

# Jūnishi 十二支

## The Zodiac Animals

by

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The traditional Japanese year according to the lunar calendar is divided into 12 months or moons. The first day of each month corresponds to the new moon and the fifteenth day to the full moon. The lunar months have 29 or 30 days, and since these 12 months do not equal one solar year, one month is repeated every third year so as not to interfere with the dates for the seasons, solstices, or equinox. The lunar months have no names but are identified by numbers one through twelve and by means of the 12 zodiac animals. Each animal is related to a specific month. The end of our month of January marks the beginning of the Japanese first month. In fact, no accurate numerical comparison can be made, as the Japanese lunar New Year varies each year according to our calendar from January 16 to February 19.

Incidentally, everybody is regarded as being one year old in the year he is born, and becomes one year older on New Year's Day irrespective of his date of birth. Taking this to an extreme means that somebody who's born on the last day of the year will turn 2 the very next day.

According to legend, the creatures of the zodiac, and their order, were determined by the Jade Emperor (Yuhuang Dadi, the celestial counterpart to the Chinese emperor, ruler of the cosmos and the highest tier of the Daoist pantheon). One day he invited all the animals in creation to a race. Thirteen animals showed up, including the cat, a friend of the rat. During the race, the animals had to cross a river, and since cat and rat were poor swimmers, they asked the ox to stay on his head. Along the way the rat pushed the cat off, who had to return to shore, and when the ox almost reached the finish line, the rat jumped from his head, crossing it first. The Jade Emperor gave each of the twelve animals that crossed the finish line a number according to their places in the race, starting with the rat who was the winner. However, cat and rat have been enemies ever since.

The legend of the Zodiac Race is entertaining, but certainly not the origin of the zodiac. The twelve earthly branches that correspond with the zodiac were already in existence in the Zhou era. The order of the twelve animals was based on the number of hooves / toes, alternating between even and odd numbers. The rat was selected number one, because – unlike all other animals – has four toes on the front legs, and five on the rear legs. Ox is second with four hooves on each leg; tiger is 3<sup>rd</sup> with five toes; hare is 4<sup>th</sup> with four toes; dragon is 5<sup>th</sup> with five claws;

snake is 6<sup>th</sup> without any toes, and zero was considered an even number; horse is 7<sup>th</sup> with four hooves; sheep is 8<sup>th</sup> with three toes on each leg; monkey is 9<sup>th</sup> with ten fingers and ten toes; rooster is 10<sup>th</sup> with three claws; dog is 11<sup>th</sup> with five toes; and boar is 12<sup>th</sup> with four toes on each foot.

Each Japanese year is named according to one of the twelve zodiac animals (Jūnishi) and one of the celestial stems or elements (Jikkan). These elements are five in number, being wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. These five elements were in existence since the Shang dynasty, as the stems were part of Shang rulers' names. They are further subdivided into "younger brother" and "elder brother", such as wood-younger-brother and wood-elder-brother, making a total of 10 stems. The 12 animals run in the same sequence year by year as do the 10 stems, and therefore every 60 years the same cycle is repeated, as the common denominator for both 12 and 10 is 60. This sexagenary cycle is called Eto. For example, the first year of the latest Eto is 1984. In 1998, it's the 15<sup>th</sup> year and Eto is "Tsuchi no E Tora" (elder brother of earth tiger). In 1999, the Eto is "Tsuchi no To U" (younger brother of earth rabbit). The last year of this Eto cycle will be 2043, "Mizu no To I" (younger brother of water boar).



Each of the same 12 zodiac animals is also representative of a specific month, a specific time (hour), and a specific point of the compass. It should be noted that the old Japanese hour was equivalent to two of our hours and was counted backward from 9 o'clock to 4 o'clock, there being no 1, 2, or 3 o'clock. The Japanese 9 o'clock is equivalent to our 12 a.m. and 12 p.m., 8 o'clock being our 2 a.m. and 2 p.m., 7 o'clock being equal to our 4 a.m. and 4 p.m., 6 o'clock to our 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., 5 o'clock to our 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. and 4 o'clock to our 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Specifically, for example, the rat represents our 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (the hour of the rat or our 12 midnight and the Japanese 9 o'clock), November, and the north direction. The diagram at the end of this article summarizes all of these factors for quick reference.

An understanding of the Japanese zodiac is also often necessary for interpreting the signed age of artwork. Such recorded ages may note the Nengō ("year name"), month, and sometimes even day. Thus if the inscription states the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Ansei, the year would be 1856, since Ansei started in 1854. However, if the writing only states Ansei, the year of the dragon fire-younger-brother, we would have to refer to the Ansei period and then see which zodiac year corresponded to the dragon, which again would prove to be 1856.

In view of the strong Oriental beliefs in the power of nature and the universe and their influence on time and people, the various elements of the zodiac were closely correlated with fortune-telling as good or evil spirits affecting every day life. The five directions, each of the zodiac animals, the sun and moon, younger-brother and elder-brother years, the five elements, and even

corresponding numbers and colors all held symbolic good and bad influences. Thus there were propitious as well as bad days for weddings, building, sewing, repairing, planting, and even funerals. Similarly, a man born under a certain element, star, color, or animal year, had best marry a woman born under a compatible element and year as well as in accordance with certain lucky ages.

Since the zodiac animals and the five elements exerted such an important symbolic influence on Japanese life, it is no wonder that they were portrayed with considerable frequency in Japanese art. The animals were often depicted according to their month or season along with corresponding symbolic grasses, trees, and other vegetation. Occasionally two seemingly symbolically incongruous animals are seen on the same item. Their strange combination can usually be explained, however, by their relationship through the zodiac, such as the combination of the snake and the boar, which corresponds to the hours of 10 a.m. and 10 p.m.



Of course it must be noted that in this present age the ancient Japanese calendar and zodiac calendar is, for all practical purposes, no longer in use. However, an understanding of the nature of the zodiac calendar is a necessity in order to determine the ages of works of art that were signed in accordance with this ancient calendar, and to identify the zodiac animals depicted on various sword fittings, Netsuke, lacquer work etc.

# 子

## RAT



The rat, looked upon with great disgust in Western culture, is curiously a great favorite in China and Japan and is considered as a symbol of good luck, particularly the Fuku-nezumi, or lucky white rat. Indicative of this feeling, the rat is the first sign of the Oriental zodiac and thus is awarded the special significance that always accompanies the beginning of things.

The Kojiki ("Record of Ancient Matters" which was presented to the imperial court in 712 AD)



tells of the further exploits of the Great Name Possessor, Ohonamochi, after he has saved the white hare. As promised by the hare, he meets the Princess of Yamaki, the daughter of Susano-o, they exchange glances and are married. However, Susano-o is greatly displeased by the match and does all in his power to rid himself of his son-in-law. The princess gives her husband snake scarves with which to protect himself. One day Susano-o shoots a "humming arrow" into the moors and orders Ohonamochi to go and fetch it. However, when he is in the middle of the moor, it bursts into flames and he can see no way to escape until a rat appears and shows him a hollow where he can shelter. The rat hands the deity the arrow, which it had caught in its mouth, and he returned to his grieving wife who nurses him. This is by no means the end of the Great Name Possessor's troubles, but eventually he triumphs, destroying his eighty fellow deities and thus "begins to make the land" in this fable of creation.

