

# 福

## Fortune

### a Lenormand card deck

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#### What is Lenormand?

An oracle system that originated from a playing card game. Often compared to Tarot, Lenormand has fewer cards and a more direct, literal approach. Cards are often read in pairs. The Grand Tableau spread uses all 36 cards, so small size and quick identification is crucial.

A few places to get started:

CafeLenormand.com / LearnLenormand.com

#### Overview

The following is a quick list of common meanings, plus some brief notes on the illustration. The imagery of this deck is inspired by my Chinese/Taiwanese background, and includes figures, places and symbols of historical, mythological, and contemporary origins. Completed for Inktober 2017, all art is rendered with a Sailor fude de mannen pen (fountain pen with bent nib that mimics brush strokes for Asian calligraphy).

**CARD BACK** / Chinese knotwork.

**01 THE RIDER** / Something coming soon, news, message, new direction, action to be taken, visitor, young man, male side of a partnership.

**02 THE CLOVER** / Good luck, opportunity, chance, gamble.

**03 THE SHIP** / Journey, long distance being crossed, travel and transportation, exchange of goods, business, foreign matters. Treasure ships from Admiral Zheng He's fleet. During the Ming Dynasty, He led 7 expeditions to further Chinese exploration and trade.

**04 THE HOUSE** / Warmth and stability of home, family, the familiar, the comfortable, the domestic, the secure/private, matters of real estate. This home in Beipu, Taiwan was hidden behind a stone wall and resembled a temple.

**05 THE TREE** / Things that are alive and growing, physical and mental health, nature, being rooted in reality or the past. Sinuous, twisting, whiskered trees in Dansui, Taiwan.

**06 THE CLOUDS** / Confusion, uncertainty, depression, a cover-up. A temporal quality - bad weather eventually passes.

**07 THE SNAKE** / Deception, betrayal, manipulation, seduction, maliciousness. Traditional: a woman. Modern: ambition, desire, single-mindedness.

**08 THE COFFIN** / Ending, completion of a chapter or process, closure, loss, illness, grief, metaphorical burial/suppression. Chinese coffin with a pair of burning Joss (incense) sticks and food offerings for paying respects to the dead/ancestor worship: 3 dishes of meat (whole chicken, fish, chunk of pork) and a plate of oranges. Additional meaning can be conveyed in Lenormand if the coffin is draped/has an open side (and what other card appears on the side of the opening). Here the direction of the incense smoke plays this role.

**09 THE BOUQUET** / Gift, invitation, happiness, beauty, charm, joy, something wonderful. Peonies: the king of flowers, prosperity, wealth, honour. Narcissus: longevity.

**10 THE SCYTHE** / Sudden action or stop, danger, accident, cutting something off (permanently). The cut can be painful like an injury, or rewarding like a harvest/ridding yourself of something that wasn't good for you. Or both. Chinese chicken claw sickles - many weapons are derived from agricultural tools. The sickle is used in harvesting rice.

**11 THE WHIP** / Conflict and violence, discourse ranging from discussions to negotiations to arguments, physical activities including sports and sex, punishment, abuse, pain, shame, anger. 9-segment chain whip. Flags at handle and tip allow for greater control (and sound effects).

**12 THE BIRDS** / Verbal communications, a call, pair of people (a couple, siblings etc.), high or nervous energy, the busy-ness and chatter of interactions such as meetings and conversations. The Mikado pheasant is a species endemic to Taiwan, and is also considered an unofficial symbol.

**13 THE CHILD** / An actual child, innocence, youth, immaturity, playfulness, things that are small (in size, or possibly relevance), new things, beginnings. The child is playing with a pellet drum, a quintessential traditional Asian toy, and wearing a dudou (belly wrap), an undergarment often seen on children in Chinese art. The dudou's design shows a classic visual motif of bats around a peach (peaches for longevity, bats being a homonym for fortune/blessing).

**14 THE FOX** / Things one may do to survive or get ahead, cleverness, cunning, distrust, watchfulness against deceit, unconventionality, your job, work (including workaholicism). *Hulijing* ("fox spirit") can live for thousands of years and

take on human or other forms. The consort Daji has been portrayed in Chinese literature for centuries as a malevolent hulijing who manipulated the Emperor and brought about the ruin of the Shang dynasty.

