

INVOCATION TO THE TWO-HEADED DEER

Greetings and Welcome to you, Two-Headed Deer, spirit of Winter, of the Kidneys and the Zhi Spirit of the Will! You whose given name is Mystic Darkness, whose secret spirit name is To Nourish the Infant, and whose color is *xuan* – blue-black like ink and of the winter night sky. Welcome Spirit of Darkness, of the Northern Direction, of death and rebirth, and nourishing spirit of our ancestral past and of the children of our future.

Patron of Courage in the face of Fear and of the sacred wisdom of our inheritances and our instincts. You who guides us as we travel through the dark mysteries of uncertainty, of gestation, and rest ...

You who embody the paradox of past and future, death and life, stillness and motion. Guardian at the Gate of Survival, of fight and flight, freeze and leap forward into the fray.

Protector of the northern direction and harbinger of hibernation, survival, wisdom, and emergence, we call on you to strengthen our resilience, to sniff out scarce resource, and recognize safe haven! We implore you to protect us as we travel down to the depths where we can be transformed and renewed.

Like the nearly inaudible whisper of the wind at twilight, you travel silently through the understory of the forest, sniffing out her secrets, discovering the hidden places where nourishment waits ... the soul food – reishi mushroom – that sustains the deepest parts of our being.

Accompany us as we enter the realm of our bones and blood and ancestral memories. Protect us on our visionary journeys. Be our guardian as we enter the cinnabar caves of alchemical processes. Support us when we approach the cold of winter, accompany us as we travel through the unknown or when we are paralyzed by fear. Stand at our back. Keep watch over things that are hidden.

Protect us and give us the courage to step forward into the mysteries of the night, the wisdom to rest, and wait patiently until the morning sun returns.