous Ox
Water	Swamp Rat	Water Buffalo
	Tiger	Cat
Wood	Forest Tiger	Exploring Cat
Fire	Furnace Tiger	Ambitious Cat
Earth	Mountain Tiger	Relaxed Cat
Metal	Golden Tiger	Sharp Cat
Water	River Tiger	Pond Cat

When Do Astrological Years Begin?

Please be patient – the most fascinating parts of the book are very soon to arrive! Just before I am to introduce the analysis of the astrological years, an additional foundational aspect must be introduced.

In this book, for the sake of convenience, I refer to years using the yearly numerical system widely accepted worldwide – that of the ‘Common Era’, which originated with the agreed-upon birth-date of Jesus Christ. Thus, for the first year discussed for instance, I specify it as the year between 2024 and 2025 of the Common Era.

Yet you ought to know, that this is not the exact and precise time when the astrological years commence. Technically, in Chinese traditional thinking, the correct beginnings of an astrological year would be on either the 3rd, 4th or 5th of February. That date correlates with the astronomical period known as the ‘Beginning of Spring’ (Lìchūn 立春). It is the day when the Sun is at exactly at the celestial longitude of 315 degrees.

Some of you who are not familiar with this idea, may wonder why the Chinese have referred to this day as ‘The Beginning of Spring’. How come ‘Spring’ is described as arriving as early as February? The simple answer is that each of the seasons already begins to initiate before the previous season has ended. When the coldness or frost of winter is still dominant

in the air, below the ground things are already warming and changing, in preparation for Spring. This is also true of the years themselves. It is not that one astrological year suddenly disappears, and another emerges instantaneously, all on the same day, at the beginning of February. Rather, there is a process with which one year loses momentum, as the next year begins to replace it, with the peak of the dynamic occurring in early February. It is akin to one wave that merges into another, and then takes over.

The first year discussed in this book is 2024-2025, which was the year of the Yang Wood Dragon. It is not the first year on a list, as the Chinese consider the Dragon to be the 'fifth animal in the cycle of 12'. This book begins with the Yang Wood Dragon, because the first year during which work on this book has begun.

My personal opinion is that because there is a total cycle of 60 years, no year is truly 'first' or 'last'. It is an endless cycle, and no year within it is more 'important' or of 'greater significance' than the others. Whichever importance or significance we give to this or that year in history, is the entirely subjective interpretation of human cultures.



An Astrological Analysis of the

Yang Wood Dragon

For the years 2024-2025



The Qi of Dragons

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

In thinking about ‘dragons’, consider something which is unique and exceptional. Chinese Culture strongly identifies itself with the Dragon, and this has been the case for thousands of years. Moreover, the Dragon is the only one among the 12 Animals of the Chinese Zodiac that is mythical. To some extent, dragons also have the qualities of all other animals, combined. They can roll, crawl, walk, run, jump, pounce, swim and fly. They can eat anything. They can be timid or aggressive, quiet or loud. Thus, they have more potential than other animals. But they are still more inclined towards specific types of behaviour.

Compared with other animals, the Dragon is noble, majestic, powerful, intelligent, confident, charismatic, visionary, ambitious, tenacious, creative, independent, dynamic, proud, egotistical, transformative (of other things), inspiring or intimidating (depending on its actions), restless when active (works hard and rests hard), magnetic (in its personality) and expansive (seeks out new places, lands and opportunities). Some call Dragons ‘courageous’, but this is a descriptor more suitable for the Tiger. The Dragon seems to act ‘with courage’, but it is more so because it confidently believes, and typically rightfully so, that nothing and no one can intimidate it. You do not need courage, really, when nothing can pose you a threat.



Because nothing can threaten the Dragon, it can go and do whatever it wants. But this does not mean that it will. That would depend on its motivations, and often on which type of Dragon is involved. Yet when the Dragon desires something, hardly anything has the power to stop it. The Horse can push through obstacles. The Ox can move obstacles slowly. The Dragon can go around any obstacle, and prefers it that way, but it can also blast its way through with its sheer size.

The Monkey can imitate others. The Snake can take the shape of other things by transforming itself. The Dragon either transforms other things, or overpowers. But it retains its core identity.

There is a similarity between Dragons and Snakes. One can think of the Dragon, as an extremely powerful and bulky snake, which can also fly. The Dragon therefore retains the ability to change its shape in order to go around things, but loses the ability to shed its skin. Indeed, the Dragon cannot change who and what it is. That reality is clear and evident to all. It is an animal that expresses its glory, but does not transform into something new. Things around it, change to match its behaviour.

The Horse is the most independent of the herd animals. The Dragon is the most independent of all the animals in general, for it needs not a mate, family, group or herd. It is free of all social structures.

Being enormous is not necessarily an advantage. The Dragon is respected, but also feared. Much like the animal, dragon years are ones in which the energy is that of mighty movements in the world. People allow tremendous things to happen, but such occurrences can be frightening.

Many people feel uneasy about Dragon years. All of the years of the physically-larger animals have a more powerful energy, and the Dragon is the biggest of them all. Any Dragon brings forth a force which is difficult to reckon with. They are like large storms or erupting volcanos, and thus often favour the survival of the strongest. It is no coincidence that Dragons, with their regal might, have long been associated with Imperial Sovereigns in Asia, and especially in China. Those who hold dominion over others, such as Presidents, Kings, Heads of companies, Leaders of clans, and anyone who has a major following combined with sway, has the potential to gain further advantage in a Dragon year, because he or she are closer in their social manifestation to a Dragon, more so than to the other animals.

When a dragon year comes, it is like a giant elephant on the savanna grassland. It can be seen from a distance. It inevitably makes noise when it travels. Those not careful, or too small, might be stepped on. The Dragon may not even notice that it happened. People know where it passed, as ruins and stories are left behind. Other times, treasures and inspirations are the inheritance of its journey. It may come quickly, and then disappear without a trace. It is inherent that chaos follows it, but that drama is seldom instigated by malevolence.

The Dragon does not have to speak in order to make its stance. The Dragon needs not call, growl, roar, hiss, oink, moo, neigh or bark. It has a presence, which can be used without sound. Its will is made known simply by its actions, and via positioning itself where it desires to be. Actions then, speak louder than words in a dragon year.



People consider Dragons to be both smart and lucky, which is a useful combination. But unless one can handle the challenges inherent to dealing with a Dragon or acting like it, those luck and wit could not be made of use. This is similar to the dilemma of having substantial wealth. It is a wonderful thing, but only for those who know how to manage it. Dragons come and go, but not every person knows how, or is able, to cope with their massive energy.

It is important to remember that the Dragon is a predator. It is neither innocent nor mild, and it will take what it chooses, and when it desires that object of interest. That is its instinct. The Dragon of Western myths is typically of the unhealthy kind, that embodies its role as a predator to the fullest, without ever reciprocating. This is one aspect of the Dragon, overly-exaggerated. Dragons can be a blessing too. People's hearts shake when the enormous storm arrives, or when the massive volcano erupts. But in retrospect, those occurrences often set-up the conditions for other things and opportunities to flourish, in the aftermath. When people fear change, the Dragon comes and coerces circumstances that disallow them to remain as they were before.

The Dragon easily changes its mind, and is not committed. It is akin in that way, to an extreme wealthy person, that lives outside of the ordinary rules and regulations of society, such as a Monarch. When you have all of the options, and see everyone from above, then beyond the directive of your core conscience, you owe nothing to no one. This is accentuated by the fact that the Dragon can also change its momentum and direction in flight with ease, making it even more fickle, unpredictable and dangerous. Since the Dragon represents the energies of a year – of the planet in a given time – then

we humans ought to find it within ourselves to be adaptable and flexible, as well as ready for surprises, in order to deal with this kind of drama in the dragon years.

