



The Mystery of The Cat Disappearance from The Shio

Floria Egidia Umardifa^{1*}; Kalya Fausta Fika²

Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

E-mail: florian.egidia@student.uns.ac.id; kalyaff@student.uns.ac.id

Abstract

The Chinese zodiac system, known as shio, is a symbolic representation of the years based on the cycle of 12 animals that influences Chinese belief and culture. Immortals were sent to the human world to announce that the rank of animals depends on the order in which they pass through the gates of heaven. However, not many people understand that cats used to participate in the race to pass through the gates of heaven, although, in the end, cats were not included in the 12 ships. Therefore, this paper aims to tell the story and introduce and give an in-depth dimension to the traditional culture and heritage that continues to be inherited from generation to generation. In this research, we use qualitative research methods by making a detailed and accurate description of a subject so that readers can easily understand why cats are not represented in the Chinese ship. The results of this study can be concluded that there is competition between several animals to the gates of heaven, which ultimately becomes the Chinese calendar system as an annual representation, a symbol of human characteristics which is still used to predict luck, sustenance, and can even expect a thing that is much sought after in young people, namely romantic relationships.

Keywords: Shio; Chinese Zodiac; Symbolic; Relationships; Human Characteristics

Introduction

A long time ago, in the land of Vietnam, there was an exciting change in Chinese astrology that became the talk of the land. Initially, the animal representing the year in the Chinese calendar was the rabbit, but suddenly, like in a magical fairy tale, the cat took its place. The question is, where did this change come from? Was there any particular mythology or local interpretation that influenced this decision?

We must dig into the historical roots and understand the factors involved to answer this question. There may be old stories or local beliefs that give new colours to astrological animals. Through this understanding, we can dive into how Vietnamese culture and traditions infuse Chinese astrology with their unique identity.

However, this change didn't just create waves in the astrological world. The impact extends throughout Vietnamese culture and society. Has the celebration of Chinese New Year undergone significant changes? How is society responding to it? Is it with enthusiasm and excitement or with doubt and scepticism? Through this analysis, we can pull back the curtain into the social and cultural dynamics evolving in the beautiful land of Vietnam.

Next, let's enter the world of individuals born in the Year of the Cat. How do the traits and characteristics of the cat shio affect their self-view? What are the social interactions in Vietnamese society celebrating the Year of the Cat? It's like walking

through the storyline of an individual's astrological life that shapes who they are and their relationships with others.

So, amidst the changes in Vietnamese Chinese astrology, we encounter complex layers from traditional symbolism to contemporary cultural dynamics. It's like a magical story, where the zodiac animals take centre stage, and each turn of the year is a new chapter in the Vietnamese Book of Life filled with magic and deep meaning.

Research Methods

The method we use in writing this essay is qualitative. The qualitative method is an approach that emphasizes an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, in contrast to quantitative methods that focus on measurement and statistical analysis. The advantage of this qualitative approach is its ability to capture the nuances, feelings, and subjective perceptions of individuals or groups towards an issue or phenomenon. In addition, we can understand the context, motives, and social interactions surrounding the phenomenon through qualitative methods. In the data collection process, we did not solely rely on direct observation or interviews but also used the "Internet searching" method. This is a technique that utilizes Internet media as the primary source of data. Through Internet searches, we can access various sources of information such as references, scientific journals, research articles, and reports relevant to the object of our research. The advantage of this method is its ability to collect extensive and diverse data from various sources quickly and efficiently. However, we need to ensure the credibility and validity of the sources of information we use so that the results of our study remain accurate and accountable.

Results and Discussion

With its annual cycle represented by 12 animals or ships, Chinese astrology has been one of East Asia's most revered aspects of culture. Every year, with great enthusiasm, people wait to determine their shio and uncover their potential fate. But there is one interesting change in Chinese astrology: many may need to be more familiar with removing the cat from the ship.

Chinese astrological tradition attributes various human characteristics to 12 animals representing the years in the 12-year cycle. These ships are the rat, buffalo, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, chicken, dog and pig. Each animal is represented in 12 years, creating a complex and diverse astrological framework. However, ships also have pretty exciting legends behind their function in today's times.