In Hindu myth the rat is the mount of the elephant-headed deity Ganesha. There also was a Chinese belief that a rat could transform itself into a quail.

In China the rat is associated with money, the sound of its nocturnal scrabblings thought to be made by its counting of money. In Southern China it is believed to be the bringer of rice. These two qualities have combined to make the creature the familiar of Daikoku, the god of wealth. One of the Seven Lucky Gods, he is depicted as a jovial old man surrounded by rice bales and rats, a subject frequently seen in folk art. A tale tells how people took offerings to Daikoku, hoping he would make them rich, but the god appeared too relaxed to make any effort. In frustration, they turned to Emma-Ō, the god of hell, and asked him to get rid of Daikoku. Emma-Ō sent one of his Oni (devils), Shiro, to dispatch the god. Eventually tracking him down, he finds his quarry asleep on a rice bale and lies in wait for a propitious moment to strike. However, Daikoku has heard his footsteps and sends his chief-rat to investigate. Finding the demon, the rat chases him off with a

sprig of holly, all the way back to the gates of hell. It is said that from this tale originated the ritual of putting a holly branch at the door as part of the New Year's festivities.

One of the most charming legends relates that when the famous artist Sesshu was a boy he was sent to study with some priests. One day, being angry at the boy for wasting his time painting and dreaming instead of studying his lessons, the priests tied his hands to a tree and bade him sit and repent his ways. The boy sat and wept for a long time, and his tears wet the ground around him. In this soft, moist earth he drew with his toes some rats which were so realistic and vital that they came to life and, in thanks, gnawed away at the ropes which bound his hands and freed him. The priests, returning just then, were so awed by what they saw that they forgave the lad his laziness and encouraged him to pursue his real talent. Another tale similar to this is that of the Kabuki heroine Yuki-hime, who frees herself by drawing a rat in the fallen cherry petals at her feet.

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Being born in the year of the rat ensures that a person will be charming, clever, and thrifty. Such people pursue goals to the end and are honest and ambitious. They are lucky in life and prosperous. Although easily angered, they have the ability to control their feelings and remain calm. They are thrifty but generous to their loved ones.

丑

OX



In Japanese, the ox, the buffalo, the bull, the bullock, and the cow are all referred to under the name Ushi. This animal is employed in art in many different settings and associations, and its symbolic meanings mostly result from the placid temperament of the animal as well as its everlasting usefulness and willingness to serve man.



In general, oxen were used as beasts of burden for drawing carts, plowing fields, and carrying bundles or people upon their backs. The ox is shown in very much the same manner as the horse, although it is never used for warlike purposes and is never ridden into battle. By temperament it has a mild disposition and it is a slow but sturdy and faithful worker. As a reward for its tireless service for the good of man, beef eating was forbidden by the Buddhist religion. As its principal use in the fields is in

preparation for the planting of the rice, it is emblematic of spring, and in this association it is also often seen with peach blossoms. The Ushi was quite commonly depicted in all of the miniature arts, including sword furniture, lacquer art, and Netsuke.

As with many other animals, a pure white beast holds a special place of reverence in both China and Japan. In the case of hares, foxes and the like, it is a sign of great age and is considered a symbol of longevity. In the case of the ox it seems to apply more to a concept of purity. In China it is associated with the spring and agriculture. The emperor - as the son of heaven - would take part in a ploughing ceremony with a white ox to stir the earth on the first day of the new year. Edicts were issued by several emperors forbidding the eating of its flesh.

A docile beast of burden, it is the mount of various Chinese and Japanese sages and poets. In Buddhism it carries the Daiitoku-myō, the god of Science of the West, who is usually depicted with six arms. Among the wheels of law it is he who controls the wheel of authority.

Its tranquillity and contemplative nature have made it an emblem of Japanese Zen Buddhism. Teachings follow the ten stages of the journey of the herdsman and his ox, but it is seen that the ox does not need to be led for it follows its own natural instincts. The frequently depicted image of the boy seated on the beast's back playing a flute indicates joy that the correct path has been found.

A reclining ox can refer to one of two traditions: firstly the white ox which carried the great teacher Rōshi (Chinese: Lao-zi) to the West and which



lay down to rest following the completion of his journey. The second, perhaps more popular in Japan, is the story of the death of Sugiwara no Michizane (845-903). This prominent minister of the imperial court was falsely implicated in a plot and banished to the island of Kyūshū where he died of grief. His

body was brought back to Kyōto, the carriage pulled by a splendid bullock. (The noblemen of Kyōto took great pride in their oxen which they kept for this purpose.) At one point on this long journey the beast lay down and refused to carry its master further. Eventually his grooms were obliged to bury Michizane's remains there, where a Shintō shrine was later erected to mark the site. The avenging spirit of the dead courtier struck repeatedly as violent thunder on the imperial palace of Kyōto, finally forcing the emperor to clear his name and re-instate his honors, deifying him as Tenjin. In 947 a shrine was built at Kitano, northwest of Kyōto and dedicated to Tenjin, who had come to be regarded as the patron of literature. A Tenjin cult developed in Japan, each shrine displaying sculptures of a reclining ox. Either of these traditions could have been the inspiration for the classical "reclining ox" model.

One of the folk tales connected with the Ushi is that which concerns the Tanabata festival. It is said that a dedicated cowherd fell in love with and was wed to a maiden who was a weaver of heavenly garments. After they were wed the couple became so engrossed in each other that she neglected her weaving and he his herd. As a punishment the gods decided that they must live

apart. Thus they were sent to live at opposite sides of the Milky Way, and the herdsman, Kengyu, became a star in the constellation Aquila while the weaving lady, Shokujo, became a star in the constellation Lyra. There is only one night each year, the seventh night of the seventh month, when the lovers are permitted to be together. On this night the magpies form a bridge across the celestial stream of the Milky Way so that Kengyu may cross it to be with his wife. All is well if the skies are clear, but if it rains on that night, the birds may be prevented from forming their bridge and the herdsman cannot cross and thus his visit is delayed until the following year. However long the separation may be, the lovers are always in their accustomed places at the appointed hour and always remain faithful to each other.

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A person born in the year of the ox is patient, kind, and successful. Ox-year people are talented, dexterous, creative, and very smart. They speak well, although they often remain silent.