At the same time, Dragons can be stubborn if they are fixated on something. They could be distracted, but not easily moved physically from their trajectory or place of sitting. The Dragon then can be lured at times, but you would often not be able to convince it to stray from its intentions without much effort.

The Chinese consider Dragons as the ultimate expressions of the mightiness of Nature itself. Metal Dragons are their shapes in clouds in the sky, or storms or tornados in their thundering outlines. Water Dragons are the sea squalls and the great waves in their mayhem. Wood Dragons are the ways in which entire forests create ominous and yet alluring shapes. Fire Dragons are the erupting volcanos with their violence and destruction. Earth Dragons are observed in the formations of mountains, with their immovable presence. In Chinese Culture, people look at such things, and see a mirror of the energies of those different Dragons, and those of their associated years. It is for this reason that the Dragon does not have to exist as an actual 'animal' in our world. Its presence is there, irrespective of not living and breathing. For the Dragon, much like all other 11 zodiac animals, is not a creature in the flesh, but a metaphor for the celestial powers that influence our existence.



There are some people who say that the Dragon, together with the Monkey and the Rat, make for the ‘lucky triad’, and are “auspicious animals”. But this is a misrepresentation of how those animals thrive. The Dragon, Monkey and Rat are neither lucky nor auspicious. They are simply well adapted for survival, in combination with taking advantage of circumstances. The Dragon is simply born powerful enough to deal with whatever comes its way, and sort of lives ‘outside of the laws that bind the rest of the animals’. The Monkey is sneaky and agile, and serially avoids trouble by outplaying or tricking it. The Monkey is also good at getting out of difficult situations, which most other animals are not skilled at. The Rat is small, quick and evasive. It can disappear with greater ease. It is also cunning, and relies on planning. In those ways and others, the Rat often gets out of harm’s way. Those three animals then, are ‘statistically’ observed to suffer fewer calamities, in relation with their circumstances, as compared with other animals. The Rat for example, seldom lives long, because many things want to kill it. But in the span of its short life, it typically manages to prevent itself from being killed numerous times. Such things are not ‘luck’. They are rather, the expression of the inherent traits of those three animals, in their dealings with the world around them. They are simply more capable to defy dangerous circumstances, or to gain an advantage, on average and in comparison to others in similar circumstances.

The Image of the Yang Wood Dragon

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

In the cycle of the Five Phases, the dragon that comes 12 years before the Wood Dragon, is the Water Dragon. One of the most famous sentences in the Yijing (Book of Changes) is as follows:

潛龍勿用 Qián Lóng Wù Yòng

Submerged (Hidden) Dragon, do not use it.

This is a metaphor for a force that has not yet matured sufficiently to openly present itself to the world. The Water Dragon is a powerful force that remains under the water. It gathers momentum, like the fluids that rise up inside of a tree in winter, before erupting as new branches and leaves in the spring. The Water Dragon absorbs power. 11 years later, the Wood Dragon uses that power for growth. Then in the passing of yet another 11 years, the Fire Dragon will consume the previous expansion in the full manifestation of potential, as the utmost Yang expression.

The Wood Dragon is the first of the Five Dragons. Among the Five Dragons, the Wood Dragon occupies the natural direction and phase of that animal in the system of the Five Phases – it is the Teal Dragon, associated with the East and with the Liver. It takes bold initiative, can issue commands, and behaves more ‘like an army general’ than the other four dragons. The General issues orders, but it does not always



have to be on the front lines. Sometimes it may prove just as successful by coordinating things away from the action.

The energy of the Yang Wood Dragon year is that of boundless expansion in all directions. Such is the combination of Yang, Wood and Dragon. Yang is ‘male energy’, therefore more dominant and aggressive. Wood, as in the movement vectors of a tree, expands downward (roots), upward (branches), and sideways (roots, branches and trunk). The Dragon, as an animal, can go wherever it pleases. Therefore, the Yang Wood Dragon year holds the greatest potential for boundless expansion than any other year in the 60-year cycle.¹

¹ There is a common view that the Yang Wood Dragon is a key ‘transformative year’. This requires some explaining. Technically, in the cycle of the 60 Zodiac Year, the Yang Wood Dragon is the 41st. Yet as I have commented earlier in the book, the cycles are endless. As long as our solar system remains in its current general formation, the cycles will forever continue as they are today. Therefore, any year in the cycle of 60, can be considered ‘the beginning of something’. The Yang Wood Dragon is thought of as allowing the instigation of major transformations, because it is a Dragon Year – thereby most energetically powerful amongst the animals, a year of Yang – ‘male creative energy’, and a Wood Year, implying expansion. Yang Wood is also called ‘one of the 10 Celestial Stems’, and its name in Chinese is Jiǎ 甲. It is the first among the 10 Celestial Stems. Jiǎ 甲 is traditionally described as ‘a sprout breaking the soil’, ‘an upright tree trunk’, ‘the moment when a form first asserts itself’. All of those then, are descriptions of the Yang Wood Dragon, also. ‘A sprout breaking through the soil upward’ is furthermore the classical description of the Yijing trigram 震 Zhèn ䷲, which is also associated with the Dragon. In other words, although the Fire Dragon is the most stereotypical form of that animal in Western lore, the Yang Wood Dragon – the Teal Dragon, most clearly resonates with how the whole of Chinese Philosophy, Astrology and Cosmology perceive this beast to be; and the Yang Wood Dragon is the herald of that which sprouts anew – the instigator of fresh things that break into the world. As expressed by its association with the first of the 10 Celestial Stems, known as Jiǎ 甲.

As you may also remember from the beginning of the book, there are 10 Celestial Stems and 12 Earthly Branches. The 12 Animals of the Chinese Zodiac are correlated with the 12 Earthly Branches. But despite this correlation, the 12 Earthly Branches are called by different names – not by the animal names. The earthly branch of the Dragon is called Chén 辰. It is associated with the Earth Phase (of the five phases: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water). Therefore, in the Yang Wood Dragon, there is a meeting of the celestial stem called Jiǎ 甲, that represents Wood, with the earthly branch called Chén 辰, which represents Earth. The Chinese see it as a dynamic of ‘Wood breaking through the Earth’, hence the strengthening of the metaphor mentioned earlier, of the sprout emerging from the soil. This is a classical dynamic of eruption, also widely and commonly addressed in the medical theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). ‘Wood invading Earth’ in TCM, is the most common manner in which problems with the Liver (Wood) cause issues with digestion (Earth). So, when we think of the Yang Wood Dragon in that way, we are expecting that kind of a year to ‘stir trouble’ – from the human perspective, but more accurately, to bring about an abrupt or violent change ‘to the natural order’, with ‘the emergence of wood shaking the earth from beneath’. Something akin to an earthquake, but more often in ways unrelated to that specific kind of a natural disaster. A shaking of things formerly stable. Much as implied by the name of the trigram 震 Zhèn ䷲, which means: ‘to quake’, ‘to shake’ or ‘to vibrate’. It does not mean ‘to destroy’. When things quake and shake, some people adapt by becoming stronger, changing themselves, or improving their structures. Others fall apart or even disappear, but by so doing, they make room for new people and opportunities to emerge, like fresh sprouts.

The Yang Wood Dragon is the most creative and intuitive of all 60 animal variations. It can be said that it knows its own soul best of all of them.

