

[Year of the Rooster Crowing and the Phoenix Rising](#)

February 6, 2017 by [Liz Fisher](#)



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Earth-based spirituality respects folk wisdom. The most colorful, sensational, and joyous of all Chinese holidays is the Lunar New Year which began this year on the New Moon of January 28, 2017. The celebrations continue through the Full Moon on February 10th. This is the Year of the Fire Rooster or Phoenix, both unique engaging birds. The element fire brings strength, passion, bravery, and leadership, qualities we all will draw upon in the coming year.

Chinese New Year is a time of festivals, parades, home decorating, and parties. It is the most important holiday in the Asian communities. People hang gorgeous lanterns for the occasion. Living in the San Francisco Bay Area for most of my adult life brought me into contact with the customs and festivities of the largest Chinese population outside China. The Chinese New Year's Parade in San Francisco, the biggest one outside Asia is on Saturday evening, February 11 and can be viewed on the internet.



This Lunar New Year got an early start with global Women's Marches. Raising our voices like Roosters and *Rising Up* like the Phoenix from the ashes of disappointment and a feeling of impending doom marked these events. Spontaneous pods of support and connection formed during the biggest demonstrations in U.S. history with many more developing around the world. Celebration was in the air. A pink shade of red, the favorite color of Chinese New Year, was everywhere. It feels like these outpourings are a foreshadowing of coming opportunities to express our passions.



This is a special year since two animals are assigned to this tenth year in the Chinese zodiac. I have reviewed the lore about them from multiple sources. The characteristics of each offer clues about what might be in store and suggest attitudes worth considering. Here are select tidbits about this coming year by a variety of commentators as well as my own observations during previous Rooster/Phoenix Years.

Roosters Announce the Sunrise

The rooster is the first domesticated creature to stir in the morning and wake up others with crowing. A born performer, the rooster calls upon all of us to get up and get on with it. The rooster is focused, practicing attention to detail to get the job done.



We are all aware that 2017 will be a period of immense changes. It will not be possible to avoid the mounting tension that has become our daily political life. Rather than fear and withdrawal, the Fire Rooster will support giving our concerns voice, being confident about our values and doing the work needed to keep them alive in the public arena.

Phoenix Rising

Sometimes the Year of the Rooster is translated as the Year of the Phoenix which intimates spiritual potential. This mythical bird that rose from the ashes to create new life epitomizes grace and beauty. Its gold and red feathers, its pheasant-like head and long plumage stirs the soul. During this year overcoming obstacles and creating opportunities for new beginnings is favored. With what we are all facing, this



may seem naïve. However, if viewed from another perspective, we can use the energy of this year to inform and educate about the important institutions and policies that are the bedrock of our Democracy. These efforts may ultimately save them and us.



In Japanese folklore, Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess is associated with the Phoenix which is one of the reasons this image is found on many Shinto shrines. Remembering to honor the Phoenix this year brings this Goddess out into the world again. (See [my January 2017 column](#) for more about this important deity.)

The presence of these two birds gives this year mystical energies. There is a shamanic notion that birds are messengers of the gods; or they are seen as humans in trance taking flight.

Alchemists used the Phoenix as a symbol for transformation. They felt She taught us to be persistent, yet flexible. Rising from the ashes is

an image we can use to give us courage and inspiration when it seems we are defeated. Staying motivated will produce a feeling of accomplishment.

I will end on a personal note. For me Rainbows, Roosters and Phoenixes merged this week, making me feel confident that surprising spiritual and emotional developments will come to our aid when dealing with inevitable challenges.



Here in California, after five years of punishing drought, we are experiencing record rains. On Saturday morning after a night of heavy rain, clouds were scattered among patches of blue sky. I was taking an early morning walk when I thought about rainbows. With my back to the rising sun I looked up and to my surprise one was just forming. I stood there watching the multicolored arc extend. It lasted for some time before fading, making a profound impression on me.

From a scientific perspective a rainbow is a meteorological phenomenon that is caused by reflection, refraction and dispersion of light in water droplets. When a beam of sunlight comes directly down to Earth, the light is white. Sunlight is actually made up of different colors that we don't usually see. Because there were still plenty of raindrops suspended in the clouds above, a stunning rainbow appeared in the sky. The metaphorical meaning of this event is worth pondering.

Oddly, I came across a Biblical quote that seemed to resonate with my feelings. God said to Noah, "You see, I have set my rainbow in the sky. This will be the sign of the covenant I have made with you and all creatures, never again to destroy the earth by a flood. It will always remind us of the promise between you and me." For me it was a message from the Creatrix. She says: "Your connection with the Earth and the Cosmos is strong."

Let us all rise this year and show what the true sacred covenant with all creatures and the earth looks like. Or, as Maya Angelou says in her famous poem when she reflects on the despicable treatment directed toward her: “Still I Rise.”

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U.S. Postage Stamps from this year (2017) and from a previous Rooster year (1993)

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Purple Phoenix Rising from the Ashes, Public Domain image

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