

the PRINCIPLES of FENG SHUI

The concepts of chi energy, yin and yang, the Five Elements and the Eight Directions explain how making changes to your living space can transform your life and fortunes; Nine Ki astrology deals with the timing of those changes.

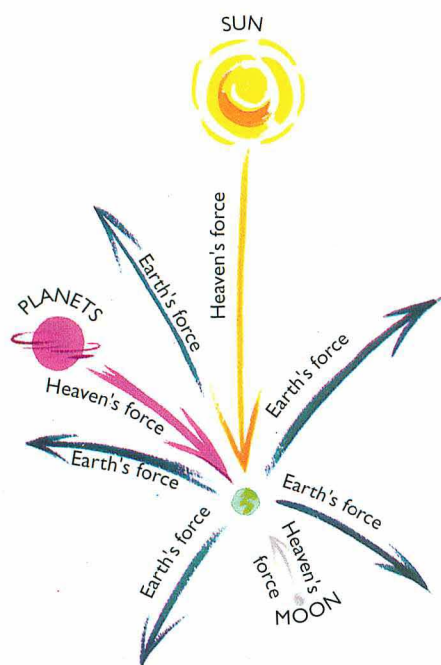
chi energy

For thousands of years people have been aware of energy moving through the universe, connecting everything in it like a huge computer network.

What has come to be called 'chi' is a subtle flow of electromagnetic energy which links all things in the universe. Ancient peoples were probably able to sense its movement. Sites such as Stonehenge, Carnac and the Nazca lines, seem to have been constructed along so-called ley lines, believed to mark underlying concentrations of energy. They may have been built specifically to channel this energy: maybe their builders were in touch with the flow of energy and knew how to influence it.

In the Far East the understanding and control of energy flows underlies traditional healing systems such as acupuncture and Shiatsu as well as martial arts like Tai Chi, Qi Kong and Aikido. The energy has several names. In China it is called Chi, in Japan it is known as Ki (also spelt Qi) and in India Prana. There are no specific words for it in the West, although expressions such as 'atmosphere', 'mood', 'life-force' or 'spirit' describe how it is perceived. In this book it is referred to as chi energy. Chi is central to Oriental astrology and Feng Shui.

Chi stays mainly within entities such as human bodies, plants or buildings, but some of it constantly flows out and some flows in from other sources. Your own personal chi energy is always mixing with the chi energy around you. In this way you are connected to the immediate environment, and ultimately to the whole universe, as ripples of chi energy from far away reach you. Exceptionally sensitive people may be able to pick up advance information from these distant sources in the form of premonitions, visions or telepathy.



Heavens's force and Earth's force
Chi energy radiating from the planets moves towards the Earth – Heaven's force. Earth radiates chi energy that moves away from it – Earth's force.

WIND AND WATER

The flow of chi energy from one entity to another is the basis of Feng Shui. The chi energy you take in from your environment influences your moods, emotions, physical energy and, over time, your health. Chi energy is carried through the environment by wind, water, the sun's solar energy, light and sound. It moves in a similar way to these natural phenomena except that, unlike some of them, it is able to flow through solid matter. It flows in and out of buildings mainly through the doors and windows, but some chi can enter and leave through the walls. It moves like water ebbing and flowing with the tides, and like air moving around the Earth. The name Feng Shui, which literally means "wind-water", reflects the way chi energy moves. The basic aim of Feng Shui is to enable you to position yourself where this natural flow of chi energy helps you to realise your goals and your dreams in life.

UNIVERSAL CHI

Chi energy flows not only throughout our planet, but through the entire solar system and galaxy. Our own planet, Earth, radiates chi energy that flows out and away from the planet. To the people who live on Earth this appears as chi energy moving upwards and is called Earth's force. At the same time, the planets surrounding Earth radiate chi energy which travels towards and into the Earth. This appears to us to move downwards and is known as Heaven's force. So the movement of chi energy on the surface of the Earth, and therefore in our homes and in our own bodies, is influenced by the Earth itself and the surrounding planets. As the position of the Earth, Sun and planets changes, so does the movement of chi energy, which in turn affects our own flow of chi energy. Feng Shui astrology (see pages 34–41) is the art of understanding these largescale movements of chi energy and predicting their effect on a particular person.

The spinning motion of the Earth means that more of Earth's force is thrown off at the Equator and less at the poles. Slightly more of Heaven's force will flow into the north and south poles. Earth's chi energy moves from the centre up through the Earth's crust, becoming more dispersed in some areas and more concentrated in others. These concentrations are thought to appear on the surface as ley lines.

As Heaven's chi energy reaches Earth its movement is altered by the landscape (hills, mountains, rivers), vegetation (trees, crops, grasses, bushes) and the ground itself (rocks, clay, soil, chalk). As Earth's force and Heaven's force mix across the surface of the planet various unique flows and eddies of chi energy develop. The same is true of buildings in a city. Low flat dwellings, skyscrapers, pointed roofs, domes and tree-lined avenues all determine how chi energy flows across the surface, and roads, rivers, railways, offices, factories, homes, entertainment centres, churches, graveyards and hospitals all have an influence on the nature of that energy.

CHI IN BUILDINGS

Buildings alter the flow of chi energy. Their shape, openings and the materials they are made of define the way chi energy flows through them (see Chapter 2). It moves most easily through doors and to a lesser extent through windows, so the orientation of a building to the sun and the planets will determine the kind of chi energy that enters it. This changes as the planets move through the sky, so there is a new pattern of chi energy each year, month, day and hour. The biggest changes occur each year (see pages 34–41). Features of the immediate surroundings, such as water or roads, further determine the kind of chi

CHI FROM THE PAST

Old buildings will have absorbed some of the chi energy linked with the happy or sad events that have taken place there. Most of this washes away with time, but a residue could stay for centuries.

Negative chi energy hangs on in parts of a building that are dark or damp, and can affect the lives of people living there. If generations of occupants have experienced similar misfortunes (for example, illness, divorce or bankruptcy), it could be caused by the Feng Shui of the building.

Before moving into a new home find out as much as you can about its history and that of the previous occupants. If there have been problems, you may be able to change the existing Feng Shui so that the chain of events is broken.



Fields of influence

The originators of Feng Shui sensed intuitively the influence of the electrical, magnetic and gravitational fields that pervade the universe.

DUST AND CLUTTER

Dust has its own chi energy, which tends to stagnate when it becomes stuck in one place. Clutter harbours old chi energy and makes it difficult for chi to move smoothly through a building. Stagnant and slow-moving chi deplete your vitality and make it difficult to look forward and be productive.

Clean your home regularly to revitalize its chi energy. Take rugs and bedding outside to air; empty and clean out cupboards, vacuum carpets thoroughly and wash or dry-clean curtains regularly.

At least once a year go through your possessions and put to one side the things you no longer use. Put them in storage, sell them or give them away.

energy that flows back and forth through the doors of the building. In an ideal situation chi energy flows harmoniously through the whole of a building. The design and interior decoration should enhance the kind of chi energy that furthers the aims and desires of the occupants and should exclude or minimize features that hinder them,

UNFAVOURABLE CHI ENERGIES

Some situations produce unhelpful types of chi, causing problems for a building's occupants, and even physical or mental ill-health.

NEGATIVE CHI Certain building or decorating materials have a negative effect on chi energy: synthetic fibres, synthetic building materials, artificial lighting and air conditioning all add their own artificial chi energy, which negatively influences the chi energy of the occupants, and could lead to mental and physical exhaustion.