寅

TIGER



Although the tiger is not native to Japan, it is one of the most popularly portrayed and highly symbolic animals in Japanese art, having been introduced into Japan by way of China through Buddhism. According to Chinese beliefs, the tiger sprang from one of the stars of the group known as the Great Bear. For this reason, it is explained, the tiger has the power to control the wind, and, because of the strength and power of its mighty roar, it is regarded by some as being an incarnation of thunder. The tiger is considered to be the king of all four-legged animals. Originally under Taoist teaching the tiger was a fearful, evil supernatural creature presiding over the west and autumn, both of which fall under the negative principle. However, under Buddhist influence the tiger assumed a positive force, its evil giving way to strength, nobility, and courage. In association with the dragon, however, it reverts back to its old Taoist negative principle.

The origins of the tiger in East Asian art are very ancient. A clay tablet from the Indus valley shows a tiger and other animals in attendance around a pre-Shivaite deity. Later, Shiva, as the Lord of Beasts, wears a tiger skin. This king of wild animals was adopted by Buddhism as a symbol of power. In Central Asian temples it is found in wall paintings illustrating a popular legend of Shakyamuni sacrificing himself as food for a starving tigress and her cubs.

In Chinese tradition, although its overwhelming strength is recognized, it is more a symbol of protection than an object of fear. Its earliest appearance in China seems to have been as a decoration on archaic bronze vessels where it probably served as a talisman against poisoning

and evil influences. Its image set against a door post protected a building from demons. Similarly, it was used in funerary art to protect the spirits of the dead. Han dynasty warriors would carry tiger amulets, usually of jade, or metal tallies with their image.



Various deities are depicted riding on the backs of tigers and it was believed to be obedient to authority, retreating to the mountains when commanded to do so. The image of a boy riding a tiger refers to one of the paragons of filial piety who distracted the beast in order to protect his father.

The white tiger is the guardian of the Western Quadrant of the universe and represents the autumn. The tiger and the dragon together are the principal animals of Taoist Feng Shui. According to Taoist thinking the dragon has the nature of wood, which produces fire, while the tiger has the nature of gold, which comes from the water. Their combined names are given to the sacred Taoist mountain, Longhushan, where the founder of the faith practiced alchemy, creating an elixir which caused a dragon and a tiger to appear out of thin air.

The "red tiger" was a feared demon and in tantric images Buddhist deities sometimes wear a tiger's skin in their warrior-like poses, the idea derived from Shivaism. Early Chinese paintings show tigers being quelled by Buddhist sages. In Zen Buddhism tigers and dragons symbolized nature and the human spirit which could be mastered by the powers of Buddhist insight.

The Ashikaga Shōguns, who were in power from 1338 to 1573, owned ink paintings of tigers by various southern Sung masters which drew much admiration. To the military classes the tiger was emblematic of strength and virility. The huge cultural influence which China had on Japan led to them adopting the joint images of tigers and dragons as symbols of power. The official Kano school of painting produced countless works of these subjects which were to adorn the homes of the military classes, carrying with them the message of authority and the stability of the social status quo.

A very common symbolic combination in art is the tiger in a bamboo grove, often depicted in Kano school screens and paintings. There are many explanations of this combination. Some say the bamboo never resists the wind, and the wind is a constant companion of the tiger, and therefore this grass is a natural harbor for the tiger. Another explanation is that the wind-tossed bamboo symbolically represents a wild and tangled tossing pit of sin and that in order to penetrate this sinful jungle one needs the strength of a tiger. To have "tiger courage" was the goal of all youths, particularly the Samurai. Many possessed tiger charms and amulets to give them strength, to ward off bad luck, and to discourage demons.





In general the tiger's symbolic meaning is "fluid rather than fixed." It is credited with supernatural powers and is reputed to live to the age of 1,000 years. After it reaches 500 years of age it is said to turn white. It becomes immortal at 1,000 years and can take any shape or form it desires.

There is a folk tale which lauds the wisdom of the tiger. It tells of a mother tiger with three cubs who wishes to cross a river. However, one of her cubs is fierce and vicious, and she is fearful of leaving it alone with any of its brothers since it might do them harm. Coming to the edge of the river, she takes the troublesome cub in her mouth and swims to the other side, where she deposits him. She then returns for the second cub. Carrying him to the other side, she then picks up the fierce cub and goes back across the river carrying him with her. She places him on the beach and takes the third cub across to the other side and puts him with his gentle brother. Finally she returns for the troublesome cub and once again carries him across to where his two brothers wait.

The tiger is often seen by the side of a waterfall, since the characteristics of both are their ceaseless strength and their forcefulness. The tiger is a symbol of strength, fearlessness, and the power of faith. Referring to a safe return from a perilous journey, a popular saying is "a tiger travels a thousand miles and returns home again".

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Tiger-year people are sensitive, sympathetic, and short-tempered. They are deep thinkers and have great physical strength, courage, and empathy for the people they like. Others hold them in high esteem.

卯

HARE



The Japanese artist does not distinguish between the rabbit and the hare, both animals being depicted and referred to under the name of Usagi. The hare or rabbit is commonly associated with the moon in art and legend, and as in Occidental countries we speak of the "man in the moon," so in Japan do people refer to the "hare in the moon." The origin of this association dates back to ancient mythology.

In another story, as recorded in the Mahabharata, Buddha appeared on earth as a hare in one of his transmigrations. An old, ragged, hungry traveler asked for food from the hare, the ape and the fox. The hare instructed the hungry man to gather fuel and build a fire. When the fire was burning, the hare threw himself upon it and thus sacrificed himself to assuage the other's hunger. The

beggar proved to be the god Indra in disguise. As a reward he recorded the image of the hare upon the moon as a shining example and a lasting memorial.



The Sanskrit word for hare is Sason, which means "the leaping one," and this is associated also with the moon, for as the hare leaps and bounds, so also does the moon periodically change its face. The Sanskrit name for moon is Cacadbaras, which translates as "one who carries the hare."

The hare is the emblem of Candra, the original Brahmanic deity, the goddess of the moon, and he is often represented with her in art. In Chinese mythology the moon hare is an attribute of the celestial Queen Mother of the West. Furthermore, he is pictured in the moon as pounding with mortar and pestle to prepare the elixir of life from herbs which must be gathered only in the light of the full moon. In Japan this legend has been altered slightly to conform with Japan's own elixir of life, rice. This popular belief states that the hare in the moon is pounding rice for the rice cakes known as Mochi. The word Mochizuki means both "rice cake" and "full moon". It is also said to polish the moon with a brush of mare's tail. This image is one of the twelve ornaments on Chinese imperial robes. Since the moon is believed to ripen rice crops, the hare is considered as a rice giving deity.

