

DECEMBER NEW MOON 2006
MONTH OF THE WHITE RAT
“THE RAT ON THE CROSSBEAM”
20 DEC 2006
 By Malvin Artley

Hour	Day	Month	Year
Stem: 9 Yang Water	Stem: 10 yin water	Stem: 7 Yang Metal	Stem: 3 Yang Fire
Branch: I Water Rat <i>Rat on the Mountain</i>	Branch: VIII Earth Sheep <i>Sheep in a Flock</i>	Branch: I Water Rat <i>Rat on the Crossbeam</i>	Branch: XI Earth Dog <i>Sleeping Dog</i>
Combined Wood <i>Mulberry Wood</i>	Combined Wood <i>Pliant Wood</i>	Combined Earth <i>Earthen Walls</i>	Combined Earth <i>Rooftop Slates</i>

Chart Name: NEW MOON 20 DEC 2006
 Date/Time: 21 Dec 2006, 1:00 am (AEDT -11:00) / 20 Dec 2006, 2:00 pm UT
 Solar Period (Fortnightly Festival Period): 21 Great Snow (N); Corn in ear (S)

From the Center, even a small boy can lead an elephant. Honor and courage proceed from the Center.
 (Daytime)

or

Sickness begins with the phantoms of doubt. The Wise One fosters firm resolve. (Nighttime)

OK....This one is a bit long, but there are chase scenes.....

The time for decisions has come. The White Rat was in a predicament. As he sat upon the crossbeam in the roof of the barn and reflected upon his recent life, he could not believe how his luck had been. “So many possibilities!” he thought to himself. “How shall I choose? Every path I see holds a brilliant promise, but also the potential for disaster. It could go any way with any choice. At first, it seemed I had but few choices. Now I have too many. What if I make the wrong choice? I could go back to my old life, I suppose—or maybe I couldn’t. I cannot choose on the basis of what is before me or what was. It is all too good—and too terrible! It isn’t fair!” So, he sat, and he thought—and thought—and thought—and then he thought some more. He knew his time was running out, though. “Life shouldn’t be so difficult!” he complained. He was such a lucky little rat. Life was urging him onward, however, and he had to choose his path, and right away!

The White Rat was very respected by the other rats when he lived in the wild. He had always been strong and outspoken and had always made his own opportunities. The others always wondered at how lucky he was. Before he had happened upon the farm he had lived in the woods close by with a number of other rats in the area. There were dangers in the wilderness, to be certain, but he was very crafty and always knew how to get around dangers and come out the better for it. One of the ways he managed to avoid dangers was by his great acrobatic abilities. The White Rat was a bit smaller than most of the other rats and very wiry, which meant he could get in and out of places the other rats could not. There was one time when he went exploring in one of the larger trees in the area. He had noticed that one of the squirrels seemed to frequent this particular tree and his curiosity got the better of him. Upon ascending the trunk of the tree he found a small hollow that had been filled with nuts by the squirrel for the winter. “Jackpot!” he thought to himself and he promptly crawled into the hollow and began to gorge himself on his neighbor’s hard work. Alas, he was surprised in his repast by the owner of the cache, who was none-too-happy to find a rat munching away on his winter food. Heated words were exchanged and the White Rat had to beat a hasty retreat through a small opening on the other side of the hollow. The chase was on! The squirrel was not about to let this interloper get away with thievery, especially with all the hard work

that had gone into the cache. The White Rat had a choice in that moment—retreat through the branches or go straight down. He knew he could better the squirrel in the branches and lose him, so the chase was on through the tree tops

The White Rat stayed just ahead of the angry squirrel, who chattered and snapped at him as they jumped from branch to branch and from tree to tree. The squirrel almost made a trophy of the White Rat's tail a few times, but the White Rat always managed to find a new branch just in time and jump away to safety. Eventually the White Rat saw his chance to make a clean escape and he jumped onto a very spindly little branch—one which would not support the weight of the squirrel. Sure enough, as soon as the squirrel leapt and made contact with the branch it snapped, sending him to the forest floor with a loud thump. The squirrel picked himself up and cursed at the thief, but the White Rat was long gone by that time and safely in the top of another tree, hidden from view. As was the case many times before, the White Rat's agility and pluck had saved him, but not by much this time. That episode had been a bit too close for comfort, and the White Rat was chastened and rattled by what had just happened. At that moment he was cast into despair and he thought there had to be a better way to make his way in the world, so his thoughts finally came to rest upon a nearby farm, about which he had heard so much from the other rats. Being the adventuresome little fellow he was, the White Rat promptly decided that he'd had enough of life in the woods and he made his way to the farm and to a more cosmopolitan lifestyle. Riches awaited him—as well as excitement, as he was soon to discover.