**15 THE BEAR** / Figures of strength/authority, power of physical or material nature, parents (especially a protective mother figure), those in teaching/training roles, boss, judge, personal finance, food and diet, weight. The Formosan black bear (also white-throated bear or moon bear because of its crescent marking) is an endangered species found only in the forests of the mountains of Taiwan. Amongst a number of the indigenous peoples of the island, hunting and killing one invites disaster.

**16 THE STAR** / Hopes, dreams, goals, ideals, movement towards such things, inspiration, imagination. Dou Mu is goddess of the Northern (Big) Dipper and the polestar. She holds the moon and sun, a bell, a seal, a bow, and a halberd/spear.

**17 THE STORK** / Change, movement, transformation, going from one place to another. Lan Caihe, the most mysterious of the Eight Immortals of Daoist mythology, is of unknown gender and age, depicted variously as a beautiful young man or woman (or maybe both), or an old man. An eccentric beggar/busker who would sing and dance and wander round with one foot bare, they carried a basket of flowers (also sometimes a hoe, a flute, and castanets) and let other beggars pick up all the coins they earned. They enjoyed alcohol, got super drunk one day and rode a stork up to heaven, departing the earthly realm forever.

**18 THE DOG** / Familiar person (ranging from an acquaintance to love interest), friend, friendship, loyalty, trust, dependability (possibly dependence), assistance, support, actual dog. The Taiwan (Formosan Mountain) Dog is smart, affectionate, high energy. They have a distinctive black coating on their tongues.

**19 THE TOWER** / Protection, isolation or loneliness, separation/parting, institute of authority (e.g., government, schools, hospitals, corporations). Yellow Crane Tower is considered one of the four great towers of ancient China. Originally a military watchtower, it was destroyed and rebuilt several times. It inspired many famous melancholy, wistful poems.

**20 THE GARDEN** // A shared space, social activities and spheres, a gathering or meeting, an event, something out in public, something popular. A group of scholars discoursing under plum blossoms. Plum blossoms are arguably as important to the Chinese as sakura are to

the Japanese (plum blossom viewing was actually a precursor to cherry blossom viewings as an older type of hanami). Their popularity exploded during the Song dynasty, to the point where there are historical records of complaints about plum blossom clichés in poetry/art.

**21 THE MOUNTAIN /** Obstacles and challenges, weight upon your shoulders, something you can no longer ignore, difficulty you must face head-on. Surrounding cards help identify the thing or person creating or affected by the hurdles. *Shansui* (“mountains [and] water”) is a traditional type of Chinese landscape painting that is less about reproducing the scenery exactly as seen in the physical world, and more about conveying a philosophy/balance and the awareness or idea of nature.

**22 THE PATH (also called THE WAY or THE CROSSROADS) /** Free will, choice, decision to be made, multiple solutions or perspectives, ambivalence or hesitation around what settling on one of them may mean. A *bagua* in motion. Bagua includes the well-known yin-yang icon and trigrams representing various Daoist elements, often used to represent the pursuit of *Dao* (or Tao - “path” or “way”). Difficult to define, it in essence refers to the underlying flow, harmony, nature, or ultimate reality of the universe, which is ever-changing with one thing constantly giving shape and rise to its opposite.

**23 THE MICE /** Things that gnaw at you: worries, fears, anxieties, stresses eating away at your nerves, thefts, things that are breaking down or deteriorating and in need of repair. Rats/mice in Chinese symbolism have a much more positive connotation than in the West. Seen as intelligent, clever critters associated with abundance, fertility and the ability to untie knots/knotty problems. Regardless, they certainly multiply quickly and nibble on things!

**24 THE HEART /** Love and affection both romantic and platonic, acts and aspects of love directed outwards for others, such as generosity, charity and altruism. In Chinese culture/medicine, the heart is considered ruler of the organs and seat of the emotional mind. This heart shape is based on the character for “heart” in oracle bone script, possibly the earliest renderings of this Chinese character, surrounded by 空心菜 (literally “empty heart [aka. hollow] vegetable”, known in English by various names including water or Chinese spinach). It references a famous story about Daji (see: 14 The Fox) and the minister Bi Gan, who was so noble he was like a saint. There are variations, but essentially Bi Gan's heart was cut out to satisfy either Daji or the king's supposed curiosity regarding a proverb that the heart of a good man has seven apertures. Bi Gan staved

off all negative effects, even death, with a protective talisman, but the magic/illusion was dispelled when he was tricked into speaking to a woman selling 空心菜 and forced to actively think about the reality of his missing heart. Not surprisingly, he dies.