The Kojiki records many legends associated with gods, the divine descent of the imperial line and the Shintō religion. It tells the tale of the white hare of Inaba. The Master of the Great Land sent his eighty deities to each petition for the hand in marriage of the princess Yakami. In the course of their journey they come across a naked hare lying in pain and advise him to bathe in salt water and lie in the wind to ease his discomfort. The hare heeded their advice, but soon his skin cracked and split as it dried. It is in this pitiful state that he was found by the deity Great Name Possessor. The wretched creature explained how he tricked a crocodile (wani) into letting him cross the sea by telling him to line up his tribe so that he could walk across them and count them. As he reached the last one he trumpeted the truth of his trickery and the last of the crocodiles snapped at him, robbing him of his fur. Taking pity on the hare, the Great Name Possessor instructed it to wash in the river water and roll its body in the sedge grass to restore its coat. In his gratitude the hare declared that the princess Yakami would reject the eighty petitioners who had gone before in favor of the Great Name Possessor.



Superstitions regarding the hare relate that the female conceives by running across the surface of water under a full moon on the eighteenth night of the eighth month. If, however, the moon is obstructed from view by clouds or mist, then she will not conceive. In another version the hare conceives simply by gazing steadfastly at the full moon, while still a third tale relates that she becomes impregnated by licking the fur of the male of the species while the moon is full. This motif of the hare beneath a full moon is very common in Japanese art.

The hare is generally believed to be supernaturally possessed of longevity. When five hundred years old its fur turns blue, and at one thousand turns white again. He is not, however, emblematic of longevity, nor is he credited with magical or supernatural powers. The combination of hare, water, and moon are symbolic of life and is often referred to in legends. The best known folk tales regarding the hare are "The White Hare of Inaba," which is recorded in the Kojiki, and Kachi-kachi-yama, or "The Crackling Mountain."

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Talent, ambition and virtue are displayed by people born in the year of the hare. They have exceedingly fine taste, and are trusted by others. They are eloquent, financially lucky, conservative, clever, and honest.

辰

## DRAGON



The dragon is by far the most popular mythological creature represented in Japanese graphic and glyptic art. The reason is undoubtedly twofold: the first being its great mythological and symbolic significance and the second being its almost ideal artistic adaptability, both in expression and in form.



An early Chinese writer describes the creature's appearance thus: "Its head like a camel, its horns like a deer, its eyes like a hare, its ears like a bull, its neck like a snake, its belly like an iguanodon, its scales like a carp, its claws like an eagle and its paws like a tiger" - a mighty assemblage of creatures indeed. Thus its fierce face and undulating scaly body provided the Japanese artist an ideal subject in which to give full imaginative vent to power of expression and swirls of motion. Furthermore, in the graphic arts, such as painting

and lacquer, dragons were often portrayed along with eddies of water and swirls of dense, ominous clouds - a perfect combination for decorative effects.

Like so much mythological iconography, the dragon image reached Japan from China, which in turn had adopted it from Indian culture. Northern Indian Buddhism had adopted elements of Naga (snake) worship, which when it reached China was in turn assimilated into local beliefs regarding dragons. In China it





embodies male power and fertility (yang). From the time of the Han dynasty (206 BC ~ 220 AD) it became the symbol of the emperor. The imperial dragon of China is identifiable by its five-clawed feet, while courtiers were permitted only to use the images of four and three-clawed dragons. It is the three-toed version which appears in Japanese art.

Pictorially the Japanese dragon resembles the Chinese dragon. From the description of the dragon it can be seen that its fierce face and scales and spines are also ideally suited for the powerful chisel strokes of the sculptural metal artist, and it was the favorite subject of the famous Goto school of sword furnishing artists.

In general dragons are powerful, fierce, omnipotent, and representative of celestial power. While physically partially embodying the serpent, they basically differ from this creature, since the dragon in general is representative of benevolence and in art, although depicted as powerful and fierce, is not loathsome or repulsive. One of the Four Heavenly Creatures, the dragon is chief of all scaly animals and presides over authority. (The phoenix is chief of feathery animals and presides over virtue. The Kirin is chief of all hairy animals and presides over literature, while the tortoise is chief of all shelled creatures and presides over divination.) The dragon ascends into the heavens in the spring and descends into rivers in autumn, being known respectively in Japanese art as the ascending and the descending dragon.

In China, four types of dragon were believed to exist: the Heaven Dragon (tien-long) who guards the gods; the Spirit Dragon (shen-long) who produces wind and rain; the Earth Dragon (di-long) who marks the courses of streams and rivers; and the Treasure Dragon (fucan-long) who watches over the wealth hidden from mankind. Each was believed to reign over one of the four seas encompassing the earth.



It was the Spirit dragon which caused rain and storms and which found its way to Japanese iconography. Powerful ink paintings depict them amidst swirling clouds. In Japanese art the dragon is traditionally never displayed in its entirety, for to see the entire dragon is to invite instant death, the punishment for looking upon too much divinity. Thus in art its undulating form is represented weaving in and out of clouds or water. The dragon is also commonly depicted in art, more commonly in metal art, entwined about a sword. This



alludes to the story of the god Susano-o, who, after destroying the eight-headed serpent, found a beautiful sword within its tail.

Dragons are also identified by their colors, which range from red, violet, and blue to green, yellow, white, and black. The rain dragon is known as Amaryū and is said to be black. Fukuryū is the dragon of good luck and is represented climbing to the top of Mount Fuji - a symbol of success in life. The yellow dragon is identified with the imperial household. The white dragon's breath is believed to become gold. The saliva of the violet dragon turns to crystal balls.

The dragon fears iron and is also capable of being slain, as noted in legendary tales. It is also a lustful creature, and the fabulous animal known as Kirin is said to be the offspring of the dragon and the cow. Dragons are associated mythologically with various gods and sages. A dragon emerges from the sea at the command of Kannon and is the steed of the goddess Benten.

The dragon of Japanese mythology was adapted and modified from Chinese concepts which in turn reflected Indian and Taoist influences. It originally embodied the principles of the male and the female, the Yang and the Yin, and was associated with the powers of water, both of rain and of the sea, each of which was of equal importance respectively to the Japanese farmer and fisherman. With the advent of Taoism the dragon became endowed with magical powers, being able to transform itself into innumerable things. Under the influence of Buddhism it finally became endowed with spiritual and philosophical qualities and became the protector of divinities and a symbol of the transience of life and the perpetual state of change and evolution. Under the influence of Shintōism it related to the omnipotence of the imperial household.

Specifically the dragon may assume any dimension. It can fill the universe with its body or become so small as to be invisible. Thus the dragon's many-sidedness embodies the idea of the male and the female principle and the utmost attainment of the embodiment of wisdom. The continuous changes and variations of life are symbolized by its unlimited powers of adaptation, accommodating itself to all surroundings and therefore having no end, like the everlasting cycles of life. The dragon's breath is changed into clouds from which rain pours down and lightning flashes forth. It is also believed to carry water from the earth to the skies, and therefore in periods of drought it is worshiped in various ways.

