

# Happy Year of the Yin Water Rabbit 2023!

**“Go *yin* AND go home...”**

**The last time the Water Rabbit came around it was 1963...**

**The federal minimum wage in the US was \$1.25/hr.  
The number one hottest car in America was a Buick Riviera and would set you back about \$4,333.  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his, “I Have a Dream” speech as 200,000 people marched on Washington in support of Civil Rights. JFK was assassinated. The U.S., Soviet Union and UK signed a nuclear test ban treaty. Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman in space.  
Dr. Michael DeBakey pioneered the use of an artificial heart for use during heart surgery. “Where the Wild Things Are” by Maurice Sendak was published and Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor starred in “Cleopatra”.**



**Famous Water Rabbits(1963):Whitney Houston, Coolio, Brad Pitt, Takashi Murakami, Michael Jordan, Jet Li, Ella Baker(1903), Anaïs Nin, James Beard, George Orwell and James “Cool Papa” Bell were all born.**

Almost everyone is familiar with the legends of the Moon Goddess in ancient Chinese folklore that have become increasingly popular in recent years with films like, “Over the Moon” about the story of Chang’e and her journey to immortality with the Jade Rabbit by her side who continuously mixes the elixir of eternal life. The myths about the Rabbit on the Moon can be found from China to India to the Cree (Nèhiyawak)peoples in the unceded territories of Canada and the US to the Aztecs in Mexico. There are stories of the Jade(yù tù)and/or Moon(yuè tù)Rabbit dating back to the Warring States period(475-221 BCE). There is even a legend as recent as the 16th century told around Beijing about a deadly plague that killed many. The Moon Rabbit brought their elixir to earth and visited many families to heal them asking only for some clothes in return. The Moon Rabbit appeared as both a man and a woman (great *yin* becoming small *yang*) and once everyone was healed, they returned to the moon until the next Mid-Autumn Festival. The history and symbolism of the Rabbit on the Moon reveals two emerging and prominent themes; *sacrifice* and *friendship*.

One of the earliest written accounts of the story of the Rabbit is in one of the *Jataka Tales*(No.316), a group of stories written in the Pāli language that can be traced back to between 300BCE—400CE. These tales tell about the Buddha’s many previous earthly incarnations before he was said to reach enlightenment, many of which were in animal form. The story of *The Hare, the Jackal, the Otter and the Monkey* is a deeply symbolic tale that marks the Rabbit character as one of the essential representatives of the revered “perfections” of Theravada Buddhism(and other philosophies/religions of the ancient and modern world). Essentially the hare, being the wisest and most spiritual of all of the 4 friends, guided the

animals on how and when to observe days of meditation and/or fasting. As the full moon was approaching, the hare directed his friends to gather their food offerings in their own territories in order to give their share to any beggars in need of sustenance on the fasting day. They all went foraging and only the hare came up empty handed. The beggar came to each animal and was given the food offerings. When it came time for the hare to give his share, he asked the beggar to collect wood and to make a fire so that he could cook the food for him. When the fire was going, the hare shook his fur so all the insects or small animals that lived on him were released. He then threw himself into the fire to offer his own body to feed the beggar. Unbeknownst to the hare, the beggar was in fact Sakka, the Lord of the Devas. When the hare jumped into the fire without a second thought, Lord Sakka turned the fire into flames as cold as snow, preventing the hare from making a bodily sacrifice. To thank the hare for his immense nobility, he painted his form onto the moon for the entirety of our world cycle to remind humans for all eternity of his nobility, friendship and selflessness.

Friendship, intuition and noble sacrifice are the main characteristics of the year. According to Confucian thought(5th-6th cen. BCE)there are 5 “constant” relationships. I’ve modernized these relationships for our purposes as: leader(ruler) and constituent(subject), parent and child, older sibling and younger sibling, spouse and spouse, and friend and friend. The *yin* Water Rabbit this year is very generous for parent/ (younger)child relationships and friendship. Rabbits tend to be one of the most adept at finding their



friends. In fact, their survival depends upon it. Being adorable can literally save their lives and being in a group makes a single rabbit less of a target. In all the hectic forward motion of modern life, the generous feeling of giving and receiving from friendship is a joyous stop-gap allowing us to remember our essential selves. How do we feel when we know we are unconditionally loved? What is life like if we simply accept our friends for who they are and can just be a real friend? Without conditional relationship, we can experience our real, pure and essential character — whatever it is. This is the beauty and pure interpretation of the *yin* principle in this context. If you think about it, friendship is the relationship that has the most choice and inherent freedom; and therefore, the most opportunity for unwinding personal fate.