The White Rat had heard a lot about the farm from various animals about the woods, but especially from the rats themselves. Many had gone in search of the very things the White Rat was seeking—easy pickings and adventure—but very few had returned to tell their tales. The ones who had returned were never at the farm for more than a few days and were never quite themselves after the experience, either, largely because between the cats, the terrier, the owls and the farmer's wife, the life expectancy of any rat on the farm was very short, indeed. Every rat before him had either met their doom or soon seen reason and beat a hasty retreat. His lot would be different, though, the White Rat thought to himself. He was smart. He was agile. He even knew how to out-fox the foxes in the woods, but he also knew **the value of a balanced mind and approach**. His life would be a successful one on the farm, he thought His **possible future loomed large and seemed seductive** there. He was full of ideas and he concocted many a plan on his way. Yes, he would **take his time and go carefully**, he surmised, and he would make certain that he had **contingency plans** ready if—heaven forbid—disaster ever befell him. His lot *would* be different. He *would* be successful and thrive. Yes, indeed! That decided, he knew his **objective must be pursued**.

Upon his arrival at the farm the White Rat found to his great delight that what was presented to him exceeded his wildest dreams. Food was everywhere! No wonder so many rats had been seduced by the life on the farm. He saw that he could pick and choose when it came to meals—grain from the feed troughs, bits of food from the dog's and cat's dishes, grain dropped on the ground and scraps of food from the farmer's table that were thrown in the bin each day—and that was just for starters. There was food stored in sacks and boxes in the storehouse and the nearby fields were laden with the stuff. Who could ask for more? He could even eat the corn scattered for the chickens if he was quick enough to get some of it before they ate it all. That turned out to be one of his favorite pastimes, as well as his eventual downfall, but more on that anon.

The first thing he did upon his arrival there was to find some easy pickings away from the view of cats and owls, his biggest worries, so he could at least have good meals while he set himself up. He settled in quickly, though, and found a nesting hole away from prying eyes and noses. He was safe for the time. Once he had done that, he began to take his time and observe the movements of all the other animals there. There was a dog there—a terrier—but the dog was never a worry. She was always with the farmer's wife. It was sickening to the White Rat the way the woman doted over that dog—and the dog was dumb enough to fall for it. No, the terrier was not really a worry to him. The cats were another matter, but he soon found out about their sleep schedules and their favorite paths and hangouts. So, he had the cats pegged in no time. The owls were simply not to be trusted at any time. They could detect the slightest movement, so the only time the White Rat could come out was during the day while the owls slept, but he always had to keep a wary eye above when he was out in the open. It didn't bother him, though. He simply slept during the night safely in his nesting hole while the owls were awake. The only thing that remained was for him to gnaw strategic access and escape holes in the various buildings about the place in case he was caught by surprise in his wanderings. He had learned about the need for such things in the wild, and his experience there taught him that **it is essential to take adequate precautions**. Soon he was set up, and our little white friend then had the run of the farm. Yes, he *was* smarter than the other rats who had tried before him and he had made a good life for himself through his own **cleverness**.

Now chickens, on the other hand, are not the cleverest of animals, as most people know. They are also easily frightened as long as there is not a rooster nearby. There were no roosters kept with the chickens on this farm, though. The farmer's wife didn't like having to deal with them at feeding time. For some reason, they always flew at her. Every rooster that passed through the farm usually ended up in the pot, and usually because they had spurred her. No, roosters weren't a

worry to the White Rat. The chickens thus became his entertainment as a result of their skittishness and their silliness. The White Rat had come up with a game that kept him amused when he got bored with the ease of his life, which was often. His favorite pastime was to wait until the feed had been scattered in the mornings and then he would wait for the farmer's wife to go back indoors. When the coast was clear he would run into the midst of the then-feeding chickens, screeching and generally acting crazily and that would scare the daylights out of the poor chickens, sending them to the far corners of the coop. That being done, he would quickly scoop up enough grain to fill his cheek pouches and make a hasty retreat to his nesting hole where he could munch away at his leisure and laugh at the silly chickens. No one had caught him in the act yet. Everyone just thought the chickens had gone a bit silly—until one day. On this particular day the White Rat had let down his guard and was a little too sure of himself to keep a watchful eye. So, as he played his favorite game he didn't stop to notice that the farmer's wife had not gone indoors. She had decided to hide around the corner and see what was spooking the chickens. She saw the whole game. The White Rat was about to get a lesson in humility and kindness to his fellow creatures.