There are numerous popular legends associated with the Dragon King (Ryūjin), who is reputed to live in a palace at the bottom of the sea. His chief messenger is depicted as a white serpent carrying the sacred jewel (Tama), which controls the ebb and flow of the tides and represents omnipotence. This jewel, which was once stolen from the Dragon King, is often illustrated in Japanese art as having just been caught in the claws of a dragon. The Dragon King is represented as a bearded old man with a dragon on his back, the dragon's head forming his head covering. When aroused, the Dragon King is



responsible for the storms of the sea.

Finally the dragon is associated symbolically in art most frequently with the tiger and the phoenix. The tiger, while usually a yang force, in this association represents the material or yin forces and is bested by the dragon, which represents the spiritual or celestial or yang. The breath of the tiger creates the wind, and together with the clouds of the dragon, rain is created. The dragon-phoenix combination again represents the yin-yang principle, the dragon representing the positive yang and the phoenix the negative yin.

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People born in the year of the dragon are healthy, honest, and brave. Dragon-year people are considered fortunate because their sign represents the heavens, or celestial powers. They are energetic and sensitive and inspire trust. Their word is good, their opinions sincere and just.

巳

## SNAKE



Since ancient times the serpent has been an object of awe, inspiring worship in many religious sects and imbued with great supernatural powers. For example white snakes were said to be reincarnations of Shintō gods. In the Kojiki it is related that Susano-o, brother of the sun goddess, slew an eight-headed serpent from whose tail he withdrew the sword which came to be one of the Three Sacred Treasures composing the imperial regalia.

When Buddhism reached Japan from China in the sixth century, the Shintō religion already worshipped a snake deity called Orochi which became merged with the Buddhist guardian deity Ryū, a dragon-like serpent who controlled the clouds, rain and water. The images of the snake and the dragon are much intertwined. One story tells of the 17'th century poet Kyōrai being begged to accompany a strange looking old man to a certain seashore.



On their arrival, however, the traveler revealed himself as a giant white snake, over a thousand years old, who with the poet's help had managed to achieve the final stage of his ascetic tasks and was forthwith transformed into a dragon.

In many of the world's cultures the snake inspires loathing and fear, probably due to its silent presence and ability to shed its skin. The

shedding of skin must also have contributed to its reputation of being able to transform into human shape, such tales abounding in Japanese folklore. A person might also choose to come back into the world in the form of a serpent in order to exact revenge and impose justice, in which case his image is heroic rather than evil. The subject of a snake entwined around a skull appears quite frequently in art and may refer to this belief in souls reappearing as serpents. A snake in an old house should be left in peace as it is considered to be a guardian spirit.

White snakes are considered auspicious as messengers of the gods. The truest form of the snake was the attendant and messenger of the goddess Benten. According to ancient legend, on the island of Enoshima there lived a serpent who was rapidly depopulating the countryside, until one day, following an earthquake, there arose an island in the middle of a lake. Upon this island was hidden the serpent's lair. The goddess Benten descended upon the island and married the serpent, thus causing it to cease its wanton activities. In art she is frequently portrayed accompanied by a snake. In general, the snake has become emblematic of deceit, cunning, and most particularly jealousy.

Superstitions hold that human saliva is poisonous to snakes, as described in the tale of "Tawara Toda," and also that iron offers particularly good protection against snake bite. There are still stores in China and even Japan today that sell snakes and snake extracts and medicines made from snakes, which are said to possess remarkable curative powers.

\* \* \*

People born in the year of the snake are quiet, wise, and wealthy. Relying on their own judgement, they are determined and persist until their goals are attained. They are deep thinkers and financially lucky. Men born in the year of the snake are passionate and handsome, and women are beautiful.

午

HORSE



Frequently depicted in art, the horse presents an interesting and varied multitude of symbolic meanings. It is a favorite subject for painters, who often display their skill by executing drawings of the horse utilizing a minimum of strong brush strokes and displaying a free form with the emphasis on movement rather than on realistic detail.

The horse figures on the oldest of all Buddhist monuments, the Ashoka pillars, as one of the four sacred animals. According to legend, Shakyamuni left his father's palace mounted on his horse

Kantaka. The steed's hoofs were said not to touch the ground, thus allowing its master a silent departure.



In China the horse represents the yang, or male principal, as its hoof is not cloven, thus being an odd number. White horses are considered sacred and are kept at various temples. The Tōshōgū shrine at Nikkō keeps a white horse, the stable being the only building in the complex which has been left unpainted.

The horse is a symbol of fecundity as well as a phallic symbol. In this respect Uma, the word for horse, was used as a slang expression for a prostitute, for menstruation, and also for penis. The castrating of a white horse was performed in ancient Japan on certain festival days as a symbolic punishment and repentance of women who had confessed to committing adultery during the preceding year. Offerings of horses to the gods were common, a black horse invoking rain, a white horse fine weather connected to the harvest, but by the Nara period Ema, pictures and paintings of horses on wood tablets were offered to the Shintō shrines as emblems of desire and attainment in place of live horses, although Ema are nowadays painted with diverse images. Horses have long been esteemed in Japan and many Haniwa figures of them have been found in ancient tombs. The horse is also mentioned in the Kojiki, for it was a "flayed, piebald horse" that Susano-o flung into the room of Amaterasu, which caused her to hide in a cave and thus thrust the world into darkness.

Because it was chiefly used as the mount of military heroes, the horse became symbolically associated with martial power, endurance, strength, and vitality and is regarded in general as being emblematic of manhood. Gamboling, frolicking horses are symbolic of a thrifty but free and spirited early manhood awaiting the call of duty. The motion of the horse's gait, with its up-and-down movement, is likened to the up-and-down aspects of life.

Rodrigo de Vivero y Velasco, a noble born Mexican who was raised in Spain, was shipwrecked off Japan in 1608 and wrote an account of his ten month stay in that land in his Relacion. He



describes entering Edo castle and seeing the stables of some two hundred horses and declared that if they would be trained as horses are in Spain they would lack nothing "as they are sturdy and well cared for". However a Spanish merchant named Bernardino de Avila



Giron, in Japan some ten years earlier, inspected the stables of the Daimyō of Arima in Kyūshū and though much impressed by their cleanliness, dismissed the horses, the best of which he said would not have fetched a hundred Ducats in Mexico. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century story of the famous stallion Ikezuki, the young colt lost its mother soon after birth, but seeing its own reflection in the water, thought it was her and jumped in, thus teaching itself to swim. En route to the annual horse fair at Azuma it saw a train of other horses on the opposite bank of the river and swam across to join them, arriving at the fair much before the merchant who wished to sell it. No-one would buy



such a high-spirited creature, but on their return journey they met with a traveler who paid the owner six hundred silver coins for the beast, which later became the steed of Yoritomo, the hero of the Battle of Dan-no-Ura in 1185.