It is not easy to stop the momentum of a Yang Wood Dragon once it has accelerated. Often, it is impossible. But it is also not as wild as the Fire Dragon. It can be lured, to a degree. Sometimes convinced, to an extent. It will go where its energies can expand without being hindered. It is like the habit of Ficus trees. They will send roots and branches in the direction they desire, and would even go through concrete if necessary. Yet if the concrete offers smooth and pleasant grooves and crevices for the roots and branches to pass-through, then often the Ficus will prefer following via those avenues and routes, rather than having to waste its energy in direct conflict, even though it is not averse to the latter.

Because this year supports the momentum of the strong and powerful, it also reveals imbalances. It is akin to a person who is successful, but whose progress is visibly observed in costing him his health, wealth or relationships. The Yang Wood Dragon comes at us with vigor, rambling as a massive earthquake. Many structures will not survive such intensity. But those that persist, will suddenly reveal their vulnerabilities – where their cracks are.



Aligning Yourself With the Year

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

The previous year was that of the Yin Water Cat. In the preceding year, the energy was very deep and withdrawn, almost secretive. This new year of the Yang Wood Dragon is out in the open and extroverted, almost obtrusive. It is a sharp transition from darkness to light, from the small with the enormous. Those who blink in the process will miss valuable opportunities. The strategies which may have earned one progress and benefits in the year prior, would be the downfall of the coming year. Major change in attitude is therefore due.

This is now a year of chaos and instability. Yet for the wise, chaos is a ladder. With ambition, charisma and innovation, it is possible to ride the chaos to success. Do not change who you are. Change the world around you.

The energetic movement to contend with in this year is quite large. It is somewhat akin to a Tsunami. When a giant wave comes over a city, the meek continue to cower even after the danger has passed. But there are a few who can take advantage, in both positive and negative ways. There might arise a hero, who would save people. A leader, who would organize the community during the crisis. A healer, who would tend to people's physical or emotional wounds. A caretaker, to look after the needs to those harmed. The giant waves will wreak havoc on some, but those who are wise and

calm under pressure, can find the opportunity hidden therein. The Dragon does not eat those whom it respects.

Can you think like an Army General? Can you take a look from above, and consider the circumstances and resources objectively? This year calls upon you to do so. It does not mean that you need to lead a military force, or even a group. You can be a General, even in the management of your own personal resources.

This quest to expand, take charge and use big opportunities in times of crisis, is a call to adventure. Those who are willing to be adventurous, and to arrive in places and situations they have not been to before, could benefit from what this year has to offer. This will be enhanced if imbued with passion and tenacity.

The Dragon is of the Heavens. This is a year of Heaven, and not of the Earth. The implications are that this year favours macro over micro, the greater picture over small details, and the vision over the technicalities. Some may argue even, the spiritual more than the mundane.

Macro, Greater Picture, Vision and the Spiritual – from what angle and perspective, though? Because this is the Teal Wood Dragon of the East, the year flows better with those things which are newly initiated; young and fresh; budding and promising. There is a greater potential drive behind such things, like the sprouts of springtime, as opposed to those initiatives that are already old or seasoned.

Due to the natural presence of the Dragon, this is a year when actions speak louder than words. The action of the Yang



Wood Dragon is to literally stretch oneself. To extend over, beyond and around people, things, circumstances, obstacles and opportunities. When this is done, others notice, and an effect is achieved. Whether good or bad, depends often on the question of if the energy of the Dragon that was used, was perceived by others to be inspiring or intimidating.

All Dragons sin with pride and egotism, and these are pitfalls to watch out for, especially given the expansive potential of the Yang Wood Dragon year. There is a very fine line in such a year, between the need to showcase one's success, and having it perceived negatively by others.

To act boldly based on one's intuitions, whilst taking calculated risks and externally demonstrating one's resolve – such can be a useful strategy in a year such as this. In such a year, taking calculated risks also means to seek to counsel of others. That is because the accelerating expansion of the Wood Dragon can sometimes come at the expense of acting with logical reasoning. Do not rush daring actions, before considering the consequences.

However, remember that the Dragon does not progress by 'the luck of the fool'. The Dragon is an intelligent animal. To make haste based on feelings alone, and with no rationale or plan, is contrary to intelligence, and therefore not in-line with the energy of the Dragon. While the Dragon, by the sheer power that it wields, needs not be as calculated as the Snake or the Rat, it is still not prone to random or spontaneous actions, unless angered into impulsivity. It acts with a purpose, also because it can see from above and to a distance.

This year favours the ‘ground-breakers’. Yet when one breaks new ground, not everyone can follow. Most in fact, would not. This means that even if you were able to ride the energy of the year and expand magnificently in all directions, you are likely to ‘leave some others behind’. Perhaps your family, friends or colleagues, would not be able to adapt as quickly as you did. Maybe the bureaucracy is not yet suited to handle the transformation you have pushed for. Society could be impressed by, but not always accepting, of your tremendous leap forward. Be sure then, that if you undertake monumental action, that there is still a support network to back up your decisions and progress. Else, you may be hindered, or required to wait later for further progress.

The Dragon is the Yang-est of all the Yang Animals. Like the Alpha Males among the high-mammals, then, part of its status is earned by its display of **generosity**. The Dragon mostly takes, but it must also give something back – its mythical status as a ‘creature of luck and fortune’ demands it. This is all the more true of the Wood Dragon, who symbolizes **abundance** (within the grouping of the Five Dragons). To generously share with others is the positive virtue of the Wood Dragon, and to become angry and upset with others is among its worse vices. This mirrors qualities of its related bodily organ, the Liver, as it is understood in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). A Dragon who charges for entry to the sky looks insecure. A Dragon who leaves the gates open looks unassailable.



Generosity is made possible by the belief in abundance, and anger is often the result of frustrations deriving from the belief that there is scarcity. Yet the Wood Dragon, who can go anywhere and do whatever it desires, is genuinely almost never in a position or condition of scarcity. It needs only to look around objectively, for the abundance to appear. Although this abundance will not often come to it in the form of 'a low-hanging fruit', still it has the power, will, charisma and ability to collect and own it.

Dragon hours are 7AM to 9AM every day. These are the hours when the Stomach is most active. In the years of Earth Dragon, this is all the more important, because the Stomach belongs to the Earth Phase as well. However, one should pay attention in the years of Wood Dragon as well. It is in the character of the Wood Dragon to boundlessly expand. This can lead to certain gluttony, either physical, psychological or spiritual. A Stomach overly expanded will lead to vomiting, or severe disease in the long-term. Thus, from this we learn that the Yang Wood Dragon ought to be careful, as to refrain from expanding beyond his or her natural capacities. There is only so much that 'one could stretch'.

Now as to the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) point of view. Dragon was beforehand noted as relating to the Stomach. Wood relates to the Liver. The dynamic between the Stomach and the Liver is often a turbulent one. Specifically, the Liver is prone to 'attack' the Stomach. When the Liver is dysfunctional, the Stomach often pays a price. This is most commonly the case when frustration or anger lead to a harmful dynamic as such. This year then, requires

a harmonizing of the Liver and the Stomach. The most relevant acupuncture point tends to be LV-14. The most relevant herbs are typically Chai Hu, Bai Shao, Gan Cao, Chuan Lian Zi, Chen Pi, Qing Pi, Zhi Ke, Mu Xiang, Zhi Ban Xia, Wu Zhu Yu, Huang Qin, Huang Lian and Yu Jin. The most appropriate formula is commonly Chai Hu Shu Gan San. Do not take herbs or formulas without a prescription from a legitimate practitioner of TCM.

From the perspective of qigong, shaking the body is well-indicated this year. One of the main things that cause the Liver to stagnate is when the Yang of the Liver rises uncontrollably. This is a year when a Yang Wood Dragon rises. Gentle to mild shaking, in different ways, diffuses liver qi stagnation, in part by diffusing the excessive ascension of Liver Yang. Shaking it therefore beneficial for preventing the Liver from stagnating. How has to learn from a qigong qi teacher, however, how to shake correctly.