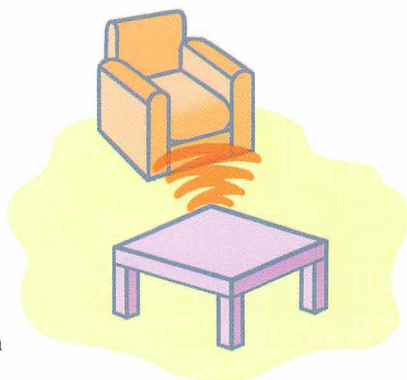
STAGNANT CHI Slow-moving and stagnant chi energy is produced by dark corners, cluttered rooms and dampness. They can lead to a slowing down of your own chi energy, which may cause serious health problems and a loss of direction in your life.

FAST-FLOWING CHI Chi energy moving quickly in a straight line can destabilize the flow through an entire building, so long corridors, straight paths or several features in a straight line should be avoided. Fast-moving chi energy directed towards you could push away some of your own chi energy, making you feel insecure and under attack.

(See also Cutting Chi, below.)

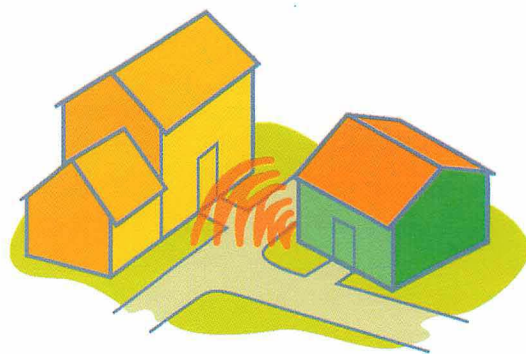
cutting chi

If chi energy passes a sharp corner it begins to spin and swirl, forming eddies and whirlpools like a fast-flowing stream passing a sharp bend. This is called cutting chi and can occur inside or outside buildings. It can make your own chi energy swirl, leading to disorientation and confusion and, in time, ill-health. There are various remedies (see pages 62 and 85).



Furniture

Sharp corners on furniture can cause cutting chi. Avoid them in bedrooms and near seating areas.



Neighbouring buildings

If the corner of a building points at your home, it can cause cutting chi. Plant bushes to shield the front door.

five elements

The concept of the Five Elements is a refinement of the principle of yin and yang. Instead of two types of chi energy, there are five: tree, fire, soil, metal and water.

The Five Elements are most often applied in Oriental medicine but they also relate to the home and environment. Like yin and yang, the Five Elements are linked with seasons and times of day. The year is divided into five seasons, rather than four, with an extra season appearing between summer and autumn, called early autumn or late summer.

Each of the Five Elements describes a certain kind of chi energy and these can be related to a particular direction based on the way the sun moves around the sky during the day and over the year. The different types of chi energy are best appreciated by imagining that you are outside in nature at the appropriate time of day and year (see opposite)

THE FIVE ELEMENTS IN YOUR HOME

The Five Elements are associated with five directions, which are related to the movement of the sun through the day. In the morning the east of your home soaks up the upward chi energy known as tree. As the day progresses, the sun moves from east to south and charges up the south of your home with radiating fire chi energy. Later, the sun begins to go down and brings more settled soil chi energy into the south-west and centre of your home. As the sun sets, the west of your home will take in inward-moving metal chi energy. During the night, the north of your home benefits from flowing water chi energy.

Five-Element chi energies are taken into your home most intensively at the relevant times of day and remain there until recharged again the following day. So the east of your home, for example, will always be charged to some extent with tree energy regardless of the time of day.

The Five Elements are also found in your home in their pure form. Tree energy is there in the form of wood, paper and tall plants; fire in the form of stoves, fireplaces and lighting; soil in the form of china, clay and plaster; metal in the form of iron, silver, stainless steel and other metals; water in the form of ponds, sinks, bathrooms and aquariums.

SHAPES, COLOURS AND MATERIALS

The Five Elements are associated with shapes, colours and materials (see chart on page 26), and can be introduced into your home in these forms, applied to the building itself and its interior decoration.

Wallpaper with vertical stripes, for example, will bring more uplifting tree chi energy, making the ceiling appear higher and the room more spacious. A star print will increase fire chi energy, creating an exciting

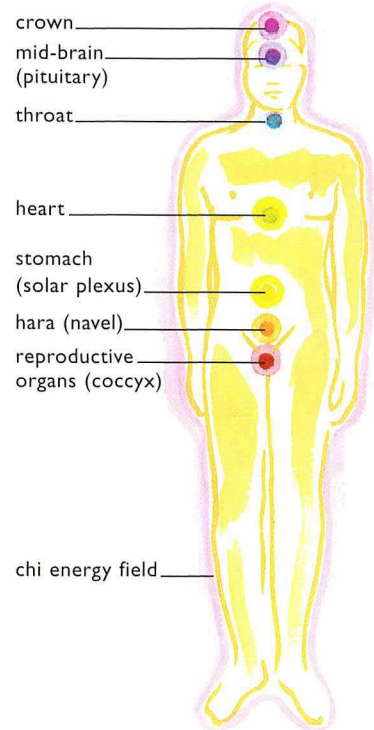
PERSONAL CHI

To appreciate how chi energy in the environment influences you, it is necessary to understand how it moves within your own body. It flows through it in much the same way as blood. Along the centre of the body are seven concentrations of energy called chakras (see right), which are similar to large organs where blood concentrates. Spreading out from the chakras are 14 paths of chi energy known as meridians. These flow along your arms, legs, torso and head. Like blood vessels and capillaries, they take chi energy to smaller and smaller channels until each cell is nourished by both blood and chi energy.

While blood carries oxygen and nutrients, chi energy carries thoughts, ideas, emotions and your dreams in life. It also carries some of the chi energy from the environment. Therefore, what you think and where you think it, will have a direct influence on the cells in your body. The influence of the mind on physical health is well-established. Many people have experienced the benefits of positive thinking and some claim to have used it to recover from serious illness. Similarly, people have been healed by moving to a new location. Travelling to spa towns or locations with special healing properties has a long tradition.

Chi energy operates as a two-way process whereby the way you think influences your chi energy, and your chi energy influences the way you think; so your environment will influence your chi energy and that change will alter the way you think and feel. Like trees planted in the best soil for their needs, we thrive if we are planted in the best chi energy. By moving from one building to another, one city to another, or one country to another, you have the opportunity to change your own chi energy and therefore the way you think and feel. If the chi energy of the place where you live matches the chi energy you require for happiness, then it will have a very positive influence on your life. Unfortunately, it is also possible that your home may work against you, and the chi energy of some places could negatively affect your well-being.

Many factors affect the chi energy that comes into your body – among these are food, weather and the people you are with. In Feng Shui terms, the primary influence is the chi energy of the environment. This includes your home, your place of work and the surrounding landscape. A building itself has an influence. Being in a large ornate building such as a museum or cathedral can be inspiring, exciting and stimulating, whereas a small cosy place such as a cottage, café or bar is more relaxing and intimate. A building's location also helps shape the kind of chi that enters your body. The chi energy in rural areas is different from that in a city, and travelling to other parts of the world also gives you the chance to experience very different kinds of chi energy.