There are many gods and heroes associated with horses in history and folk tales. White horses are sacred to the gods and are usually used by them as mounts. The emperor of Japan, allegedly a direct descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu, has always ridden only a pure white horse. Bishamon, the militant god among the seven household gods of good fortune is occasionally portrayed riding upon a horse. Although the horse often serves supernatural beings, it does not have supernatural or magical qualities himself. Rather it possesses the virtues of nobility, wisdom, and purity and is a steadfast companion and devoted friend. Many folk tales tell of his refusal to eat when retired or left behind by his master and friend.

The image of a monkey seated on a horse carries with it the wish that the recipient be soon promoted to high rank. A horse seen emerging from a gourd represents the Taoist immortal Chokaro, who could conjure a horse from his Saké gourd and travel anywhere on his magic steed. To dream of a horse is considered a lucky omen; however, it also symbolizes that the dreamer will soon be taking a journey. As an expression of the farthest distance imaginable, the Japanese say "to the uttermost limits of the hoof marks of the horse". The symbolic associations of the horse have led to its widespread use as a crest or badge (Mon).

\* \* \*

People born in the year of the horse are cheerful, talented, and quick. They love to dress well and swiftly adopt new ideas and grasp new concepts. They are skillful with their hands and are wise, popular, and diplomatic.

未

SHEEP



The sheep is rather infrequently represented in Japanese art, and if at all it resembles a goat more than a sheep. Both animals were not indigenous to Japan. The goat, like so much else, was adopted from China. The differentiation between sheep and goats appears to be very vague, the horned mountain sheep seeming to correlate to our western image of a goat. The sheep made its first appearance when it was introduced by the Dutch and the Portuguese. Under Buddhist doctrine, the Japanese were not permitted to eat the flesh of animals, and woolen goods were not

manufactured in the country .Therefore sheep had never been raised in Japan before comparatively modern times.

The serious countenance of the sheep provoked the Japanese artist to poke fun at it, and it is often depicted wearing a whimsical, comical expression. There is no specific symbolic meaning



attached to the sheep. The Chinese name for the animal is yang, a homonym for the male principal, which it also represents. As the kid kneels to suckle from its mother, it is considered a symbol of filial respect.

In many of the world's cultures the goat is a sacrificial animal. In China its blood is highly valued. A rare herb which grows high in the mountains is guarded by the goat, who feeds on it. The herb is believed to be nourished by the body moisture of the Great Mother goddess who sprang from water and whose body substance was thought to exist in plants. The goat is an avatar of this goddess. The plant grew in very inaccessible places, but the blood of the goat was thought to carry all its properties and was considered a restorative against injuries caused by falls from horses and a cure for smallpox. The Chinese Traveler, published in London in 1772, refers to the difficulty in obtaining goat's blood.

In Japan there is a legend of Kohosei, based on the Chinese demi-god of the eight compass points, Hwang Chu-Ping. At the age of fifteen he led his herd of goats to a mountain grotto, where he stayed and meditated for forty years. His brother, a priest called Shōki, set out to look for him, but when he eventually came upon him in his grotto, he was surprised to see no goats. He questioned Kohosei about this, at which point the hermit struck the ground with his staff and the white stones lying around him all sprang to life as goats.

\* \* \*

Elegance and a passionate yet gentle nature are traits of people born in the year of the sheep (hitsuji). They also are wise, generous, charitable, and highly accomplished in the arts. In addition, they possess a good taste for living and are financially successful.



## MONKEY



As a species, the monkey is said to have originated in the Orient. However, only the red-faced, short-tailed ape with fine, tawny-colored fur is indigenous to Japan, although all varieties appear



with great frequency and fluency in her art. The Japanese name for monkey, Saru, is pronounced the same as the verb "to leave". The cry of the monkey is said to resemble the sound "Ki" which is the character for the word "joy ." Chinese poets refer to the cry as carrying with them a mood of great melancholy, and the Japanese poets took up this theme in Haiku.

The Hindu ape-god, Hanuman, embodies the virtues of loyalty and devotion to duty. His tribe became part of the retinue of Buddha. In China deities sometimes took on the guise of monkeys, a particularly well-known example being Sun Wu-kong, who accompanied the Buddhist pilgrim Xuan Cang on his journey to India. The monkey god saved his companion from many disastrous situations, but also inflicted a string of practical jokes upon him. The story is the subject of a Song dynasty picaresque novel entitled *The Journey to the West*, parts of which have been made into popular drama.

These animals are imbued with magical, superhuman qualities; are capable of transformation; are said to acquire great longevity; and indeed are often shown holding the peach of longevity which they have stolen from the garden of the Queen Mother of the West. The Chinese also believed that the monkey could control the demons that harmed mankind. Because of their mischievous, playful, and humorous qualities they are frequently depicted in art as imitating human characteristics and postures. The Saru-mawashi or monkey trainer, used to travel about the country with his troupe of performing animals, and this subject is also frequently portrayed.

Numerous temples dedicated to the monkey god were built in southern China, but amongst the ordinary populace the ape is considered an adulterous animal.

The monkey is associated with several Shintō deities. It is the messenger of Sanno Gongen and the front entrance of the Hie-jinja (Sanno-sama) in Tōkyō is guarded by two stone apes, while two more are enclosed in the main shrine gates.

Perhaps the most common presentation of monkeys in a group is that of Sanbiki-no-saru generally known in the West as the Three Wise Monkeys. They are of Buddhist origin, and their Japanese names involve puns on the word Saru (which often becomes Zaru in combined forms). They are called Mizaru, literally meaning "see no (evil)"; Iwazaru "speak no (evil)"; and Kikazaru "hear no (evil)". Undoubtedly the most famous depiction of this grouping is at the Tōshōgū shrine in Nikkō where they appear on the transom of the otherwise unadorned sacred stable. Sometimes the three subjects are incorporated into the body of one ape. Symbolically the group serves as an



example of the right mode of life and warns against the evils of indulging in these temptations. According to Buddhist teachings, the Sanbiki-no-saru are the attendants and messengers of Koshin, god of roads. The Shintō religion teaches that they are also the messengers of the deity Okuninushi no Mikoto as well as the attendants of several mountain deities. Another interpretation of the three monkeys is that of Sangoku no saru, which means "monkeys of the three countries" - that is, India, China, and Japan.

A Buddhist fable known as "A Monkey Reaching for the Moon" (Enkōhōgetsu 猿猴捕月) became a popular subject of Suibokuga 水墨画 (Japanese ink painting) since the Kamakura period when Chinese monochrome paintings of the Song (960 ~ 1279) and Yuan (1279 ~ 1368) dynasties dealing with this theme were much sought after. The moon on the water, which looks real, symbolizes the illusion of existence, from the Buddhist perspective that there are no permanent, fixed entities that we can catch and hold in our grasp. As the monkey is about to grab the moon, the branch breaks and the monkey falls to his death in the water; in other words: if you get too ambitious or greedy, you will ultimately meet a fate not unlike the monkey reaching for the moon.