Dragons are meat-eaters. But meats in this year must be balanced with a lot of green vegetables, to support the liver. Eating actual livers, as well as drinking bone-broths, is excellent as well. It is generally a healthy thing, and even more so this year.



Important Dates For Yang Wood Dragon

The Wood Season: Spring

The Dragon month is: April 4th to May 5th

Yin Wood days are: April 4th, April 14th, April 24th, May 4th

The Dragon Hour of every day is: 7AM to 9AM

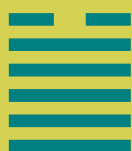
Thus, between 7AM and 9AM on April 4th, April 14th, April 24th and May 4th, these would be the Dragon Hours in the Yang Wood Days in the Wood Season (Spring) in the year of the Yang Wood Dragon. These are the hours and dates when the energy of the year would be strongest.

Also, consider applying the type of advice and ideas presented in this chapter, 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.

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:



Break-Through

Quite literally, this is a ‘breakthrough year’ for the daring, matching the name of the hexagram. Other names for it include ‘Determination’, ‘Parting’, ‘Displacement’ and ‘Resoluteness’, all likewise being suitable for this year.

This is both an opportunity and a warning. One can make great leaps forward in many directions and areas. But it is also possible to expand until one bursts, breaking through your own healthy limits, as in the example of the Stomach, given a few paragraphs earlier.



This hexagram suggests an ability to stand firm against the forces of negativity. It matters less who is 'objectively the villain' – only that when behaving as a Wood Dragon, you can gain momentum in fighting that force. It is possible to do so as long as a person resists corruption and creates his own rules rather than being a slave to those of others.

The traditional translations of this hexagram's description, speak of Justice. They indicate the idea of bringing a matter of great concern – a wartime affair or a criminal plot, before a royal court. There is danger in exposing such a truth, and therefore that act is made in the open for all to see. Yet the proposed solution by he who declares the problem, is to resolve it without the need of violent force – without having to resort to an armed conflict. This appeals to the nature of the Dragon. Few dare face the Dragon head-on. He who can be the Dragon, does not have to take risks while in the service of Justice. His presence may suffice.

The structure of the hexagram is that of a marsh atop of heaven, or a lake in the sky. It is a mythical image, almost as if taken from a 'garden of the Gods' in a folk tale from Ancient Greece. The traditional interpretation is that this is a lake which had been 'lifted' or 'sucked into' the heavens. Essentially, meaning that the murky waters have become heavenly vapours, and shall now be redistributed across the land. It is a symbol of abundance, as the water-filled sky will rain plenty. It therefore calls upon the virtuous person to avoid hoarding wealth, and to share generously with his subordinates.

Yang Wood Dragon - A Year in Review

The year did lend itself to major world-scale dynamic and chaotic transformations. Great floods occurred in countries Indonesia, Brazil, Papua New Guinea and Kenya. Major political shifts transpired, particularly in Eastern Europe, the Middle East the United States and the Congo. They who had the upper hand were the stronger forces, or those who knew how to exert their strength better than others. Whoever dared, was harder to stop.

On the global scene, there were four great winners during this year, and four great losers.

The country of Israel, and the American President-Elect Donald Trump, the Argentinian President Javier Milei, and the El-Salvadorian President Nayib Bukele, were big winners that year. This country and those people won, because they consciously chose to adopt the mannerisms of a Yang Wood Dragon: Act large without restraint, expand in all directions simultaneously, and ask not for permission to act and to assert dominance. Be visible and decisive, and make your stand clear, while avoiding impulsiveness.

Donald Trump, arguably the biggest winner of the year, had used the virtue of generosity as a key strategic attribute of his new political vision. It may be argued to what degree Trump intended to be generous towards his citizenship, but it is certain that he sought to appear benevolent in that manner. He did so by focusing on many issues which his potential voters cared about in their daily lives, more so than he had done before. This made him 'a more likable Dragon'.

What else Trump did, was to expand into marketing territories that he had not attempted before, broadening his political and propaganda horizons. He campaigned while working for a short while inside of a fast-food restaurant, and went on to be interviewed on popular internet interview shows. This was uncharacteristic of him, and had paid-off.

Hamas and Hizballah, two Middle-Eastern Terrorist Organizations, lost this year because they were cats and rats trying to contend with Israel, which was a Dragon as compared with themselves. The smaller animals cannot use force to compete with the larger ones, unless they either work together, or find the right timing, leverage or circumstances. What could have worked for them with better organizational coordination in the previous year of the Yin Water Cat, has utterly failed them in the year of the Yang Wood Dragon.

Russia and China were the losers who mis-engaged the energies of the the Yang Wood Dragon. Russia attempted to behave like a Teal Dragon, even though it is inherently a White Tiger, thereby trying to capitalize on enegertic dynamics opposite to its own, and failing. China, who is a natural Teal Dragon or a Red Dragon (depending on the historical period), kept itself timid, like a sleepy Tiger, due to internal challenges with its economy and society, and so had missed a decent opportunity to expand. In that year, especially at the backdrop of the American Elections, the Chinese Communist Party had a superior opportunity to seize Taiwan, but failed to do so, despite preparing for that occasion for several decades.

China also lost the potential of the year because it is not only a natural Teal Dragon, but also culturally located in the East, whence the Sun comes. It had the identity with the animal, the direction and the element of surprise, and failed to capitalize on all three accounts.

A 'hidden dragon' which rose to prominence in that year was Artificial Intelligence (AI). The year saw the most widespread adoption of AI tools by the general public in human history, surpassing expectations of both popularity and scope of usage. AI emerged without warning, and immediately began to threaten the stability and existence of established human professions and occupations, many of which with a history of hundreds or even thousands of years.

I spent all of 2024 as a volunteer, during the Iron Swords War. This was a process I began in October of 2023, and that continued all throughout 2026. During the year 2024, I typically used three whole days of each week to travel across Israel, providing medical treatments with Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) near the front lines of the conflict. For me, this was an ultimate expression of the energetics of the year. Although I am a well-traveled person in general, previously I seldom did any traveling within Israel itself. Even during my travels abroad, I seldom ventured beyond limited areas. Yet in the year of the Yang Wood Dragon, I visited dozens of new places all-over my homeland, which I have never been to before. I met, spoke with and sometimes befriended thousands of new people, from all walks of life. I spread the good works of TCM to the hearts and minds of all of those people, and dramatically increased my skill and understanding in this amazing Medicine.

Through this boundless expansion in all directions, I became a formidable healer, and a much more astute observer of the world in which I live. Those experiences of mine are documented in my war memoir, titled: **'Iron Swords, Golden Hearts'** (published in 2026).

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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

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 – the ‘Zodiac Archetype’ of the Snake’. 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 for all to see and feel.

The Snake is always in the process of becoming something else. Snakes can also 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’ tend to attract others to them, go behind the scenes, and reach where they want without being noticed. They could also be alluring, mesmerizing, hypnotizing and attracting. The energy of snake years 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. Snakes make great actors and can become anyone, as in 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.

Despite all of their positive qualities, snakes also have dark sides to them. Their so-called ‘wisdom’ is not exactly the ‘wisdom of a sage’. It is ‘adaptive intelligence’, and it is accompanied by moral ambiguity, also. The Snake is comfortable with the half-truth and with ‘what works to achieve a goal’.

Snake additionally live in self-contradiction. They want to be left to themselves without interference, but they are also perceived as attractive, alluring and enticing. So even though they do their best to maintain camouflage, once in a while the negative attention finds them, and inevitably creates conflict.