The chakras

Chi flows through the human body by means of channels called meridians which act rather like blood vessels. They radiate from seven key points in the body where energy concentrates, called chakras. Typically, chi extends at least 10cm and up to 1 metre outside your skin.

atmosphere. Horizontal or check patterns enhance soil energy, which makes the room feel cosier. Round shapes boost metal energy, making it feel more complete and finished. Wavy or irregular patterns add water chi energy, conveying a peaceful flowing atmosphere.

Appropriate colours can be applied to walls, ceilings and floors or furnishings. Strong colours like red and black will be effective even when they cover a relatively small surface area. A vase of red flowers could be enough. Similarly, what your furniture is made of – wood or metal, for example – will have an influence.

These effects will be especially intense if you combine colours with particular patterns or materials. For example, green wallpaper with vertical stripes would represent tree energy and so on. This ability to manipulate the existing chi energy using the Five Elements is the basis of many Feng Shui remedies.

five-element chi energies



Tree
You are walking down a tree-lined path in the early morning in spring as the sun breaks the horizon. The overriding feeling is of energy moving up, like the branches of a tree reaching up into the sky. The tree is coming into leaf, everything is looking forward to a new day and a new year.



Fire
It is the middle of a hot summer's day. Nature is in full bloom. The tree is in full leaf. Bright light and colourful flowers fill the picture. The energy seems to expand in every direction, radiating like the heat of a glowing fire.



Soil
Think of an afternoon in early autumn. The leaves have changed colour and are beginning to fall. The sun is getting lower in the sky. The overall feeling is of energy moving down into the ground.



Metal
It is evening in late autumn and there is a beautiful sunset. As the red sun sinks below the horizon the feeling is of energy gathering in, and nature storing up its energy ready for the winter. Energy is moving inwards and becoming solid, which mirrors the process by which metal is formed.



Water
Finally it is a damp, frosty night in midwinter. On the surface all is quiet and still, but powerful changes are taking place in the soil below and there are strong currents of water beneath the ice. Water is calm on the surface but flowing beneath. This type of chi moves in a similar way.

the principles of feng shui

FIVE ELEMENT	SHAPES	COLOURS	MATERIALS	MEANING
TREE East/South-east 	rectangular tall thin vertical	green	wood wicker rush bamboo paper	life growth vitality activity
FIRE South 	pointed star serrated triangular pyramid diamond zigzag	red	(plastic is the material associated with fire chi energy, but is not recommended for use in the home because of its negative effects on chi energy – see also page 129)	passion warmth excitement expression
SOIL South-west/Centre/ North-east 	squat low flat wide check horizontal	yellow brown	plaster china clay ceramics bricks natural fibres (e.g. cotton, linen, wool, silk) softer stone (e.g. limestone)	comfort security steadiness caution
METAL West/North-west 	round domed arched oval circular spherical	white gold silver	stainless steel brass silver bronze copper iron gold harder stone (e.g. marble, granite)	richness solidity leadership organization
WATER North 	irregular curved chaotic wavy amorphous	black	glass	depth power flexibility tranquillity

FIVE-ELEMENT RELATIONSHIPS

Two flows of chi energy govern the relationships between the Five Elements: the support cycle and the destructive cycle (right).

These can be compared to the annual agricultural cycle. Remember that each of the Five Elements relates to a particular season: water to winter, tree to spring, fire to summer, soil to early autumn, metal to late autumn.

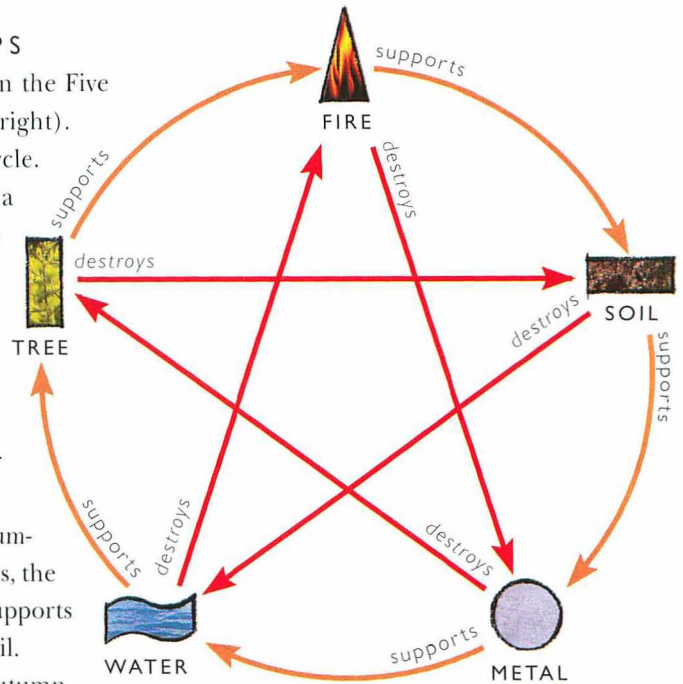
WATER In winter we prepare the ground and plant the seeds. If spring is fine, they will grow. But if there are late frosts, they will destroy the new shoots, and there will be nothing to show in summer. Water supports tree, but if tree is deficient, water destroys fire. Think of water feeding a tree, but extinguishing fire.

TREE If spring goes well, the fields will be full of crops in summer. But if summer is poor, due to lack of sun or heavy rains, the crops will rot in the ground in the early autumn. Tree supports fire, as wood is fuel but, if fire is deficient, tree destroys soil.

FIRE After a good summer the crops will ripen in early autumn. But if the weather is cold and cloudy in early autumn, the crops will not ripen to be ready for the late autumn harvest. Fire supports soil just as ash enriches the earth but, if soil is deficient, fire can destroy metal.

SOIL With plenty of sun in early autumn there will be a good harvest in the late autumn. But early frosts or heavy rain in late autumn will destroy the harvest and there will be no new seed to plant in the winter. Soil supports metal just as minerals in the soil form metal ores, but if metal is deficient, soil will destroy water.

METAL If the crop has set seed in the late autumn and conditions in winter are good, the seed can be planted for the following spring. But harsh winter conditions may destroy the seed before it can to sprout. Metal supports water, but if water is deficient metal will destroy tree.



Cycles of support and destruction

In the support cycle (orange) chi energy moves in a circle clockwise from one Five-Element position to the next, changing itself into the next element. Each element supports the next, but the supportive activity is draining, so each element is drained by the following one – water supports tree, but is also drained by tree. This means the support cycle can be used to calm chi as well as boost it.

In the destructive cycle (red) chi moves in straight lines from one element bypassing the second element and going straight to the third. It does this if the second one is deficient in some way, but the effect of the first element on the third one is destructive. The destructive cycle can be used positively in Feng Shui, but generally the main objective is to build up deficient energy.

These relationships are summarized in the chart (left).

5 ELEMENT	SUPPORTS	DESTROYS	DRAINS
WATER	tree	fire (if tree is weak)	metal
TREE	fire	soil (if fire is weak)	water
FIRE	soil	metal (if soil is weak)	tree
SOIL	metal	water (if metal is weak)	fire
METAL	water	tree (if water is weak)	soil

USING THE FIVE ELEMENTS

The Five Elements and the relationships between them (see page 27) provide a model for understanding the universe and the interaction of the different types of chi energy. They can be used to manipulate the flow of chi energy in your home and are the basis of many Feng Shui remedies and solutions. Using your knowledge of the supportive and destructive cycles, and depending on what you are trying to achieve or what problem you are trying to solve, you can enhance one type of Five Element chi energy, calm another or maintain a balance. This manipulation is carried out by introducing objects associated with the relevant elements (see below) into the appropriate space.