The Race of 12 Animals Down The River

As the leader, the Jade Emperor wanted all the animals on Earth to wish him a happy birthday. However, there was a particular condition: they had to cross a river, and their arrival order would determine their rank on the ship.

The animals then participate in this race in their way. Rat, for one, woke up early but had difficulty crossing because of the swift River. However, when he saw a buffalo about to strike, he asked for a ride. Once thriving, the rat ran to its destination and became the first animal on the ship, followed by the buffalo in second place.

The tiger and rabbit came third and fourth after crossing the River. Although the dragon can fly, it chooses to help other animals by creating rain and wind, which results in it coming in fifth place.

The snake, which should have been behind the horse, took sixth place after the horse gave way. This makes the horse seventh. The monkey, goat and chicken, who

cooperated to cross by boat, came in eighth to tenth place. The dog, who chose to pause and take a bath, came in 11th place.

The pig, which chose to sleep and eat before crossing, was the last animal to arrive and placed 12th. In addition to these twelve animals, it turns out that cats also participated in the race across the River to the gates of heaven.

Legend of The Cat's Disappearance from The Shio

After hearing the Jade Emperor's announcement, Cat expressed concern to his best friend, Mouse, about his fear of swimming across the river. Meanwhile, old Ox was also complaining about his blurred vision. The resourceful Rat immediately devised an idea to cross the river using the Ox. The Mouse suggested they climb the Buffalo's back to help him cross.

The next day, before dawn, the three animals began to cross the river, leaving their competitors behind. However, halfway across, the crafty Mouse pushed the Cat aside, causing it to fall into the river. Unaware of this, the Buffalo continued walking and eventually reached the riverbank. Mouse quickly ran to the finish line and came first, followed by Buffalo in second.

Meanwhile, the other animals struggled to cross the river. Tiger came third, followed by Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Chicken and Dog. Pig finally emerged as the twelfth, while a wet and disappointed Cat arrived without getting any position. Since the incident, the Rat has become a great enemy to the Cat.

In conclusion, God was delighted with the race's outcome and decided to give each year to the winner and give the animal's characteristic trait to those born in that year. However, in Vietnam, most people welcome the Lunar New Year differently. They celebrate the Year of the Cat instead of the Year of the Rabbit as they do in China, Japan and other East Asian countries. The question is, why this change? To understand this change, we need to examine the factors that may have influenced this decision.

Language and Sounds that Differentiate

In Vietnam, the term for cat is "meo," a phonetic similarity that may lead to potential confusion with the Mandarin word for rabbit, which is "mao." This linguistic nuance could contribute to misunderstandings or errors, particularly in an astrological context. This linguistic overlap might explain why Vietnamese consider cats a more unmistakable and understandable choice.

The Vietnamese zodiac system is based on the lunar year of birth, and the cat holds the fourth position among all the zodiac animals. The cat is highly regarded for its auspicious symbolism and is believed to be able to ward off evil spirits. This favourable perception of cats further solidifies their popularity within the Vietnamese astrological framework.

Culture and Tradition Influencing Choice

Beyond linguistic factors, culture and tradition also play a crucial role in influencing the choice of animals representing specific years. In Vietnam, raising rabbits is not a common practice. Conversely, cats have long been considered daily companions in the lives of the Vietnamese people. Cats are valued for protecting crops and food from rats, which is particularly significant in agriculture. Furthermore, cats are believed to possess the power to ward off evil spirits and bring luck to their owners. Therefore, the choice of cats as the symbol for a particular year reflects the enduring relationship between the Vietnamese people and these animals.

The Vietnamese zodiac system is founded on the lunar year of birth, with cats holding the fourth position among all zodiac animals. Cats are highly esteemed for their favourable symbolism and are believed to be able to repel evil spirits. This positive perception of cats further reinforces their popularity within the Vietnamese astrological framework.

Cat Shio Traits and Characters

Recognizing the characteristics of the cat shio can provide a deeper insight into why Vietnamese people consider it a powerful symbol. People born in the Year of the Cat are often considered to have intelligent, clever, agile and astute traits and characters. They have a visionary outlook and often treat people enthusiastically and kindly. They are brilliant, clear-thinking individuals and can succeed in many fields, including calculation, business and the arts.