As opportunistic predators, they often have their way via cunning. The lore of Western Culture, especially the Bible, is pretty clear on this aspect. The Snake can make tempting proposals, which are often self-serving. This is more characteristic of the Wood (Tree) Snake, but all snakes can be said to be less trustworthy than most other animals, lacking reliability. It is not that they are fickle or flaky – they are actually quite intentionally deluding others, once in a



while, for the sake of promoting a specific goal. As author Suzanne White once wrote: “Snakes were charming men, long before men were charming snakes”.

Snake people and years also have their ‘forked tongues’. Dual meanings are carried by the same sentence – one meaning that is heard, another that is hidden. One should be careful, and assume that not all is as it initially sounded.

While not as thoroughly conniving like the Rat, the Snake will readily trick and delude to achieve its desires. When the Snake schemes, the agenda is usually focused, and not overarching. Its process of trickery furthermore usually involves a slow interaction, or one that is passive, unlike the Monkey, who actively tricks with speed and body language.

Snakes, with their strong self-centeredness and preference for solitude, 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, or by coincidence. In snake years, it can therefore sometimes be more difficult than usual, to gather people in a group, without previous strong associations.

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 a similar difficulty, but it can eat a meal for longer, and 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.

Cats and Rats quickly multiply themselves and 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. Relative to the Five Snakes, the Wood Snake is more shy, gentle and calm, unless it is hunting, or being disturbed. 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:

This first type of this green crawling reptile, the wood snake, is a small, mild and gentle snake. It can also be thought-of as a ‘baby snake’. The second kind of a 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. While they can certainly bite if provoked, they have to be careful of grabbing unto something which is too large for them to consume. 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 it feels threatened; sometimes even to its detriment, because it will typically not win the fight against larger animals, or at least not benefit from the effort.

The Yang Wood Dragon is often likened to a massive and sprawling tree, like certain species of Ficus, that sends roots and branches everywhere and through everything. The Yin Wood Snake is more similar to flowers and vines, which can form and manifest in many difficult and challenging places, but do so with far less coercion; in fact, with the least amount of force necessary.

Despite being a patient and hidden creature, the Wood Snake specifically is still a climber. Consider that it desires to climb higher than the other four snakes, who typically stay closer to the ground. 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. So it continues to draw upon at least some of the momentum of the Yang Wood Dragon, albeit far more gently, and with fewer vectors of action.

The Tiger and Cat are both ambush predators, but are also fast, hasty and not methodical. They rely on their ability to improvise at the moment of action, no less than on their element of surprise. The Yin Wood Snake knows both the ambush and the patience. It does not need to eat often. It is not in a hurry. It understands well, the concept of timing. Had it been a person, it would have been able to conceive of this book quite well. For as was noted at the very beginning of the book, Astrology itself is the study of Timing.



Regarding timing, the Yin Wood Snake must also be understood as the ‘coiling of momentum that is ready to explode’. This momentum should be used quite sparsely during this year. Instead, the greater energy that it gathers, ought to be spared for the race that one could pursue in the year to follow, that of the Yang Fire Horse.

In Judeau-Christian religious lore, the Yin Wood Snake is the first animal whose encounter with mankind is documented. At the Garden of Eden, this ‘Yin Wood Snake’ – the snake of the trees, makes tempting proposals, and those lead to disastrous consequences for both mankind and itself. Curiously, that Wood Snake is subsequently transformed by God into the Earth Snake, as punishment. For its deeds, it is made to live a life of bitter, ‘wasted potential’. It is devolved.

Later we see this theme repeating itself throughout the history of Western Civilization. Snakes, and especially the Wood Snakes, become associated with hypnotism. The Charmer of Snakes who can hypnotize such animals, is considered a foremost magician in the eyes of laypeople, because he can overpower, with his mind, an animal whose spiritual expertise is believed to be the ability to sway others. The character of the hypnotizing Snake Kaa, in ‘The Jungle Book’, is also a good example of this archetype.

In such stories we see that the Wood Snake is affiliated with the feminine, and its energy connects with women more naturally. The year of the Yin Wood Snake is one in which women may find it easier to harness the energetics of the times in their favour.

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.



Thinking further in terms of TCM, this year, like the previous one, also risks liver qi stagnation, but from a different angle. The extroverted Yang Wood Dragon is more prone to this syndrome due to liver yang rising, most commonly at the backdrop of overly-expressive frustration or anger. The introverted Yin Wood Snake attracts liver qi stagnation via the repression of emotions. A typical Snake would **want** to have the world know how it feels, but a Yin Wood Snake cannot afford to make itself known; for reasons already explained before. This has to do with the self-contradiction inherent to all snakes, too; namely, that they want to be in the background, but end-up attracting attention nevertheless. The slow and timid energies of this yearly may thus lean people towards not saying what they strongly feel should be spoken; or avoiding action when their hearts tell them that it is fiercely due. Because they want to expand and extend outward, but hold themselves back. Especially given the fact that the momentum of the Yang Wood Dragon of the previous year is still pushing to a degree, but the Snake is not capable of handling waves of that magnitude.

Given this wood year corresponds with the Spleen, here we have a Liver-Spleen dynamic, that requires harmonizing. The most relevant acupuncture point tends to be LV-13. The most relevant herbs are typically Chai Hu, Bai Shao, Dang Gui, Chuan Xiong, Gan Cao, Xiang Fu and Mu Xiang. The most appropriate formula is commonly Xiao Yao San. Do not take herbs or formulas without a prescription from a legitimate practitioner of TCM.

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 a preexisting 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 by it. You would likely 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.

The energetics of opportunities in the year of the Yin Wood Snake, express themselves in two major forms. One type of opportunity is that of the 'prey' which can be grasped by you, through patient ambush. This opportunity is safer, if preparations, patience and caution were adhered to. The other type of opportunity is that which arises through a tempting propositions.



This then begs the question – would you be on the receiving end of the Snake’s tempting proposition, or the one making it to another party? Either of those options works well with the energy of this year. The risk in receiving such a proposition, is that if it was made to you by a metaphorical Snake, then it could very well be a trap. The danger in making such a proposition yourself, is that as a ‘Yin Wood Snake’, you may not have much energetic backing to lean against, if things do not go according to plan.

Remember that all Snakes lie, most often simply in order to survive. The Yin Wood Snake is additionally an animal that seeks to stay covert. Combine those tendencies, and you receive an inclination for deceit. Be careful who you trust, then, because liars could have an extra edge this year. Thoroughly scrutinize people and opportunities, and do not readily agree to terms or say something sensitive to a person whom you do not know very well.

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.

One interpretation of such a change could be that of your own bodily form. Lose fat? Gain muscle? Do both? Those processesses are definitely in-line with the energetics of this year. Those are transformations, typically slow to happen, that require plans, patiences and ‘a slow upwards climb’.

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.



Important Dates For Yin Wood Snake

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.

Also, consider applying the type of advice and ideas presented in this chapter, 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.

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 re-formation. 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.

Yin Wood Snake - A Year in Review

This was certainly a year to be careful of an ambush. Charlie Kirk was a famous American aspiring politician, which many predicted could have one day become President. He was regrettably assassinated by a ‘random nobody’ – a frustrated young lad akin to a ‘hidden snake’, who was spontaneously triggered by Kirk’s mere opinions.

I also have a friend from California who is a famous healer, but does not indulge in Chinese Astrology. My healer friend lives in the countryside. One morning he was looking for something in his basement, when he accidentally stepped on a rattlesnake in the dark. The time was about 10AM – the hours of the Snake. He was bit at Liver 1, which is the Wood Acupuncture Point on the Liver Channel. It happened circa May 25th – the Yin Wood Day in the Wood Season in the Year of the Yin Wood Snake.