The farmer's wife hatched a plan that night. Quietly, while the chickens were roosted, she made a small hole in the fence out of sight of the main feeding area—just big enough for her terrier to fit through. She tied the terrier there overnight to keep out any predators and waited for the morning. In the morning just before dawn she untied the terrier and commanded her to "Stay!" (She was quite a dutiful little dog.) She went in and fed the chickens, then quietly walked around the corner behind the terrier, picked up a shovel and waited to see if her quarry would appear. She was not to be disappointed. Sure enough, the White Rat came running in from behind the coop, scared the daylights out of the chickens and began to scoop up the grain for the morning repast. The White Rat was particularly pleased with his performance that morning and was lost in his reverie when, all of a sudden, the hairs stood straight up on his back and he froze. Listening, he heard a faint rustle behind him and turned just in time to see the terrier running as fast as she could straight for the him—and she meant business!

Well, the White Rat shrieked in panic, and there was a flash of white light as he went airborne, hurling himself onto the nearest fence post and scampering onto the top of the fence for the coop. Grain and dust went flying everywhere. The chase was on in earnest then. The White Rat made a bee-line for the barn along the top of the fence, the terrier yapping away in hot pursuit below, the farmer's wife yelling after her to "Catch the little bandit!", running after them both with her shovel. The chickens were in an uproar. All the commotion attracted the attention of the cats and woke up the owls, too. All of them saw the scene before them—the White Rat running along the fence, the terrier in hot pursuit and the farmer's wife trying to keep up with them both—and all of them joined into the chase. All of them wanted to have their little 'meeting' with our white friend, and they all headed straight for the barn chasing after him. It was a spectacle not to be missed!

As usual, though, the White Rat had planned for such an eventuality and made it to one of his escape holes gnawed into the side of the barn—and just in the nick of time, too. He made his way along the wall out of sight, trying to avoid the notice of the barn owls, who were now very keen to make his acquaintance. They could not see him, however, because his escape route was underneath a stack of hay bails against the wall. Eventually, our intrepid friend made it to the crossbeam in the roof of the barn. He knew he would be safe there for a short time while he worked out what to do. This particular beam was covered, but through holes in the wood he could see the scene below. Everyone was on the ground looking for him. The cats were milling around, sniffing and trying to pick up his scent. The terrier was still yapping away and making a general spectacle of herself, eventually annoying the farmer's wife, who yelled at her to "Shut up!" Then the poor dog got chastised for not catching the White Rat. The farmer's wife eventually left as things settled, muttering under her breath that she would "find the little rascal!" and have her day with him. In lieu of that, she told all the cats to be certain to bring her the White Rat's head if her shovel didn't get it first. It was not a good day for the White Rat, and he knew that unless he changed his tactics drastically, his days at that farm were very and truly numbered. He also knew he could never play his favorite game again if he wanted to keep his head. As his heart finally settled and his breathing slowed, our little friend had to take stock of his situation. All things must come to a conclusion, for good or ill, and the time had come for him to make some serious choices about his life. Yes, the White Rat was in a predicament

Now that our pulse rates have settled a bit and the dust has cleared, one might well ask why the story to go with the month is so long this time when the others have been short. The reason is two-fold. Firstly, I wanted to give you an example of how the stories for all 60 Pillar combinations will appear when in book form. I abbreviate them for these letters while still retaining the salient qualities of the Pillar. Some would be long, like this one, while others would be only a page. People remember stories, but the main thing to be imparted in these tales is a psychological quality for each individual animal, and that takes time to develop sometimes. The second reason is that—what the heck—I just got carried away and enjoyed writing it. The basic gist of this story is that every situation has a history associated with it, that there are background reasons for why people behave the way they do, which explains why we get ourselves into trouble at times and that

everyone has gifts and faults that contribute to the playing out of any situation. This month marks a culmination of sorts and a pause before movement. It also marks the start of a new cycle in people's lives, and certain choices have been building for some time that life is about to force upon many of us. If this sounds like your life at the moment, rest assured—you are not alone in feeling stuck and like something immanent is about to befall us, or hopefully to resolve things for us. So, let's have a look at the Month of the Rat on the Crossbeam and see why we are feeling stuck and what awaits us in the days to come.