The ability to establish or reconnect with nourishing and supportive humans this year is available to absolutely everyone. The intuition of the rabbit character will help you tune into that “gut” feeling and to discard prior entanglements and life choices/directions that no longer serve you in order to understand the fundamental joy of an ordinary home life and the simple but immense gift of embodiment itself. “Ordinary” in this way, is the true contentment of the human condition. Humans, although pretty fascinating organisms, are not the center of this whole situation we find ourselves in. Nor are we entirely in charge all the time. We affect, and, are affected. Our place in the universe takes continual self-reflection, negotiation, and occasionally a bit of nudging.

The rabbit character is the ultimate childlike sign. Children born in a rabbit year should be allowed to *be* children. It seems obvious, but of all the animals, they are the most vulnerable. They are to be loved, supported, encouraged, given the material comforts that are necessary and adorable/cozy, and kept safe. If they have all of the corners of a healthy childhood, they will be well-balanced adults that go on to help everyone they come in contact with, just by being themselves. Rabbits are part of a trine in the Confucian ideal of society, along with Pigs and Goats. These three domestic symbols are the foundation for a society that works together, inherently understands universal justice and egalitarianism. That can sincerely enjoy and prosper in a balanced and ordinary bucolic experience. When these three are allowed to lead,

ordinary becomes extraordinary. Joy becomes bliss. These three animals together can remind us that just *being* is a remarkable gift. If we are all respectful in the purest sense of the word — meaning understanding that we are all more alike than different — we can all live in peace; perhaps the most important aspiration for a rabbit. Well, to live in peace and to have 800 thread count organic sheets. You get the idea.

If you did the work of understanding your personal threshold for conflict and catharsis in Water Tiger last year, you can make room to reassess your material and financial world and find a balance with having and creating space. Although the Rabbit is not known for fighting or being so deliberately militaristic like last year's Water Tiger, make no mistake, they are master manipulators. Ahem, I mean *negotiators* and perfectly capable of winning. So good in fact, you won't know you've lost until you're in love, you've bought a house in the 'burbs and you're on a waitlist to adopt a dog...and you won't even mind because they're so adorable! If you recognize the power of gentleness this year, take stock of what you really have and are thankful for, and make a very secure home base, whether it's a location to hang your name or deep inside yourself, you will have an excellent foundation for the limitless capacity that's coming our way in Wood Dragon 2024!!!

So, in this Water Rabbit year, find your “fluffle”, live and let live, and cherish the relationships that protect the fragile social network of our society.



Every year I recommend charities because, the principles of reciprocity are always “in”. In a Water Rabbit year, any charity, particularly those close to home that strengthen the dignity of the recipients and/or acknowledge the sacrifice, are excellent. Think: safe injection sites, mobile bathrooms for unhoused populations, anything giving back to veterans, and medical care as a basic human right (Doctors Without Borders), etc. This year I would like to draw attention to the work of a friend of ours, The Navajo Healing Project, a non-profit that shares Chinese Medicine knowledge with Navajo (Diné) interns to serve the needs of the Diné community. If you are so inclined, please visit [navajohealingproject.com](http://navajohealingproject.com).

**IN:** Go *yin* AND go home, finding a hunny bunny, having twins, abstract art, peaceful protest in constant and large numbers, cancel stuff and things not people, mend your knickers and darn your socks, advances in genomics, anonymous donations, watch “Mission Joy” a very *Rabbit*-style film about the special friendship of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu (co-directed by our family friend, Louie Psihoyos), chosen family, animal rights, veggie stew, massage and maybe just a *little* drama

**OUT:** mean gossip, fast fashion, proving yourself, hoarding, waiting until next year to deal with relationship issues, extreme sports, war, pop culture, being cool, letting yourself go/sweatpants, impulse shopping, dictators, fad diets, junk and trinkets, dessert

**But Eréne, what about me?! Read on to learn about how Rabbit may interact with your character:**

**RAT:** Your honesty and surprising incidental acts of extreme generosity are very well received this year... just keep your honesty to necessary and not brutal. Some self-reflection and reaching out to past friends just to say hi will be very humbling and enriching in this Rabbit. Take it easy this winter, maybe go somewhere warm with friends to regroup, but on a budget.