It was interesting to see the American President, Donald Trump, transition from a Dragon to a Snake. In the year 2024, one could say that Trump “was all-over the place”, issuing countless plans and threats. In 2025, soon as the Snake became dominant, Trump had slowed down, and began to tackle the challenges he had laid-out for his administration, one-by-one. There was still an upward climb, yet it was slow and cautious, without engaging everything at once.

Towards the end of the year, the United States Government issued a limited operation for the hijacking of the then-President of Venezuela. The political and financial reasons for this were many, but are unrelated to the contents of this book. The manner in which this operation was carried-out

however, was very much reflective of the energetics of the year. Instead of a full-blown invasion of Venezuela, the United States sufficed with a kidnapping of a single person and his wife, to gain the leverage it desired. It was a quick strike – a sudden bite, and then a withdrawal, without continuation of the struggle. The reasoning for this action was furthermore presented – whether you agree with it or not – as an ‘act of self-defense’ on behalf of the Americans, given ‘insults that were made against them’. The Tree Snake usually does not attack unprovoked, and when it does utilize its fangs, it seeks not to prolonged the conflict.

In Israel, we were in the midst of the Iron Swords War during that year. That conflict too, has dramatically mellowed in 2025, as compared with the previous year.

Compared with other years, China was exceptionally dormant as well, and its typical military threats – such as against Taiwan and Japan, were more passive-aggressive than ones involving substantial action. Northern Korea has gone quiet. The regime in Iran, suffering sneaky and snakey short ambush-retaliations from Israel and the United States earlier in the year, has not dared pushing itself again into the spotlight.

Looking at the local parliament here in Israel – the Knesset, very few laws were passed, compared with any years prior. In places such as the United States, there was a similar trend. While in the previous Yang Wood Dragon year, Americans saw the (unfortunate) enactment of no less than 240 – a large number in general in their parliamentary system, the Yin Wood Snake year only had 61 laws enacted – a very low number (average per year over the past thirty years in the

United States has been 193). In fact, I have checked, and it would appear that in most countries around the world, there was a reduction in the number of laws enacted between 2024 and 2025, often by over 30%. This I personally attribute to the lack of ‘energetic momentum’, inherent to the Yin Wood Snake year; and furthermore, to the effect of the energetic shift from a great high to a major low, between the Wood Dragon and the Wood Snake.

At my Chinese Medicine clinic, and in my volunteering efforts on the front lines of the Iron Swords War, the cases I was seeing were, overall and on average, of a less dramatic nature. Fewer emergencies, and less need for ‘medical heroism’.

Also in my private life, I too have fallen victim to a sneaky ambush by a certain ‘snake of a person’, which seemed to have come out of nowhere. The person of which I write seemed timid and mellow, completely disinterested in causing harm. Yet when that person accidentally perceived something I did as ‘a threat’ they reacted quickly and aggressively, with harsh but short-lasting results, later retreating into their socially-camouflaged state.

Such was a great irony of course, given that I was fully aware of the potential dangers from such people, in that particular year. Yet such is also the beauty of Astrology – it deals with aspects of ‘potential fate’ that can be seen from afar, but not controlled. At best, they can be aligned with, to obtain best results. Sometimes, even someone with a measure of expertise about those matters, can be blind to their effects in real-time.

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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 – the ‘Zodiac Archetype of the Horse’. 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, mostly herbivorous, 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 are headstrong. 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, optimistic, sensitive, and although it can be aggressive, prefers to act gently. They are impatient with hesitation. 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.

In many cultures, Horses are associated with dignity, luck and courage. They retain a dignified bearing in their movement as much as they can, being erect and graceful. They often get out of difficult situations, hence people's feeling about them that they are 'lucky'. While not as courageous as a Tiger, they can exert courage in impressive ways when necessary for their goal, or for sheer survival when they cannot flee. Dignity, luck and courage though, only represent the best of what a horse can be, and not what all horses are. A Horse can be heroic, but also cowardly, depending on its training. Therefore what the Horse may eventually do, often strongly depends on past and present levels of discipline.

Horses have a 'live-and-let-live kind of mentality'. They seldom meddle in the business of others, as long as others do not interfere with theirs. Unlike the Rat and the Cat, they are disinclined to invade the space where others reside, if they feel unprovoked.

It can be said that horses are 'conservative in their world-view'. They feel more at ease in working by routines. They prefer following what they have been habituated or trained to do, and often have strong reactions against what they intuitively perceive as 'unorthodox'. While physically, their bodies can change quickly in relation to circumstances and challenges, and even heal quickly and gain fitness with impressive rapidity. By they are also, in tandem, mentally disinclined to try new things of exceptional natures, without first having been accustomed to them. Coercing horses into

too many novelties at once, or too quickly in succession, tends to negatively affect their health.

Likewise, Horses tend to be opinionated and decisive, at least in the short-term. They either want to do something, or they do not. They may like a person, or entirely reject them. They know what they believe and desire, and they will resist changing their opinion. They could be swayed to think and act differently, but neither quickly nor easily. Unlike Dogs, they are not desiring to please others. Unlike Pigs, they cannot readily be bribed against their core beliefs (unless previously trained to do so). Unlike Rats, they would not ordinarily be tempted by the promise of abundance.

This is partly because Horses, like Cats, are suspicious. That propensity of Horses for suspicion, combined with their well-developed intuition, makes them trust their instincts, and be less willing to go against what their hearts tell them is the correct manner to act.

Horses are additionally known for their Loyalty, Social Memory, and Affection to Keen. They build loyalties slowly, over time; they remember their troop members and their relations to them well; and they would directly express their affection to those with whom they have formed a bond.

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, with which the ox excels.

Horses live and thrive in troops. As happens to many herd 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.

Humans have always considered horses to be good partners. Some view them as being as useful and loyal as dogs. But even more so than a dog, a horse requires much training. Unlike the dog, it is not naturally easger to please. Although humans enjoy horses which are tame, the natural state of a horse is that it is wild and unruly. 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. When it is convinced that the human has its best intentions, it will eventually work alongside it. Horse years are like that, too. You can work with them, but it takes

effort. The dog may offer you the prize in its mouth, but the horse will expect you to climb it on your own.

Like other fast-moving vegetarian herd mammals with hooves, the Horse is also alert. Much of the time, the horse is vigilant for the possibility of incoming threats. Unlike the Sheep, which is more innocent and requires a guard such as a Dog, the Horse can watch itself, if it is careful to do so. It has plenty of reasons to be attentive in this manner. Predatory animals want to eat it. It can run into small animals it misses, such as Snakes, and become negatively involved with them by accident. Humans want to capture and tame it. Danger is very real. Horses live magnificently, but seldom die of old age in nature.

Being attuned to this dire reality from birth, Horses have strong intuitions. Like Dogs, they often pick up on negative energies from people and situations, much in advance of humans. They therefore also develop strong preferences and dislikes. They do not welcome every new person or scenario. In traditional societies, when Horse refuses to cross a bridge, its rider would often choose another route, even if he does not know the reason for the Horse's disapproval.

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 that they have gotten themselves into. 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' that other animals possess. A pig can overeat itself to stupor, and simply sleep it over. A rat will eat even 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 via sweat, an otherwise mild substance.

Although the Horse is not as independent as the Dragon, it is the most independent amongst the herd animals. It can only be tamed with effort; yet taming also unlocks much of its potential. From this can be discerned, that horses benefit from training and practice, even if they prefer to do without them.

It is generally best to physically and behaviourally appear dignified and appealing in horse years, even if internally or inwardly that is not the case. Horses are generally considered to be regal, beautiful and elegant. Someone who is ugly in their appearance, actions or mannerisms, would not attract the proper energies that a horse year has to offer.