\* \* \*

Monkey-year people are said to be smart, clever, and original. Inventive and creative, they can conquer most problems. They are knowledgeable and successful in business and in most fields of endeavor.

酉

COCK



Because of its close association with the sun, the cock as a symbol is of great importance in Japanese art. It is mentioned in both the Nihongi of 697 and the Kojiki of 712 as being brought to crow before the cave where the sun goddess was hiding, in order to make her think that the sun had risen without her and thus to coax her from her hiding place. The fowl are kept in the

precincts of the main Ise shrine in reference to their important role in restoring daylight to the world.



Its crowing at dawn to announce the coming of the sun is interpreted as worshiping the sun goddess. Its dependability and regularity in this respect have made it symbolic of faithfulness, and its constant watchfulness inspires a feeling of protection. Its crow at dawn is said to drive away evil spirits which roam at night, and therefore the crowing cock is further regarded as a protection against evil.

The cock is considered as a symbol of the male principle so important in Japanese and Chinese culture. It fights fearlessly and well with its enemies and displays great courage. It has a proud carriage, strong feet, and beautiful plumage and is symbolic of manly beauty and martial spirit. Cocks are a great favorite with the Japanese artist, and their beauty, with their graceful long tails, lends itself well to portrayal by the lacquer artist. When depicted in a group with a hen and chicks, the cock represents domestic bliss and wedded happiness.

Another often-seen representation is the cock on a drum. This is symbolic of peace and contentment. There is an old legend which relates that in the 7th century Emperor Kotoku placed a drum outside of the palace gates so that the people could beat upon it when they had a grievance. The emperor was such a wise and just ruler that no one had cause to beat upon the



drum, and in the course of time it became overgrown with leaves and served as a roost for the barnyard cock, thus indicating peace and happiness in the land. Another version of the legend states that this drum

was used to call warriors to action, but because of the wise emperor peace reigned for so long that the drum was used only by the cock as a resting place.

In China the cockerel is believed to ward off evil and in old times its flesh was never eaten. A red cock provides protection against fire, while a white cock is placed on coffins to keep demons at bay. The gift of a cockerel with a handsome comb carries with it a wish for an official posting. When seen with five chicks around it serves as a reminder that a father has a duty to educate his five sons.

The Ainu people of Hokkaidō believed that it was a celestial bird, sent down from heaven by the Great Creator to provide a report on how the world looked. However, the bird tarried so long that it was not allowed back into heaven.

Cock fighting was known to have been popular and is the subject of screen paintings. The Nihongi tells of the emperor Yuriaku, who acceded to the throne in 457 AD, who sent a retainer to report on the activities of a certain Sakitsuya. When the messenger returned he told that the man had set a group of young girls to fight a group of grown women, calling the girls the

emperor's army. When the girls were victorious he took his sword and killed them. Next he took a small cockerel, plucked out its feathers and clipped its wings and called it the emperor's cockerel, setting it against a magnificent bird armed with metal spurs and bedecked with bells. However the naked bird was the victor, so he slew it. On hearing this the emperor had Sakitsuya and seventy of his retainers put to death.

\* \* \*

People of the year of the cock are thoughtful, eccentric, and hard working. Always busy and devoted to their work, they are individualists and are interesting, ambitious, and brave.

戌

DOG



Basil Hall Chamberlain in his preface to his translation of the Kojiki notes that the dog barely features either in this ancient record or in the earlier Nihongi. The dog only appears in the later sections of both writings. From this we can assume that in terms of mythology the dog has little significance. The only exception was recorded following a great thunderstorm in 637 AD, which the Buddhist priest Bin declared to be the barking of the Celestial Dog and which was followed by an eclipse of the sun. A very ancient Chinese book, the Classic of the Mountain and Seas speaks of a red dog which guards the heaven-gate mountain with trails of light, evidently referring to a stellar constellation.

Aside from this, the dog seems to appear mainly as a faithful servant, with various tales of dogs refusing to leave their slain masters' sides, preferring to die rather than abandon them. One story tells of a man who made his living keeping silk worms, with all the toil involved falling to his wife. A disease strikes his colony of silk worms, however, and he angrily throws the old woman out of the house. All she has to take with her is her dog, the one remaining silk worm and a few mulberry leaves with which to feed it. The starving dog one day eats the silk worm, much to the dismay of the woman, but she does not punish her only remaining companion. Then one day she notices a silk thread hanging from the dog's nose and begins to wind it up, finding it to be silk of wonderful quality. The supply of this silk is limitless and her reputation travels throughout the land, earning her imperial commissions. This is a fable of reward for a generous and forgiving heart.



The Taiheiki (a Chronicle of Medieval Japan) tells of an unstable time during the Kamakura period when in 1316 a callow youth named Hōjō Takatoki was made regent, two years prior to the accession of the emperor Go-Daigo. Takatoki, referred to as the "Sagami monk", was so entranced by the sight of a group of dogs fighting in his courtyard one day, that he issued an order that taxes should be paid for in dogs and that all feudal lords should give gifts of dogs. The expense of such an exercise was great as the creatures were said to have been fed with fish and birds and held tethered with gold and silver chains. Travelers were made to kneel when a dog destined for Takatoki was carried past and the dogs were dressed in brocades. Twelve days of every month were dedicated to dog fights. While he and his feckless companions delighted in this entertainment, wise men shook their heads at this barbarity which presaged war and death.

The Kojiki tells of emperor Yuriaku travelling to visit his empress when he looks down from a mountain to see a great mansion. When he enquires to whom it belongs he is told it has been built by the Departmental Lord of Shiki. The emperor, outraged that a slave should emulate the sovereign's abode orders it to be destroyed, for it transgresses the Confucian principle of order. The lord however humbly apologizes for his ignorance and sends a white dog clad in a cloth with a bell around its neck to be led to the emperor and for this his house is reprieved.

The 8'th Tokugawa Shōgun, Tsunayoshi, treated dogs kindly because he was told by a priest that the reason why he had been childless was that he had killed a dog in a previous incarnation. Tsunayoshi inflicted severe punishment upon those who had killed or ill-treated a dog. Also, he made Shōgunate officials build dog pounds where stray dogs were given meals better than those taken by farmers those days. He is known as the "Dog Shōgun".

In Japanese folklore there are two types of dog deities (Inugami) representing both good and evil. Although there are references to dog demons used for the purposes of witchcraft, these are far fewer in number than the tales representing the dog in a far more helpful and protective role. It is a protection against the cunning of the cat, the badger, and the fox, which cannot maintain their supernatural possession qualities in the presence of a dog because of its honest, forthright character. The dog is credited with the power of being able to dispel demons with its bark. Furthermore, it is faithful to its master and shows its gratitude by protecting him not only from demons but also from the hazards of fire, robbery, and illness. An amulet in the form of a dog will serve the same purpose, so great is its power.