Suppose, for example, you have a room in the south of your home, and you wish to increase the chi energy there. The south is linked with Five-Element fire chi energy. Fire is supported by tree energy. So you can boost the chi energy of the south by building up fire energy itself or

introducing five-element objects

Five-Element chi energies can be introduced into a space in pure form – actual plants, fire, soil, metal or water – or in the form of representative objects. The most powerful objects are those which combine the shape, colour and material of an element (round, silver, metal balls for metal energy, or a low, brown, terracotta trough filled with brown earth for soil energy, for example).

Other colour schemes linked to compass directions (see pages 30–3) can also be used: for instance, red in the west for metal and purple in the south for fire.



Water

Use clean fresh water itself, glass objects or things that are black or irregular in shape. Those above include glass dishes and pebbles, black wavy stems and fabric.



Tree

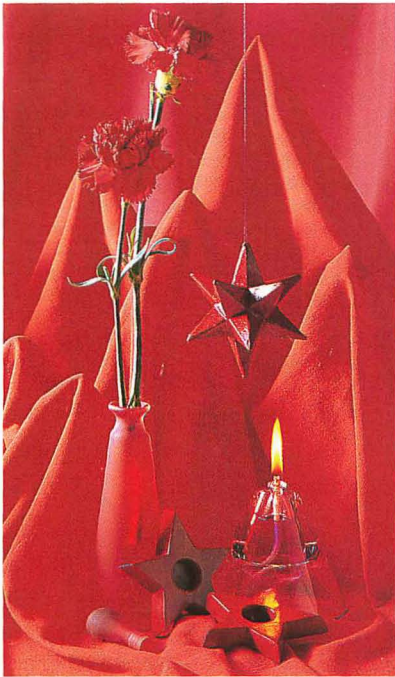
Use actual plants, wood or paper and tall, thin green objects. Those above include a green pot, a tall green vase, tall lamp with paper shade and green frame.

by adding supportive tree energy. Fire energy is linked with pointed shapes, the colour red, lights and fire itself, so to boost it introduce candles, red star-patterned wallpaper and bright lights into the room.

Tree chi energy is linked with tall thin rectangular shapes, the colour green and materials wood and paper. Trees and tall plants are the element itself, so tall plants, green vertical-striped wallpaper, wooden floors and a paper screen would all increase tree chi energy in the room.

To reduce the chi energy in a southern room you would need to bolster the Five-Element chi energy that is draining to fire, namely soil. Low clay sculptures, the colour yellow, and low spreading plants growing in plenty of soil would bring more soil chi energy into the room.

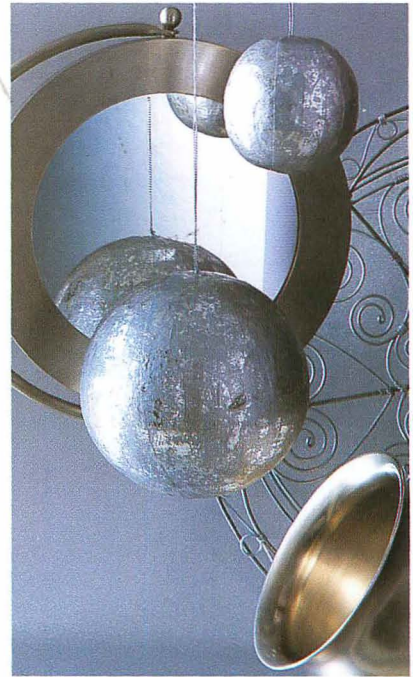
The support cycle can be used to calm chi energy as well as build it up. To calm chi energy in the north, for example, you could grow trees or tall plants because they represent Five-Element tree energy, which drains the water energy of the north.



Fire
Use fire itself and red or pointed objects. Those above include an oil lamp, star-shaped candle holders, a red star, red flowers in a red vase and red fabric.



Soil
Use soil or clay itself and yellow/brown or low rectangular objects. Those above include a clay trough, yellow flowers, a square plate, frame and checked fabric.



Metal
Use metal itself and round, silver, gold or white objects. Those above include a round metal frame, a round metal pot, a round wire tray and silvery balls.



3

The Five Elements

Central to Feng Shui theory is the principle of the Five Elements. Whenever a Feng Shui expert studies the hills or buildings that surround a site, or considers whether the prospective site matches the personality of the client, or even advises on the material and colour of the furnishings within a room, all the deliberations and counsel will be based on the interaction of the predominant element, whether Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, or Water.

This order of the elements is the principal one, because in this order each element is seen to *generate* the next one.

Thus:

Wood	burns, creating
Fire	which leaves ash, or
Earth	from which is obtained
Metal	which can be melted to flow like
Water	which is needed to sustain growing
Wood	and so on.

Through the Five Element theory, the Chinese are able to classify all things into one of five categories. The expression 'Five Elements' has been adopted for convenience, since they apparently parallel the four Aristotelian elements—Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. Some writers prefer to call the five Chinese categories by other terms, such as the 'five agencies' but since the expression 'elements' has been in use for at least three hundred years there seems to be little point in changing it now. Nevertheless, the five Chinese elements and the four western elements have little in common other than the names of three of them. But there all similarity ceases. To begin with, the four western elements form

complementary and contrasting pairs; whereas in the Chinese system, the very fact that there are five elements creates a continual imbalance, which is itself the essential kernel of the Chinese philosophy of continual change.

The Five Planets

The fact that there are five Chinese elements seems to be derived from the fact that ancient astronomers recognized five major planets; and indeed, the five inner planets are known as the Wood Planet (Jupiter); the Fire Planet (Mars); the Earth Planet (Saturn); the Metal Planet (Venus); and the Water Planet (Mercury). The names of the planets are given here out of interest only, and neither they nor the apparent confusion between Saturn and the Earth need concern us further.

The Five Elements and the Five Cardinal Points

The Five Elements symbolize the Five Cardinal Points, namely, the Four Directions—East, South, West, and North—together with the non-direction, Centre. Earlier, we saw that each of the Four Directions represented one of the seasons: East, the Spring; South, the Summer; West, Autumn; and North, Winter. Now by omitting (for the time being) the central Earth element, the Four Directions symbolize the four seasons, their colours, and four of the elements, thus:

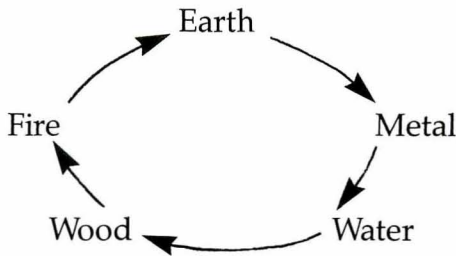
East	Spring	Green	Wood
South	Summer	Red	Fire
Centre		Yellow	Earth
West	Autumn	White	Metal
North	Winter	Black	Water

These correlations are explained by the fact that in Spring, plant life (the Chinese word for 'Wood' is wide-reaching) begins to grow, showing green buds, while Spring is the dawn of the new year and the sun rises in the East. Similarly, red is the colour of Fire; the sun is at its hottest at midday, when it is in the South; Summer is the noon of the year. Yellow is the colour of the earth of central China. Autumn is the time of harvesting, and also when in ancient times, after the harvesting, it was customary to fight

wars. For sickles in peacetime, or swords in times of war, Metal was needed, and white (silvery white) is the colour of polished iron. Winter is the midnight of the year, when all is black and the sunshine gives way to rains, hence Water is the element of Winter and the North.