**OX:** Lean into your natural super kindness this year. You will need it to offset your aloofness or people will get the wrong idea about you. Use manners as a way to fit in and hopefully you've done some cathartic clearing of material possessions the last couple of years or they will slow you down and let's be honest, you're a wee bit on the slow side already. Hire someone to help organize your finances and look for help and alignment with the righteous doers this year.

**TIGER:** Tiger, oh my! It was your year last year but that doesn't mean it was easy. If you can keep your opinions mostly to yourself and have some spa days and retreat this winter, you will start to feel like your fabulous Tiger self again in Dragon.

**RABBIT:** We need you this year Rabbits whether we know it or not. Be the friend you know how to be. Lead from behind by taking time for yourself and please, invite us to dinner. Remember material possessions are only energizing if they are still well maintained and help your mental/emotional outlook. Dust the cobwebs out of the attic. You can gossip a little bit, and be nice. Is there such thing as gossiping for good? If there is, rabbits are the ones to do it.

**DRAGON:** Keep it classy Dragons. You can party, you can travel, just not *too* much. The world isn't ready or tolerant of your immense awesome powers...not that you actually care what us mere mortals think. Just warm up and next year you can stretch your almighty wings.

**SNAKE:** Keep on with your secret self. Going to small parties and being the first to leave is very "in" for you this year. Just bring a nice bottle of something for the host and air kiss on your way out. Write a book or start/do that project no one knew you wanted to do because, "what's the point anyway." There's a point, it's just not what you think.

**HORSE:** What's that sound?! It's the sound of the horse community and their collective exasperation. Focus on your own work, joy, family and personally fulfilling projects. If you're on your way to coffee and your nosy neighbor starts to lament about how traffic has really "gotten so bad," just nod and smile and say, "You're right, Brunhilde, that's so interesting. Toodles!" In other words, carry on...

**GOAT:** You will feel the heaviness of a few years of a lot of questionable choices collective humanity has made and the toll it has taken on the planet. Let the small and beautiful energize you so you can be a balanced and strong group facilitator. Much work needs to be done but you can find your way to the lighter side of things. People will be more willing when they feel hope. Pull out the *good* Matcha, color code your closet and go for a ride on bike for a dopamine boost.

**MONKEY:** Auspices will be pretty mixed this year and you may have a bit of a time recognizing when to move forward and when to chill. Try not to make too many drastic changes this year out of boredom and know that much of the drama is not anything you can immediately change. Keep your cool, take a trip and/or learn a new language to distract yourself. Talk therapy and a deep spiritual practice may be in order. You're fine, don't confuse calm with stagnation.

**ROOSTER:** Surround yourself by balanced people who treat your antics and bluster with a shake of the head this year. Channel your intelligence and um, directness into community building projects. Tire yourself out with big home projects (think: landscaping and fence building), organizing (the whole garage) and physical activity (Mt. Kilimanjaro anyone?). If you're tired, you will talk less and get into less trouble.

**DOG:** You're a great friend this year to everyone. Your loyalty and general ability to stick it out will be very valuable with those that are having a bit of a hard go financially or in domestic partnership. You can really discover how good you are on your own as well but make sure to expand your horizons with outdoor adventures and some "me" time. Single dogs have a lot of success this year if a partner is something to aspire to. You will experience a release of baggage that is very attractive. Learn to ballroom dance or join a choir.

**PIG:** Find your fuzzy bunny pals and make them laugh. Eat your veggies, and for the love of all things adorable, dig into family fun no matter how much work you have. Like Rabbit and Goat, you will feel the collective breath-holding of humanity and it takes a bit of a toll on the psyche. Be a healer, a court jester, and a chef. You are very popular this year.

**\*Fun Fact:** The word for an image or sound that appears to be something significant like the rabbit on the moon is, ***pareidolia***

\*pictured in body from top to bottom: red good luck talisman by Vale; A Tang Dynasty(618-906 AD) era mirror depicting the moon goddess Chang'e with the moon rabbit; A jade 'rabbit' pendant Shang-early Western Zhou dynasty(c.1050 BCE)

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