The dog has special qualities concerning the very young, and a common toy is a papier-mâché dog or a "dog box" (Inu-bako) in the form of a sleeping dog which renders fierce and loyal protection. At one time it was the custom when taking an infant out at night to paint the ideogram for "dog" on his forehead in red ink and thus assure him protection from disease and demons. Because the dog is noted for the ease with which it gives birth to its puppies, an amulet in the shape of a dog is placed beside a woman in labor to ease and assist her in childbirth.

Although not imbued with any single specific symbolic significance, the dog is generally considered as a good omen. The most popular legend regarding the dog is the Hakkenden, or "Tale of Eight Dogs."

\* \* \*

Those born in the year of the dog are loyal and honest. They are well liked by others and have a deep sense of duty. They are diplomatic and make excellent business executives.

亥

## BOAR



A great favorite with Japanese artists is the wild boar. It is frequently depicted not only in art forms but also in the history, legend, folklore, and literature of the country, the earliest literary mention of it appearing in the Kojiki. The boar was held in such esteem that at one time its likeness appeared on the 10 Yen note.



The boar is indigenous to Japan, living in the temperate deciduous woodlands in the central, southern and eastern regions of the country. Its image features in both religious and secular, decorative art. In general the boar is highly admired for his great and reckless courage, and it is in this light that he is best known. He is a creature of reckless fighting courage and relentless spirit. When he attacks, he charges straight at his target, never veering, never flinching, never retreating, and never fleeing. For these qualities he is highly regarded as a symbol of conquest and steadfast courage, such as was associated with the Samurai and was similarly considered a formidable challenge to the hunter.



In Buddhism it is associated with Marishideva, the celestial queen who has a special significance as the patron saint of archers. The heart shaped motif often seen on arrow heads is called the I-nome (eye of the boar) in Japan.



Several legends exist involving the boar, perhaps the best known being that of Nitta no Shiro, a popular name of the hero Tadatsune. After defeating the powers of the Taira clan, the Lord





Yoritomo became ruler of the sixty-six provinces of Japan in 1190. He settled in Kamakura and to celebrate his victory invited all the feudal lords to a huge hunting party on the slopes of Mount Fuji. On the third day a large wounded boar charged through the crowd, heading straight for Yoritomo. Nitta no Shiro leapt on the beast's back, facing its rear, and grabbing it by the tail, killed it with his short sword. For this act of great bravery he was rewarded with lands. However, not every warrior grappling with a boar is Nitta no Shiro.



Another tale tells of the Yuryaku Tennō, also known as The Greatly Wicked Emperor. During a hunting party in the year 461, Yuryaku was charged by a huge boar which he ordered a retainer to kill. However, the terrified servant fled up a tree instead and the emperor managed to knock the boar on its back and dispatch it with a blow from his fist. He then prepared to kill his cowardly attendant, but the empress begged for clemency, saying that to kill a man for a



beast would be like the savagery of a wolf. Yuryaku, no doubt glorying in his feat, spared the man's life. The boar is also seen as a companion of the strong-boy Kintarō.



The animal's flesh was considered a cure for epilepsy and baldness. Furthermore popular belief credited him with being a great enemy of the snake, seeking to destroy it at any opportunity. He is said to be fond of its meat and immune to its bite. Vegetarian Buddhist monks reportedly avoided the problem of not being able to eat its flesh by renaming it the "mountain whale" (yama-kujira).

\* \* \*

Boar-year people are chivalrous, gallant, and strong. They are brave; possess great determination, fortitude, honesty and are true friends. In addition, they are affectionate and kind, intelligent, and courageous.

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***All photos are taken of items in my present and former collection.***

December 2008

## ETO 干支

	ki 木 (wood)		hi 火 (fire)		tsuchi 土 (earth)		ka 金 (metal)		mizu 水 (water)	
	e (elder brother) 兄	to (younger brother) 弟	e (elder brother) 兄	to (younger brother) 弟	e (elder brother) 兄	to (younger brother) 弟	e (elder brother) 兄	to (younger brother) 弟	e (elder brother) 兄	to (younger brother) 弟
	ki no e 甲	ki no to 乙	hi no e 丙	hi no to 丁	tsuchi no e 戊	tsuchi no to 己	ka no e 庚	ka no to 辛	mizu no e 壬	mizu no to 癸
<b>ne</b>	甲子 1		丙子 13		戊子 25		庚子 37		壬子 49	
<b>ushi</b>		乙丑 2		丁丑 14		己丑 26		辛丑 38		癸丑 50
<b>tora</b>	甲寅 51		丙寅 3		戊寅 15		庚寅 27		壬寅 39	
<b>u</b>		乙卯 52		丁卯 4		己卯 16		辛卯 28		癸卯 40
<b>tatsu</b>	甲辰 41		丙辰 53		戊辰 5		庚辰 17		壬辰 29	
<b>mi</b>		乙巳 42		丁巳 54		己巳 6		辛巳 18		癸巳 30
<b>uma</b>	甲午 31		丙午 43		戊午 55		庚午 7		壬午 19	
<b>hitsuji</b>		乙未 32		丁未 44		己未 56		辛未 8		癸未 20
<b>saru</b>	甲申 21		丙申 33		戊申 45		庚申 57		壬申 9	
<b>tori</b>		乙酉 22		丁酉 34		己酉 46		辛酉 58		癸酉 10
<b>inu</b>	甲戌 11		丙戌 23		戊戌 35		庚戌 47		壬戌 59	
<b>i</b>		乙亥 12		丁亥 24		己亥 36		辛亥 48		癸亥 60

animal	zodiac name	common name	time	hours	"old" hour	month	compass	element
rat	Ne 子	Nezumi 鼠	12 pm	23 ~ 01	9	November	North	water
ox	Ushi 丑	Ushi 牛	2 am	01 ~ 03	8	December	NorthNorthEast	water
tiger	Tora 寅	Tora 虎	4 am	03 ~ 05	7	January	EastNorthEast	wood
hare	U 卯	Usagi 兔	6 am	05 ~ 07	6	February	East	wood
dragon	Tatsu 辰	Tatsu 龍	8 am	07 ~ 09	5	March	EastSouthEast	wood
snake	Mi 巳	Hebi 蛇	10 am	09 ~ 11	4	April	SouthSouthEast	fire
horse	Uma 午	Uma 馬	12 am	11 ~ 13	9	May	South	fire
sheep	Hitsuji 未	Hitsuji 羊	2 pm	13 ~ 15	8	June	SouthSouthWest	fire
monkey	Saru 申	Saru 猿	4 pm	15 ~ 17	7	July	WestSouthWest	metal
cock	Tori 酉	Ondori 雄鳥	6 pm	17 ~ 19	6	August	West	metal
dog	Inu 戌	Inu 犬	8 pm	19 ~ 21	5	September	WestNorthWest	metal
boar	I 亥	Inoshishi 猪	10 pm	21 ~ 23	4	October	NorthNorthWest	water