



## The great race

A long time ago in China lived the Jade Emperor. It was his birthday. He wanted to measure time to know how old he was.

All the animals arrived. The Emperor decided to have a race to give a name to each year of the Chinese Zodiac.

The rat and the cat couldn't swim very well.  
'Can you take us across the river?'  
'Yes, jump on quick!'

They swam across the river. Then the rat pushed the cat into the water and jumped onto land.  
'Well done, rat! The first year will be the Year of the Rat and the second will be the Year of the Ox.'

'Look! Here's the tiger. He's very tired. The third year will be the Year of the Tiger.'

'The rabbit can't swim but he's very clever. The fourth year will be the Year of the Rabbit.'

'Why are you late, dragon? You can fly!'  
'I had to make some rain for thirsty people to drink.'  
'Well done! The fifth year is the Year of the Dragon.'

'What's this? I can hear a horse. No, it's a snake. So the snake has the sixth year.'

'Well done! It is good to see you working together! The goat is eighth, the monkey is ninth and the rooster is tenth.'

'Sorry I'm late. The water is clean and I needed a bath.'  
'The eleventh is the Year of the Dog.'

'You are the last.'  
'Yes, I had to eat and sleep on the way.'  
'The last is the Year of the Pig.'

And that is how the Emperor chose the animals for the Chinese Zodiac.

## Short story



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