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. Horses in general are 'summer animals', also in their astrological relation to the month of June, and the Fire Horse thrives at the peak of that lively warmth.

Horses are impatient with hesitation, and the Fire Horse all the more. It cannot be held back for long, without acting. All Horses are sensitive, and can be gentle. But the Fire Horse is the least sensitive and gentle among them. It belongs where the action is, and not on a therapy farm for catering for the delicate emotions of children or the mentally ill.

More so than the other types, the Fire Horse will sprint in straight lines, or in an otherwise well-defined trajectory. 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. Like the Ox, it is not averse of hard work. But unlike the Ox, it has to take rests and pauses, because it heats up quickly.

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 them. 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.

The Fire Horse holds promise in its wild potential, being most independent out of all of the Five Horses. 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 trouble.

This liberated 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 'earn the honour' of having subdued the unruly stallion. These are different types of dangers, too. The Fire Tiger is sought to be killed. The Fire Horse is usually wanted for practical usage. For the

Fire Horse, this means that even when caught, it may still survive by negotiating its talents to be of worth for the abuser.

How can the Fire Horse avoid becoming a target? Often, by remaining a part of a troop; in not forgetting about the team, and its value. In refraining to rush forward, before taking others along with you for the ride. Remember that to be self-determining, does not mean that you have to abandon the positive contributions of others, or see them as a burden. Also, its self-protection is in knowing when to stop, and in trusting earlier training.



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 most evident transition between the Snake and the Horse has to do with speed and distance. Simply put, although the Snake is capable of incredible speed at very short distances, the Horse is much faster overall, and covers longer ranges. Therefore, the rates and leaps of forward progression in one's life, can be allowed to increase. While last year rewarded patience, this year could harm those who restrain themselves for too long, and benefit boldness in light of opportunity, especially when one's success could become visible.

As in the Wood Dragon year, accomplishment is meant to be visible. The Wood Dragon's energy cannot be hidden because of its power and size. The Fire Horse's energy is noticeable because it leads. In the front, where it belongs, it is ahead of the rest. It is not the biggest of animals, but it stands out because of its distinction from the rest of the troop, and having come the distance primarily by its own resilient independence. It ought to be like the bright torch that leads the expedition, advancing before everyone else to set the example.

The fiery and flamboyant 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, with a regal presence. Make room for its progress. Do not hold it back, for

it will erupt into irresponsible action as an impatient response to your hesitation. It is better to do **something** to release the pressure to act, rather than do nothing and create internal pressures that are bound to explode outward eventually.

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, leaving it behind.

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.

But where ought the Fire Horse run, and for what purpose? Remember that the Horse is not naturally motivated by pleasing others like the Dog, by hedonism like the Pig, or by a scarcity mindset like the Rat. Therefore, make great leaps and strides for the sole purpose of making others happy, gaining pleasure or accumulating plenty, is not **entirely** in-line with the energies of the year. The Horse runs for running's sake. It runs because it can, or less commonly because it is threatened. Therefore, it is better find those things that motivate you to run, because they are in your nature to do. Those things for which you have a feeling – a key emotion of the Fire Horse. That would make progress relatively easier.



This year thrives on the balance between being adventurous and not becoming a target; as well as riding the momentum while not exceeding one's limits. The public cheers for the rapid advance of the racing horse, but often also revels in its sudden fall. Gamblers want to bet in favour of the strong horse, but also against it. Profiteers are mesmerized by the wonders of such a horse, but also desire to subjugate it. **You must be seen to prosper, yet the eyes that gaze, bring risk as well.** This is a challenge 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 to keep sprinting ahead. Yet unlike the other Horses, you may be able to collect them along the way, by attraction. 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.

Also with respect to troop members, it is important to try and embody the following essential qualities that Horses inherently have: Loyalty, Social Memory, and Affection to Keen. Yet since you are not in a Dog year, do not reciprocate with those, if the people in your life are unkind or malevolent. The Horse does not stay where it is poorly treated. A Horse also feels it fine to retreat from extreme scenarios that put it at risk.

A secondary theme of this year, is being bold and adventurous without losing control. A wild stallion can become violent, addicted, overtly sexual, extremely rebellious, disruptive, and generally a menace to his surroundings. Running wild for too much, too long, can make one lose his senses. Be careful of this, for the ferocious energies of the year could push in that direction. The powerful energy should be wielded in support of growth and enterprise, and not against other people or institutions. For the Horse, albeit strong, is still a herbivore, and cannot for long resist the onslaught of groups that seek to capture or kill it. A whole troop of Fire Horses is something else though, and it is expected that some of them will band together for an ultimate advantage; each promoting his own agenda, but acting as a part of a coordinated whole for protection and unified vigor.



As noted before in the book, Horses in general are disinclined to invade the space occupied by others. But of the Five Horses, the Fire Horse is the one most likely to violate that 'equine code of ethics'. As a Stallion, it desires to mark territory, and to defend against what it feels is an offense against its autonomy. Yet that again plays upon the theme of 'being adventurous without losing control'. A Horse can be in the service of warriors, but is not itself a fighter. There are only so many conflicts that it could tolerate. Unlike the Tiger, it does not live to wage conflicts. Unlike the Dragon, it is not powerful enough to rise against big or organized foes. When it violates its liberal tenet of 'live and let live', there could be dire consequences if it goes against an enemy stronger or of larger numbers. It can run over smaller foes, but some obstacles are too large or numerous to risk irritating.

There are two primary dangers for Horses, aside from dietary errors. Those two prime risks are 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. But it may also apply to a person of financial means or talent, being 'latched to' by a romantic partner or a promoter.

“The nail that protrudes gets hammered down”, is an idiom that could also sometimes apply to 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, because momentum is difficult to stop, also when you roll uncontrollably down a hill. 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. Not every bridge is safe to run over, and not every opportunity that can be taken, worthwhile. You could decide as you go, but do not commit fully without consideration.

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. Major changes and new aspects in life ought not be introduced too quickly, even given a tempting opportunity, because horses are not good at modifying their routines quickly.



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, the Sovereign 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, the body and mind are already leaning towards passions this year, and passions can consume, and lead to disease.

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.

But not all passionate behaviour must meet us in negative forms. This is likely a good year to begin a new career, a new hobby, a new romantic relationship, or to intensify your involvement in such things, **if you are passionate about them**. To try and do that with something you care little about, or even despise, would strongly contradict the energy of the year, and is known to be harmful to the heart.

Artists, whose work is more regal and less structured, or are deeply emotional by nature, can thrive on the energies of this year. It is also potentially 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. In addition, this year can support those who will face a career-change, and have the resources, health and mental flexibility to want to make that transition. Another way to look at it, is that this year favour those who are mobile, and ready to take action.

The Fire Horse is closer in its mentality to men, than to women. Much like the previous year of the Yin Wood Snake was quite feminine in inclination, this year is masculine, to a fault. It is masculine to the extent of making men prone to take excessive risks in expressing their Yang. Women should both beware those risks – even to their own spouses, and also be weary of men who can go astray in that manner. The majority of women would also find it *relatively* more difficult to ride the energies of this particular year, unless their innate nature is already adventurous and energetic, seeking ‘unhindered sprinting through the expanse of potential progress’.



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, such as bitter melon, Huang Lian, Zhi Mu and Ling Zhi, 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. Some people who are habitually anxious or mentally-ill may also benefit from the herbs Hong Zao and Suan Zao Ren, or the formula Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan during this year. Do not take herbs or formulas without a prescription from a legitimate practitioner of TCM.