**25 THE RING /** A union, commitment, contract, relationship, connection - of any kind, not strictly romantic. Some interpretations also take the circular, unbroken shape of the ring to include the concept of a cycle, recurrence, things coming around again. Bi disks are ancient stone/jade artifacts. Their distinct shape may be plain (smooth) or carved with intricate embellishments. Their original purpose is unknown, but they frequently appear with imagery and other objects connecting heaven/sky to the earth, and were buried with the dead.

**26 THE BOOK /** Knowledge, education, research, discoveries, secrets, information still unknown. The card that is in the direction of the book's opening can point to the nature of the information. The I Ching, or Book of Changes, is a divination system developed over 2000 years ago and still used around the world today.

**27 THE LETTER /** A literal letter, message/news (overlaps 01 The Rider who can convey the same), other communications and documents. A spread you might find on a classical Chinese writing desk, with all Four Treasures/Jewels of the Study: brush, ink, paper, inkstone, plus a name seal and container of paste for signing.

**28 THE MAN and 29 THE WOMAN /** Special cards representing the querent of the appropriate gender. The other card represents either the querent's significant other or the most relevant person of that gender to the question being asked. Other cards can also represent people, but these two always have priority in the hierarchy of importance.

**30 THE LILY /** Possibly the most complex and challenging card requiring a great deal of context. Sensuality, maturity, sex (frequently disputed. Some further clarify it to be specifically faithful sexual relations), intensity/passion, austerity, humility, virtue, peace/harmony, wisdom, winter/retirement, family, an older male figure. The Chinese word for lily 百合 references a sum of 100 (a reference to the bulb's layers). 合 also means union. Thus it is associated with longevity particularly in marriage, and has protective powers.

**31 THE SUN /** Day, warmth and light, confidence, positive energy (frequently lightens negative effects of surrounding cards), success and luck, the conscious. In Chinese folklore, there used to be 10 suns. They were gigantic

three-legged raven brothers and sons of the Emperor. 9 suns were taken down by the archer Hou Yi to stop them from burning up the land.

**32 THE MOON /** Night, darkness, intuition, emotions, creative endeavours, recognition and fame, the subconscious. After Hou Yi reduces the suns to 1, stories differ wildly: he is either rewarded for his heroism or punished for the crime of killing the Emperor's sons. Either way, he ends up with a potion or pill for immortality, and (in most versions) intends to share it with his wife, the beautiful Chang'e. But for various reasons, Chang'e intentionally, accidentally or unwillingly consumes the entire thing. Her body becomes lighter than air and she floats to the moon, where she lives with a rabbit that makes medicine/more immortality potions, forever separated from her husband.

**33 THE KEY /** The matter that requires your attention, the thing that is needed, the missing piece. It can direct you to an answer, revelation, or resolution. Ancient Chinese keys are pretty utilitarian and mundane looking. (Padlocks, on the other hand, are very fancy.)

**34 THE FISH /** Money, commerce, an abundance of something (profit or prosperity), actual fish, bodies of water and watery/liquid things - alcohol is frequently mentioned. Fish/carp are common in Asian art and represent practically identical connotations to this European (German) Lenormand system: abundance, riches/wealth, profit.

**35 THE ANCHOR /** Stability, faithfulness, hard work, the long-term, the routine. Based on an anchor discovered at the site of the Longjiang Shipyard in Nanjing, China, where parts of Admiral Zheng He's fleet were built.

**36 THE CROSS /** Challenges, burdens, physical or emotional pain, suffering, destiny. Traditional: religion. Modern: morals/ethics and conviction. The most prominent cross-type Asian symbol is probably the *manji* (*wan* in Chinese), reappropriated/heavily bastardized during WWII. Still used in Asia today to mark Buddhist temples on a map. Without using the symbol directly here, its central theme - like spokes of a wheel in motion, whirlwind of forces constantly in flux - is connected with the Four Symbols/Sacred Beasts/Benevolent Animals: Black Tortoise (North, winter), Azure Dragon (East, spring), Vermilion Bird (South, summer), White Tiger (West, autumn). The drawings are based on classic depictions of the animals on ancient medallions. The imagery supports the idea of alignment with principles, balance, and bearing with things you can't necessarily overcome, but must endure until they pass.