People born in the Year of the Cat are also known for being optimistic, honest, and forgiving. They can adapt to various situations and are often sensitive and emotional, giving them a rich inner life. These traits have led Vietnamese people to respect and value the cat shio as a symbol influencing an individual's personality and fate. They believe that people born in the Year of the Cat tend to have positive and valuable characteristics to society.

The Year of the Cat is set to occur in 2023, and in the past, it also occurred in 2011, 1999, 1987, 1975, 1963, 1951, 1939, and 1927. To find out when the next Year of the Cat will happen, you can add 12 years to 2023. The Lunar New Year of 2023 starts on January 22nd and marks the beginning of the Year of the Cat, ending on February 9th, 2024. As a result, people born in 2023 before January 22nd would be considered Tigers, while those delivered after February 9th, 2024, would be regarded as Dragons.



Figure 1. The Cat is the zodiac animal of the coming Lunar New Year in Vietnam
Source: <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3207357/why-vietnam-celebrating-year-cat-not-rabbit>

The Influence of Change in Vietnamese Chinese Astrology

The influence of change in Vietnamese Chinese astrology is not just limited to annual affairs or personal beliefs. It also has a broader impact on culture and society. Such changes can affect traditional festivals and celebrations associated with the Lunar New Year. For example, Vietnamese people may have different celebrations from

China and other East Asian countries to celebrate the Year of the Cat. This creates unique differences in how they celebrate and honour the new year.

In addition, these changes may reflect the openness of Vietnamese society to foreign cultural influences. In an increasingly connected world, outside cultural influences are becoming increasingly relevant. These changes in astrology show that Vietnamese people not only accept these changes but also take steps to accommodate new cultural influences while maintaining their traditional values.

About Cat Loss in Chinese Shio

This change also illustrates how the interpretation and meaning of cultural symbols can vary across different contexts. In Chinese astrology, the rabbit has specific meanings and characteristics that may differ from the meaning of the cat in Vietnamese astrology. Losing the cat from the Chinese zodiac creates differences in how Vietnamese people understand and interpret their new year.

In this context, we can reflect on how important flexibility is in culture and language. Sometimes, the meaning of a symbol can change or be adjusted to accommodate cultural and environmental differences. This teaches us to remain open to different interpretations and to not be too rigid in keeping traditions.

Psychological Impact on Individuals

Lastly, these changes can also psychologically impact individuals born in the Year of the Cat. They may feel more connected to the characteristics and traits associated with the cat shio, such as intelligence, agility and resourcefulness. This may affect their self-perception and their interactions with the world around them. With these changes, individuals may feel more connected to their Vietnamese culture and traditions.

Conclusion

The cat's disappearance from the shio in Vietnamese Chinese astrology is an interesting example of how language, culture and tradition differences can affect people's worldviews and beliefs. While Chinese astrology remains an integral part of Chinese culture, variations like this illustrate the unique cultural diversity of different communities. These changes also teach us to appreciate better and understand the diversity of cultures worldwide. While cats may be missing from the ship in more common Chinese astrology, they remain a powerful symbol that inspires positive qualities we can learn from and apply in our lives.

In describing the disappearance of cats from the shio in Vietnamese Chinese astrology, we can conclude that differences in culture, language and tradition significantly influence people's worldview. The presence or absence of an animal in astrology can reflect a community's values, beliefs and cultural uniqueness. The disappearance of the cat as a symbol in Vietnamese astrology reminds us of the complexity of cultural diversity worldwide. While cats may no longer be part of the more common Chinese shio, they remain a powerful symbol that inspires positive qualities that can be applied to our lives. The importance of respecting and understanding cultural diversity must be emphasized. Each community's unique worldview and beliefs should be respected as part of its valuable cultural heritage. In this era of globalization, we need to be open to different views and traditions while remaining true to our cultural roots.

The disappearance of the cat from the shio in Vietnamese Chinese astrology is also a reminder that the world is full of mysteries and uniqueness waiting to be

explored and appreciated. We can learn a lot from these cultural differences, and they can enrich our understanding of the world.

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