White is the color associated with the element Metal in Chinese astrology. Metal rules decisions and decisiveness. We may have noticed over the past few letters that this element has been largely missing in the charts for the new moons. Metal is the 'Venus Element', and Venus in Chinese astrology is about justice, decisions, the Law and truth—especially living one's Truth. Metal is the Yang side of Venus, whereas Venus in Western astrology is given a much more Yin emphasis. As we can see from the Four Pillars, Metal occupies only one of the 12 boxes there and, as such, the interpretation points to people generally being gentle and indecisive. That is hardly the sort of energy the Rat on the Crossbeam presents to us. Life should be exciting and full of adventure. Experiences are to be relished and we are meant to stretch our boundaries, to stand up to challenges and to be heard amongst our peers. Strong Metal in a chart imparts those qualities. Metal rules the 'animal spirit', the lungs and our ability to breathe Life into our daily circumstances. It also rules athletic ability and oratory, persistence and daring. Sadly, it is lacking at the moment and we feel stuck as a result, especially when we see all the Earth in the chart, which has been strong for months.

Earth is the 'Saturn Element' in Chinese astrology and Saturn, as we know, is the Lord of Karma. How can we move forward when we are stuck in karmic scenarios? That is what is happening to all of us at the moment. Well, we either choose to move or we wait for life to do things for us. Do I sound like a broken record? (I wonder how many kids these days even know what a broken record is?) The general reading of the amount of Earth in this chart is "stubborn, circumspect and unyielding". Situations seem stubborn and unyielding now. I think that pretty well sums up a lot of people's lives at the moment. No one is giving anything away, everyone is content to sit where they are and would rather be miserable than to move, and nothing seems to 'give'. The best description I can give to how life feels at an emotional level with regard to getting things moving at times is like trying to push one's way through black granite. Things feel too hard and circumstances seem impassable. Again, I hear this from a lot of people. Basically, there has been a large upwelling of very old karma and it is difficult for people to either identify what it is or how to move through it. The point is, you cannot push your way through granite. You either have to go around it, smash it into little bits or stay with it and carve something really beautiful out of it. Karma is kind of like that. Few are the people who make something beautiful out of their discomfort. Most people try to rail against it and smash their way through their frustrations eventually. In the Month of the White Rat we are asked to apply ourselves to problems, make choices about our circumstances and to find ways around things if we can do nothing about them. Ingenuity, a fresh approach and quick thinking are called for.

The essence of the Month Pillar in this new moon chart, then, is outlined in red in the story: It is time to make decisions. A balanced mind and approach is the best means to success. Possible futures might loom large and seem seductive, but take time and move carefully if moving into new territory. The objectives must be pursued if the choice is made, though. It is essential to take adequate precautions and to have contingency plans. All situations must be approached with cleverness. Every Rat Pillar inaugurates a new cycle. If you find yourself on the verge of something new, go carefully and have a back-up, but stay your course. If you find yourself stuck in an old scenario, then cleverness and forthrightness are indicated. *All situations will change if we choose to do go against the status quo of our lives.* This has the potential to be an active and stimulating period. The seeds of transformation are definitely there for the month.

The Day Pillar describes how the month might be best approached. This month the Day Pillar is the Sheep in the Flock, which brings many strange twists of fate. However, we should be mindful that there are realities beyond our present circumstance and that a change in thinking may be just the thing that can break a static scenario loose. The Day Pillar also carries an admonition to stay composed within the crowded world of people's thoughts. In the end, although there might be quick rewards, the initial returns will be small. Sheep are affectionate, caring and trustworthy. That indicates the best way to approach things and people in the White Rat month. Keep your communications open, be attentive to people close to you and be open to change, because it will come if we make the effort. Finally, as we enter into the Capricorn period, let us take time to sit and contemplate the next steps ahead. This is not a time to jump and do foolish things, although the temptation may be great to do so, given people's level of frustration at the moment. Above all, enjoy your holidays with loved ones. May your new cycle be a joyful one. I hope your decisions are not as fraught as the one for our little Rat on the Crossbeam. Merry Christmas, everyone!

Cheers,
Malvin.
13 Dec 2006

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