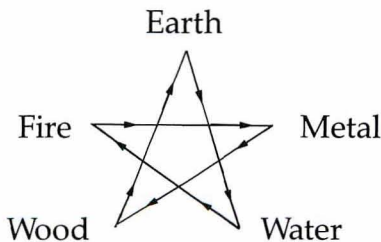
Generative and Destructive Orders

The 'generative' order of the elements has already been given. This is the basic order of the Five Elements and should be remembered. It can be shown diagrammatically:



Generative Order of the Elements

Elements that are next to each other in this order help each other; thus Wood helps Fire, Water helps Wood, and so on. But there is another order of the elements, called the 'destructive' order. When two elements stand next to each other in this series, one destroys the other.



Destructive Order of the Elements

So Wood destroys Earth, Fire destroys Water, and so on. The sequence can be remembered by thinking:

Wood draws the goodness from Earth

Earth pollutes Water
Water quenches Fire
Fire melts Metal
Metal chops down Wood

On the other hand, observe that some elements act to the advantage of others in the reverse order; for example, Earth nourishes Wood; Water softens Earth (making clay pliable); and Fire boils Water.

When someone assesses the Feng Shui qualities of a site, it is important to see what are the predominant elements of the surroundings, and then decide what is likely to be the predominant element of the site. In this way it will be possible to ensure that the elemental qualities of the location and the site will be in harmony.

Firstly, then, let us look at the ways in which the elemental qualities are revealed.

Shape

Perhaps the most obvious way by which a location reveals its elemental qualities is in its *shape*. We see opposite the shapes associated with each of the elements.

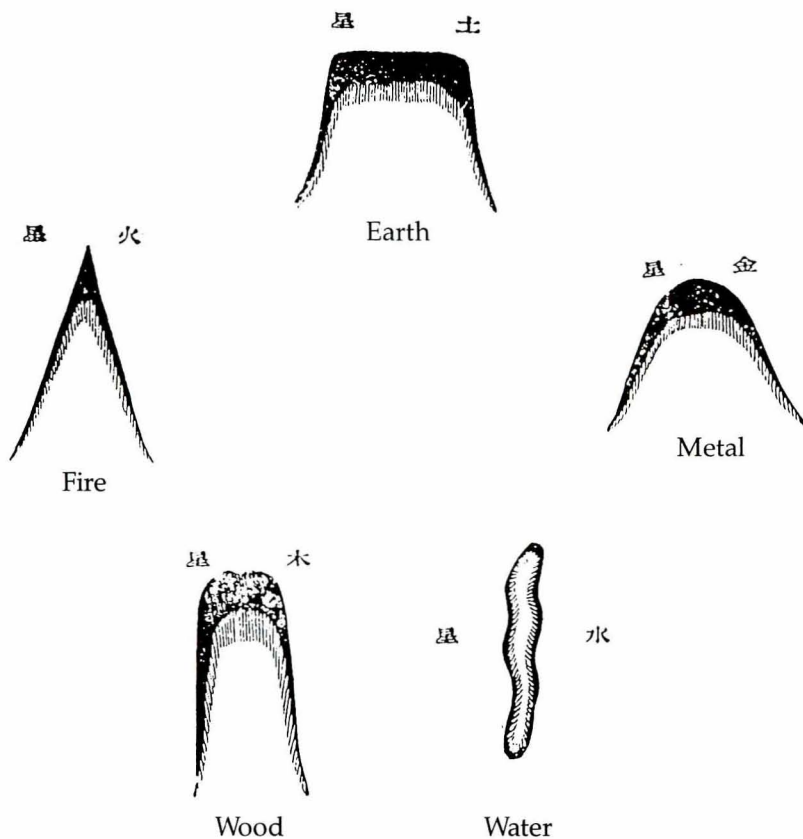
Wood. Trees are tall and upright. The Wood element is suggested by columnar structures such as tall soaring hills (such as those found in parts of southern China), or in man-made structures such as pillars, minarets, factory chimneys, or tall narrow skyscraper buildings.

Fire. Points suggest flames. The Fire element is represented by the sharp peaks of mountains, and by the steeply-pointed roofs of certain eastern temples, the spires of churches, and similar sharply-roofed buildings.

Earth. The ground is generally flat; the Earth element is shown by long, flat hills, plateaux, table mountains, and flat-roofed buildings.

Metal. Bronze mirrors and coins are round; the Metal element is shown in gently-rounded summits of hills, and by buildings that have domed roofs.

Water. Water has no shape and every shape. The Water element is revealed in undulating and irregular hills, and by buildings that have bizarre or complex structures, although rounded rather than angular.



The Five Elemental Shapes

Exercises

1. Which elements are associated with:
- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| (a) Spring | (b) Winter |
| (c) Green | (d) Yellow |
| (e) South | (f) East |
| (g) Tortoise | (h) Dragon |
| (i) Sunset | (j) Noon |

2. What element produces:
- (a) Earth (b) Water
- destroys:
- (c) Fire (d) Metal
- is produced by:
- (e) Wood (f) Earth
- is destroyed by:
- (g) Water (h) Fire

Answers

1. (a) Wood (b) Water (c) Wood (d) Earth (e) Fire (f) Wood (g) Water (h) Wood (i) Metal (j) Fire
2. (a) Fire (b) Metal (c) Water (d) Fire (e) Fire (f) Metal (g) Fire (h) Metal

Element Shapes in Practice

We should now consider the Feng Shui situation that would be the consequence of erecting a building of a particular shape, in surroundings dominated by buildings, or hills, with well-defined element features.

With the two sequences discussed above, we could imagine five possible cases, when the element of the surrounding is the SAME as the element of the contemplated structure, either precedes or follows it in the GENERATIVE sequence, or further, precedes or follows it in the DESTRUCTIVE sequence. To take an example; suppose the predominant element of the surroundings (the element of the location) is the Earth element, revealed by squarish, flat-topped buildings. It is proposed to erect another building within this location, but its general shape has not yet been decided. The proposed structure might have any of the five elemental shapes: Wood (tall and slender); Fire (pointed); Earth (flat topped); Metal (rounded); or Water (irregular).

These are the five situations:

1. *Location: Earth/Structure: Wood*

Earth and Wood are in the destructive sequence, Wood benefit-

ing at the expense of Earth. This would be very fortunate for those working or living in the proposed building.

2. *Location: Earth/Structure: Fire*

Earth and Fire are in the generative sequence, Earth benefiting from Fire. The situation would not be harmful, but on the other hand not very rewarding. It would be an ideal situation, however, for a hospital, school, or library—buildings intended to be of benefit to the community.

3. *Location: Earth/Structure: Earth*

Earth and Earth are stable; the situation is neither beneficial nor harmful. In cases like this, the structure should have the same purpose as the buildings round it, such as a new residential block in a residential area, for example.

4. *Location: Earth/Structure: Metal*

Earth and Metal are in the generative sequence; the Earth producing Metal. Since Metal represents coinage, such a situation would be financially very rewarding.

5. *Location: Earth/Structure: Water*

Earth and Water are in the destructive sequences, Water being harmed by Earth. Such a structure would not be favoured by the geomancer as its function might have an adverse effect on the neighbourhood.

