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Welcome to 1996: "The Year of the Rat"

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Even though we celebrated the arrival of 1996 on January 1, Asian nations will not celebrate the New Year until February 19. The year 1996 will usher in the "Year of the Rat," leaving the "Year of the Pig" 12 years away before it is celebrated again. The Year of the Pig was a great year, with financial gain seen in the stock markets here and abroad. Financial institutions always fare better in Pig years. However, with the Pig on the way out and the Rat coming, what does fate have in store for us according to historical perspective?

The year of the Rat (February 19, 1996 through February 7, 1997) happens to be a Positive Fire year concerning the rat. The last time this type of elemental year occurred during the Year of the Rat was 1879-1880, which means it is virtually impossible for a person to ever experience an identical energetic year or to ever meet a person born of the exact same qualities or quirks as ourselves, as there is approximately one century (give or take a decade) between like years. Please bear in mind there are Negative & Positive Fire rats and Positive & Negative Water rats; the same is true for Earth, Metal and Wood. Given the fact there are 12 animal signs and each sign is associated with a particular positive (yang) or negative (yin) element sign, there are a number of years which go by before being repeated.

Those of you who are history buffs would see tremendous similarities between this year's energy and the energy of 1879, especially if you relate the similarities to New York as opposed to "out West."

The Rat begins the 12 year cycle which is followed by the

OX (Feb. 8, 1997-Jan. 27, 1998)

TIGER (Jan. 28, 1998-Feb. 5, 1999)

CAT (Feb. 6, 1999-Jan. 27, 2000)

DRAGON (Jan. 28, 2000- Feb. 2001)

SNAKE (2001-2002)

HORSE (2002-2003)

GOAT (2003-2004)

MONKEY (2004-2005)

ROOSTER (2005-2006)

DOG (2006-2007)

PIG (2007-2008)

Even though most people know if they are an Aries, Pisces, Aquarius etc., in Asian philosophy, the month of the year one was born is still important, but the year in which they are born is paramount. Thus, one may be an Aries Pig or a Gemini Horse. Through the centuries, babies who will be born in the year of the Fire Horse are often aborted, as families seldom feel they should risk bearing children who historically born in this year, often produce social and behavioral problems. It is said the abortion rate in China and Japan soared the last time this year occurred (January 21, 1966 to February 8, 1967). Just remember, "Don't blame the messenger for the message." I wasn't the one who established the rules for Fire Horse years. But if you are one of those Fire Horse people reading this who are a bit neurotic wondering, let me ease the mind of at least 50 percent of you, as this rule only applies to females.

The Year of the Rat is a very important financial year. It is imperative to save money, for the years which follow may be lean. The Year of the Rat is an excellent year in general to save. It is historically a favorable financial year and an excellent year to invest and prepare for the future, which can be less than desirable. On the political scene this is a more than interesting year, as we will be witness to a number of surprises, and political upheavals.

Remember, following the Year of the Rat, we enter the work related Year of the Ox, followed by the turbulent Year of the Tiger; then we enter the domestic and relaxed Year of the Cat. However, Cat years produce dramatic changes which are not necessarily favorable. Be wary of Cat years. This is followed by the jubilant Year of the Dragon with its extravaganzas and celebrations (2000-2001). An incredible year.

How the year will affect us individually really depends on what year you were born in, as each year has certain characteristics within a given year, such as if you were born in the year of the Monkey and we are in a Rat year. What can be expected is totally different than a Snake in a Rat year.

All in all, The Year of The Rat has the potential for being exceptional as long as you save and invest.

Below find your birth year and its corresponding sign under the Chinese lunar calendar.

Rat	Ox	Tiger	Hare	Dragon	Snake	Horse	Sheep	Monkey	Rooster	Dog	Pig
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47
48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59
60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71
72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83
84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
96	97	98	99	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07

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