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were summoned to participate in a race. The earlier one went through the Heavenly Gate, the better the rank one would have. Why is the cat not one of the 12 zodiac animals? It is said that Cat and Rat got as far as crossing the river together on Ox's back, but Rat pushed Cat into the water. Cat was washed away and didn't get to the Heavenly Gate in time to get a ranking. After that a great enmity grew between Cat and Rat, so that rats scatter in all directions when a cat appears. The story is widespread (and widely varying) among Chinese. Though it is made up, it might be interesting for you to tell your children and friends. Actually, the 12 animals were chosen very deliberately by the ancients, after many revisions. The zodiac animals are either closely related to ancient Chinese people's daily lives or have lucky meanings in ancient Chinese culture. In Chinese culture, the top 5 luckiest/most popular zodiac signs are Dragon, Snake, Pig, Rat, and Tiger conventionally. There is a popular Chinese folk saying that 9/10 Goats are inadequate (羊九不全 '10 Goats 9 incomplete'), which implies that most people born in a year of the Goat are identified for bad luck.

Most Chinese people also believe that people born in a Goat year will grow up to be followers rather than leaders. Although this is an outdated superstition, it has a real effect on Chinese society. Conversely, the Dragon is the most coveted zodiac sign, with Chinese births peaking in Dragon years. Rationally, it's hard to identify the luckiest or unluckiest zodiac signs, as each sign has its own advantages and disadvantages. Socially, different combinations of zodiac signs cause different relational dynamics, which may affect someone's life more, as we don't live in isolation. The main similarity between the two systems is that both systems are based on time periods of birth, and they both have 12 symbols or signs with associated personalities and fortunes. However, there are big differences in their origins and astrological theory. With the Chinese zodiac, the 12 signs are derived from the ancients' musings about archetypal animals, people's personalities and fortunes, and their relationships with one another and years of birth. A myth about a celestial race was later developed to explain the Chinese zodiac sequence.

This differs from Western astrology, where the 12 zodiac signs are based on constellations' positions relative to the earth. The constellations were named according to Greek mythology and astrological theory was developed based on the stars' supposed influence on human personalities and lives. In addition, the Chinese zodiac is calculated on a year-by-year base while the Western zodiac corresponds with "months". Read more on Differences between the Chinese Zodiac and Western Astrology. Chinese Zodiac in Other Asian Countries. The Chinese zodiac has a great influence on several other Asian countries, such as the South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, and Myanmar. In some countries, the zodiac signs are the same as the Chinese ones, while some of the animals differ in other countries. The 12 Chinese zodiac animals in order are: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig. These animal signs are exactly the same in South Korea, North Korea, Singapore, and Cambodia. The 12 Japanese zodiac animals in order are: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig.

The 8 Burmese zodiac animals are: Garuda (a mythical bird), Tiger, Lion, Elephant (with tusks), Rat, Guinea Pig, and Dragon.