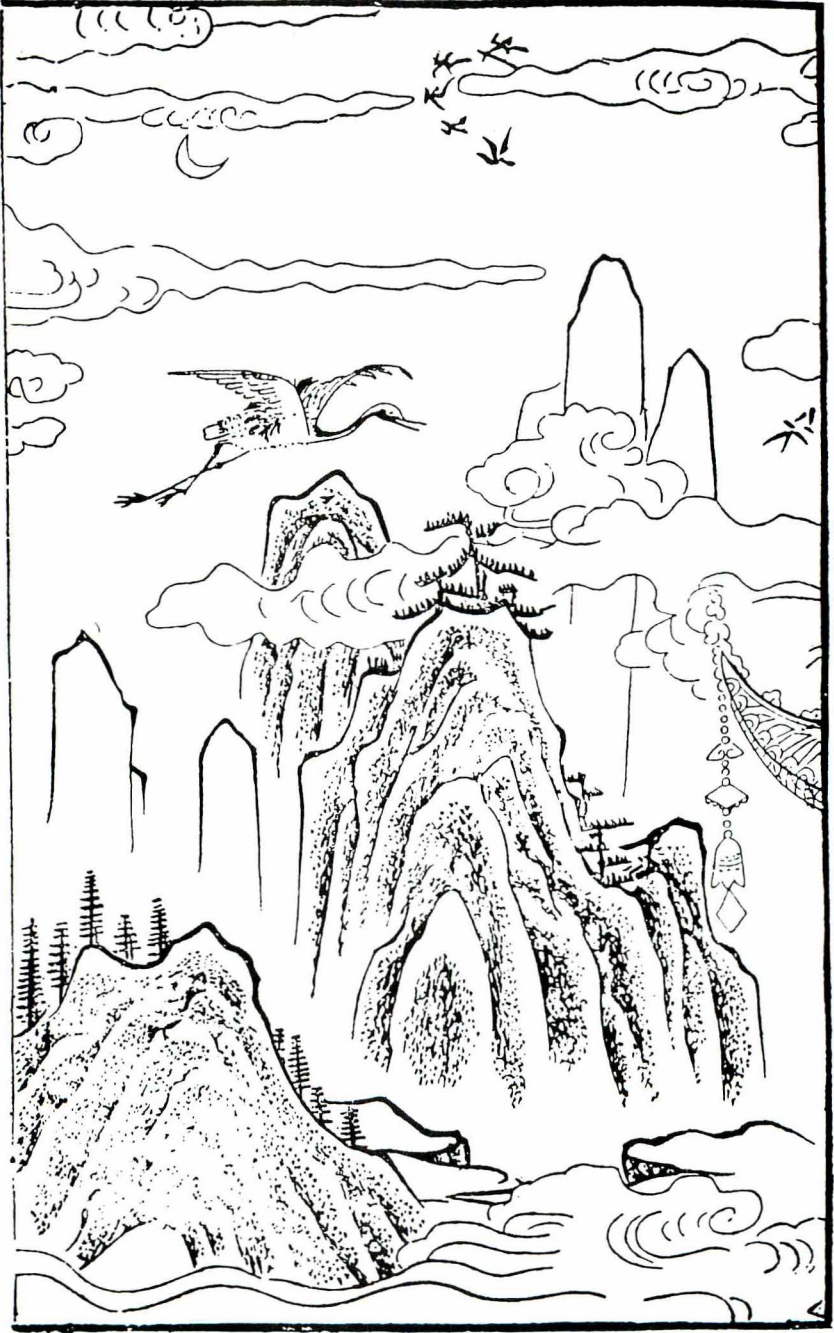
Later, we shall take a closer look at each of the conditions that can arise when a building stands in a location and the element features of both buildings and location are clearly observable. Before that, however, let us look at the symbolism of each element in greater detail.

The Symbolism of Each Element

WOOD—Spring—East—Green

Material: Wood Shape: Columnar

Although the elements follow each other in a continuous sequence, so that they have no start and no end, Wood is generally taken as the first of the series being symbolic of Spring, the beginning of the year. Consequently, Wood symbolizes creation, nourishment, and growth.



Wood environment

The Wood shape is tall and upright and is usually encountered in memorial, religious, military, or commemorative structures such as columns, obelisks, tall pagodas, watchtowers, and pillars. Until comparatively recent years, with the development of modern building techniques and the subsequent emergence of skyscrapers and tower blocks, Wood-shape structures would hardly ever be encountered for domestic or commercial use. However, Wood is a common building material, and consequently a building of standard shape might be considered to belong to the 'Wood' element if it was proposed to construct it from that material.

Buildings under the aegis of Wood would be suitable for all matters connected with creation, nourishment, and growth. Thus, nurseries, hospitals, residences, and catering establishments, as well as artists' ateliers, would benefit from the influence of the Wood element. Within a home, the dining room, the children's room and the bedroom would benefit.

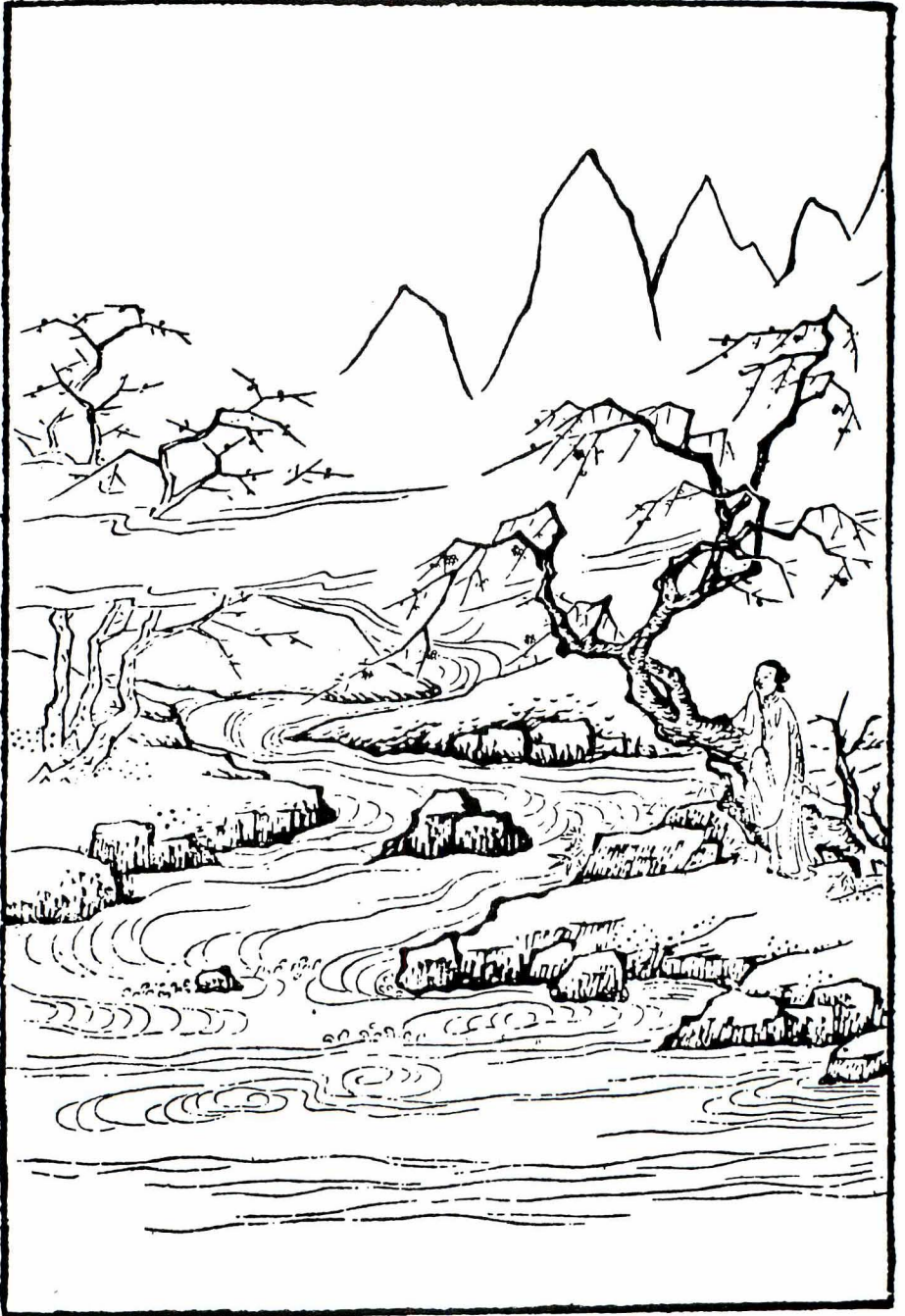
In commercial premises, the Wood element, representing creativity, would be the element most suitable for the design studio, while the 'nourishing' aspect suggests that establishments connected with the victualling trades, such as restaurants, and cafés, would benefit. In manufacture and retailing, where the Wood element predominates, the production or sale of goods made from Wood is suggested.