The herb Rou Gui can aid the Fire Horse **at a very low dosage**, of about 0.5 – 2 grams (per a person of an average weight of 64kg), as long as there is no excess heat, fire or serious Yin deficiency in the body. The herb Gui Zhi is in line with the energies of the Fire Horse, and should therefore be used with caution.

As overheating is a problem for the Fire Horse, consider swimming – a cooling aerobic activity, if you are a person with a short temper, a hot face, a lover of alcohol or smoking, or someone suffering from skin disease that feature a reddish colour. Avoid swimming if you are a person who is sensitive to cold or easily catches colds in cooler months, unless the water is very warm.

In thinking about a current year, we must always also take into account what has been developing in previous years. Such circumstances go beyond the zodiac. For example – the two decades or so that has preceded the Yang Fire Horse, saw the gradual rise of ‘Neo-Feudalism’, also called ‘Techno-Feudalism’ by some. The political era of Neo-Feudalism is marked by the diminishment of Democratic institutions, and the empowerment of people who are new kings, or equivalents thereof, such as many of the world’s billionaires. Those influential and potent figures, the Modern-Day Kings, are some of the individuals to whom this year’s energies best align naturally. Overall and on average, they are likely to expand their sovereignty and dominions, as they rise as individuals, at the expense of the collective, while still being supported by teams – their ‘troops’. Naturally, some of them will crash and fail, as happens in every year. The prediction concerns the rise of their total presence, and perhaps that of those among them who were already more prominent.

Thus and accordingly, a year of the Yang Fire Horse more easily gives rise to strong individuals from within the collective; but the latter still need to lean against the group’s support. In our time, this will probably accelerate and accentuate the already extant trend, of fans who idolize key athletes from within sports groups. Those athletes could shine, but will also face a higher risk of being subjugated for systematic personal and financial enslavement by those even more powerful than themselves.



Who is less energetically fortunate this year? Anyone who is already boxed, locked-up, penned, pinned, tied or otherwise cannot burst out into the open and express his wildness without consequences. This is not a good year for most bureaucrats or prisoners, for example.

It is an interesting year for students in large institutions, though. Can the student stand-out without being seized, captured, punished or disciplined? Could she become a stellar figure within the limiting circumstances of the naturally-oppressive establishment? This requires careful navigating, in a year when the energies tend more towards rushing forward without paying too much attention. Such is the challenge for students in this year, if they want to become something greater. My advice for students would be, to avoid the 'big leap' at the very beginning, before the energies of the Yin Wood Snake have completely disappeared. Accelerate into the sprint gradually.

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.

The Summer, which is associated with Fire, is the best season for conducting aerobic activity and sweating. The Horse is the most 'aerobically-oriented' animal in the Chinese Zodiac. Hence, the year of the Yang Fire Horse is the most suitable in the 60-year cycle, for aerobic exercising. Then of course, of all the possible aerobic exercises, the one most associated with the Horse is Running.

This does not mean that you should perform aerobic exercises by default, or even run. It means that if your body is capable of such things without risk of injury, then in a manner appropriate to levels of fitness and age, you can benefit more from those practices than in other years, especially in summertime.

Remember though, that the Horse is best adapted to short and medium distances. Pushed too far for too long, the Horse will overheat and damage itself. The marathon, which is slow, lingering and consistent, is perhaps more characteristic of the Ox than of the horse. While the horse can keep moving, it operates in intervals, and does not exert itself all day long without pause. The Ox toils and suffers, but it can endure. The Horse sometimes makes a bigger effort, but has a superior work-life-balance.



Another novel interpretation for this year combines the two cultural archetypes of 'Fire' and 'Progress'. Broadly in human culture, Fire is associated with Technology and Intellect. Progress – as in the movement of the Horse, is also associated **in our time** with Technology and Intellect. There is potential here, then, for technologies to come forth and make impact. Perhaps not new technologies for the most part, but extant technologies that would make breakthroughs in their influence over humanity. Based on predictions by non-Astrologers, I would not be surprised if that would involve, among others, the use of Quantum Computing. For as the people of our age know, as has been discussing for decades already, Quantum Computing is the 'next great **leap** forward' in technology.

Because the Fire Horse also combines Fire with Movement, another area probable area of progress is going to be in the technological fields of space rockets and missiles. Perhaps also with solar-powered vehicles; as the latter fast-moving machines are charged by the Sun – the great moving fireball in the sky.

For humanity, on average, this would not be a 'calm year'. It is possible to keep calm by running away from society to where the bubbling social dynamics would not follow... but even there the rest of the planet and its animals and processes, shall also be affected. It is also possible to calm oneself by supplementing with meditation or herbal medicines. But to truly align with the year in the best possible way, one would have to accept it for what it is, and to learn how to find serenity within the heat. I do not think that it is easy to do, yet it is also pivotal for keeping oneself sane and successful. Let your heart empty itself from

unnecessary passions, and focus on that which matters. Channel the heart's desires into what can be had, and do not pursue without pause.

Despite not being calm, this year would not be dramatically surprising, on average and overall. The Dragon, albeit being enormous, hides and then emerges. Once seen, all can observe it, but beforehand, people often cannot tell that it is about to appear. The Wood Snake camouflages itself, and may bite unexpectedly. The Horse is not like this. Horses do not conceal themselves, and are usually visible and audible from afar, as they gather momentum and progress. Therefore in the Fire Horse, change might be fast and potent, but it is also gradual, and its nature shall be known in advance, even if it culminates in the extreme.

Both Horses and Sheep are frequently on the move, and of the Five Horses and Five Sheep, the Fire Horse is the most mobile. The previous year of the Wood Snake was sufficiently lazy. The Fire Horse is not a year for sitting casually on a branch, awaiting an opportunity, or grazing grass with ease all day long. It is a year of action, not of sustainability.

The next year is that of the Yin Fire Sheep. Unlike the Horse, the Sheep is closer to the herd, and relies on its companions for both social support and survival. The Fire Horse might be fiercely independent, but the Sheep is needy. This has to be considered, in preparing for the transition into the year to follow. As a Fire Horse, be not excessive in your independence, for you are still, after all, a herd animal. Do not neglect the people around you – family, friends, acquaintances, groups, teams – else you would find them to



be of weak or absent support, when the Horse is gone and the Sheep is dominant.

The Fire Horse, as a Leader, can point the pathway, and attract people to follow. But consolidating the herd, would be relatively easier to do in the following year of the Fire Sheep.

Historically, the Chinese have referred to the pair of those two years as “Red-Horse-Red-Sheep Calamity” (Chì Mǎ Hóng Yáng Jié 赤马红羊劫). Having researched this, it appears indeed that in those pairs of years there are in those years, statistically speaking, significantly more wars, rebellions or other major civil conflicts. The Chinese Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966CE, is one such prominent example. Those are often years when large-scale conflicts either begin – usually in the Horse year, or end with bloody conclusions – typically in the Sheep year. This of course, does not mean that such years ‘cause’ the onset or brutal ending of violence. It means instead, that when the cosmos is aligned with specific energies, human society as a whole is inclined to respond to that configuration and orientation. For humans are the dominant species on the Planet, exactly because we have a better ability to align ourselves to take advantage of changing circumstances, as compared with other animals.

Important Dates For Yang Fire Horse

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 Fire Horse. These are the hours and dates when the energy of the year would be strongest.

Because the Fire Horse is the ‘peak of summertime’, another important date this year is the Summer Solstice, which shall fall upon the June the 21st, also within the Horse Month.

Also, consider applying the type of advice and ideas presented in this chapter, 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.



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.

Afterword

Every year
One animal departs
And another enters
Yet you remain, throughout

To know thyself, then
Is the true purpose
Of the Zodiac

By the animals, we learn
What it means to be human

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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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