FIRE—Summer—South—Red

Material: Plastics; animal materials Shape: Pointed

The Fire shape is revealed by sharp angles and points, particularly of roofs, and is often found in the roofs of certain temples, such as those of Thailand, where monsoon rains make tall, sloping roofs almost mandatory, although the spires of churches are also emblematic of the Fire element. Throughout South-East Asia it is considered unlucky to build a house near a church, partly because it is thought that, since people go to church to rid themselves of evil, the evil forces are likely to take up residence in the nearest available dwelling, but also because it is thought that the close proximity of the Fire element puts wooden buildings under a constant threat of conflagration.

The fact that Fire is connected with chemical processes suggests that the Fire element rules man-made materials, although in former times no building materials—apart, perhaps, from the leather tents of the nomads—were considered as belonging to the



Fire environment

Fire element. Nevertheless, premises with sloping roofs—perhaps the commonest type of construction, whether domestic, civic, or industrial—were regarded as being of the Fire element type.

The red colour of Fire is the colour of blood, so Fire represents livestock (animal life) as distinct from vegetable life.

The Fire element is said to indicate intellect, and Fire-shaped buildings would therefore be suitable for libraries, schools, and other places of learning. In commerce, design and fashion are possibilities. More obviously, manufacturing processes involving fire and furnaces, and, less obviously, chemical processes, are categorized as belonging to the Fire element type. Livestock and (with Metal) butchery are also classed under the Fire element.

In the home, the kitchen stove is the seat of the Fire element.

EARTH—Centre—Yellow

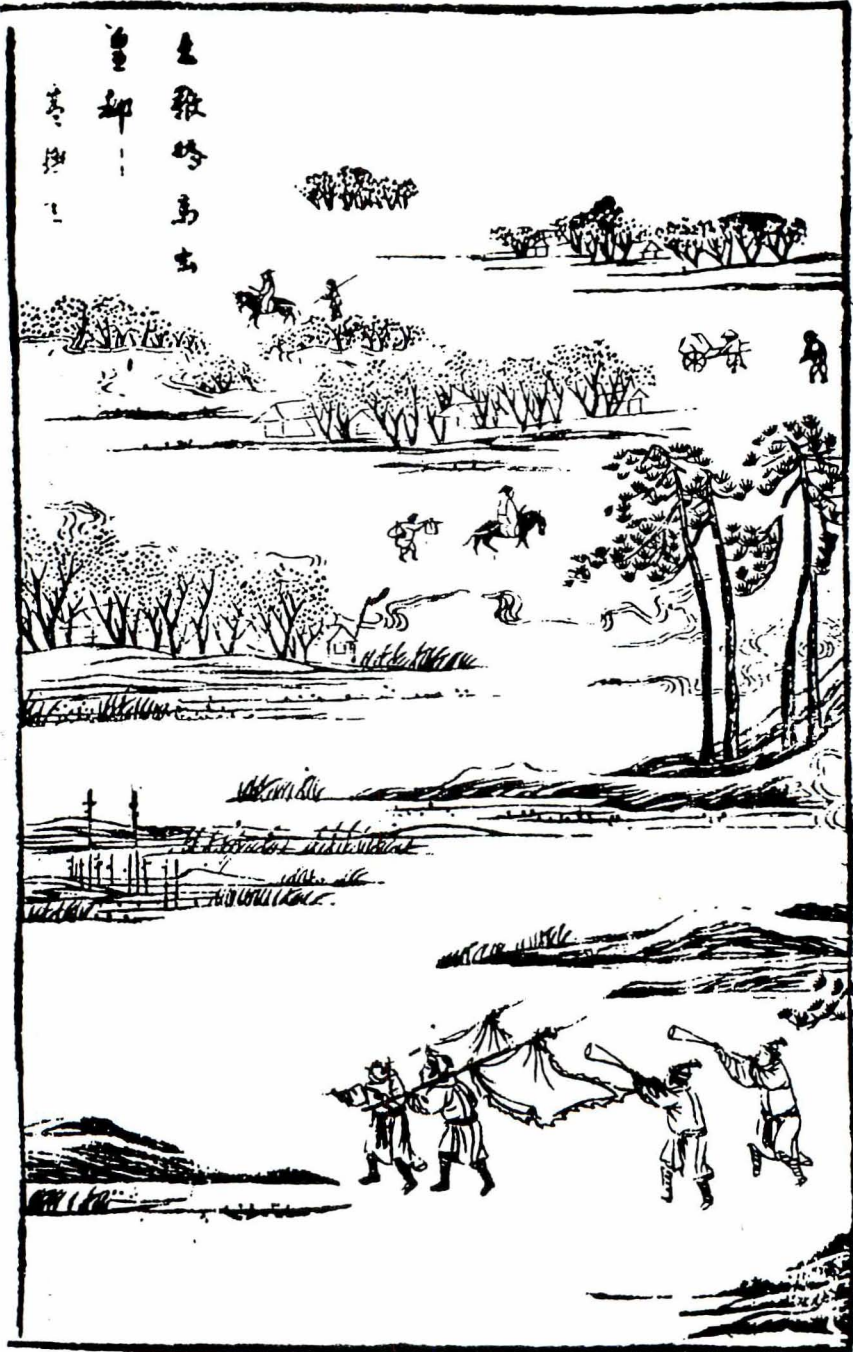
Material: Brick Shape: Square; flat

The Earth element is revealed by low flat buildings, flat sides, plain unadorned surfaces, and flat roofs. Blocks of flats and offices, flat-topped low buildings, and similar constructions all reveal the Earth shape.

Earth is also the element of clay and bricks, so that brick, clay, and concrete buildings have a portion of the element Earth present, whatever their shape. Thus, a brick house with a sloping roof shows both the qualities of Fire and Earth elements; since Fire and Earth stand in the generative or production order of the Five Elements, this is regarded as a stable and fortunate combination.

Buildings of a strongly 'Earth' type may be solid, enduring, and reliable, but they have no stimulating influences. Generally speaking, because they are considered to be 'immobile', their best use is for storage. In commercial premises, Earth element areas might be used for the stock-room. In the home, areas that come under the influence of the Earth element are best used for storage space, seldom-used lounges, garages or conservatories (although, strictly speaking, the latter should be in an area strongly associated with the Wood element).

In industry, the Earth element is associated with tunnelling, farming, building, and civil engineering. In commerce, the production or sale of ceramics is suggested.



Earth environment

METAL—Autumn—West—White**Material: Metal Shape: Round**

The Metal shape is revealed in buildings that have domes, curved roofs, and arches. Such buildings are nearly always of a monumental, religious, or civic nature; in the western world, domed residences tend to be confined to the palaces of the gentry, but there are countries where domed houses are the traditional form of domestic architecture.

Since Metal is the symbolic element of coinage and money, it is not surprising that so many successful commercial premises, notably banking houses, favour domed halls. In Feng Shui terms, nothing could be more appropriate for commerce than the dome shape. Those wishing for financial success, but are not yet able to afford a domed structure to roof their enterprises, may, however, content themselves with the construction of arches and other rounded ornament. Arched roofs often soar over railways stations; and it was entirely apt that this should have been the design, when railways, 'the iron roads', inaugurated a new era of trade and industry.

Today, Metal is also a component of building materials; ferro-concrete reveals a combination of the Earth and Metal elements. As Earth and Metal stand in the generative or production sequence of the Five Elements, this is regarded as fortunate—Earth produces Metal, and hence this combination of elements is said to ensure wealth and financial success.

The Metal element is more suited to commercial and manufacturing buildings than to domestic ones. Whilst Metal promises monetary gain, this element is not conducive to the simple, everyday processes of living and growing. In the home, any area that falls under the auspices of Metal should be set aside for a workshop.

The Metal element rules knives and swords. All manufacturing processes involving Metal obviously fall into the Metal category. In commercial activities, the manufacture and sale of jewellery and hardware benefit from the influence of the Metal element.

WATER—Winter—North—Black**Material: Glass Shape: Square; flat**

The Water type of building is revealed by irregularities of shape and construction. Buildings that seem thrown together, rather



Metal environment



Water environment

than designed, and seem to show features of all four of the other elements (although not too definitely angular or flat surfaced) may be said to belong to the Water element.

Water is the element of communication, and all matters concerned with the transmission of ideas will benefit from the influence of the Water element. Literature and the arts, particularly music, fall into this category, and it is perhaps a happy chance that the famous skyline of Sydney Opera House should reveal the characteristics of the Water shape most distinctively.

In modern construction, the predominant use of glass as a building material is another way in which a structure is revealed as belonging to the Water element. Glass, however, cannot be used on its own but in conjunction with some other material such as brick, metal or wood. Which of these materials is the most appropriate to use with glass, representing the Water element? Water and Earth stand in the destructive sequence; hence, it is suggested that buildings involving large expanses of glass do not benefit by having a brick support. Wood and Water, and Metal and Water, however, both stand in the generative sequences, and would therefore be much more favourable.

In the home, the obvious use of Water is for its cleaning properties, and the bathroom, laundry, and still-room are the more mundane applications of Water in its material sense. But in considering the metaphorical aspect of Water, any area that receives the beneficial influence of the Water element could appropriately be used for a study.

In business, the Water element represents post and communications, the media, advertising, word processing, computer terminology, electrical engineering, and enterprises involving liquids and fluids, such as brewing and distilling; but in the past hundred years, the oil business has now become part of the Water element's domain.

Exercise

Test your understanding of this section on the Five Elements by deciding which of the Five Elements is the one most appropriate for each of the items below. Then compare your answers with the alphabetical guide that follows:

Commerce and Industry:

Advertising	.....
Artists' studios	.....
Brewing	.....
Building	.....
Carpentry	.....
Catering	.....
Ceramics	.....
Chemical processes	.....
Civil engineering	.....
Communications	.....
Computers	.....
Distilling	.....
Electrical Engineering	.....
Farming	.....
Media	.....
Oil industry	.....
Word processing	.....

Residential:

Bathroom	.....
Bedroom	.....
Children's room	.....
Dining room	.....
Garage	.....
Kitchen	.....
Laundry	.....
Nursery	.....
Storeroom	.....
Workshop	.....

Architectural Shapes and Features:

Angles	.....
Arches	.....
Blocks of flats	.....
Church steeples	.....
Columns	.....
Curves	.....
Domes	.....
Flat roofs	.....

Irregular shapes	.....
Low buildings	.....
Pillars	.....
Points	.....
Squares	.....
Tunnels	.....
Watchtowers	.....

Substances, Materials, and Objects:

Animal life	.....
Blood	.....
Bricks	.....
Clay	.....
Coinage	.....
Furnaces	.....
Furniture	.....
Glass	.....
Hardware	.....
Jewellery	.....
Knives	.....
Leather	.....
Money	.....
Plains	.....
Plants	.....
Pottery	.....
Swords	.....
Trees	.....
Vegetables	.....

Index to the Five Elements

Advertising—Water	Bedroom—Wood
Angles—Fire	Blocks of flats—Earth
Animal life—Fire	Blood—Fire
Arches—Metal	Brewing—Water
Artists' studios—Wood	Bricks—Earth
Arts—Water	Building—Earth
Bathroom—Water	Cafés—Wood

- Carpentry—Wood
Catering establishments—
Wood
Ceramics—Earth
Chemical processes—Fire
Children's room—Wood
Church steeple—Fire
Civil engineering—Earth
Clay—Earth
Coinage—Metal
Columns—Wood
Communications—Water
Computers—Water
Curves—Metal
Dining-room—Wood
Distilling—Water
Domes—Metal
Electricity—Water
Farming—Earth
Flat roofs—Earth
Furnaces—Fire
Furniture—Wood
Garages—Earth
Glass—Water
Growth—Wood
Hardware—Metal
Hospitals—Wood
Intellect—Fire
Irregular shapes—Water
Jewellery—Metal
Kitchen—Fire
Knives—Metal
Laundry—Water
Leather—Fire
Libraries—Fire
Literature—Water
Livestock—Fire
Low buildings—Earth
Media—Water
Money—Metal
Music—Water
Nourishment—Wood
Nurseries—Wood
Oil wells—Water
Pillars—Wood
Plains—Earth
Plants—Wood
Points—Fire
Post—Water
Pottery—Earth
Railways—Metal
Residences—Wood
Restaurants—Wood
Squares—Earth
Storerooms—Earth
Swords—Metal
Trees—Wood
Tunnels—Earth
Vegetables—Wood
Watchtowers—Wood
Word processing—Water
Workshop—Metal



CHAPTER SIX

FIVE-PHASE THEORY: EVOLUTIONARY STAGES OF TRANSFORMATION

As a microcosm, human beings embody all the phases within themselves. Within each thing is contained all things. In the seed is the tree; in the tree is the forest. . . . Life forms are stations for the reception and transmission of forces, through which all are nourished. Each thing exists to nourish all others and, in return, to be nourished itself. In this manner, each kingdom of nature serves to receive and transmit life. . . . These forces are not all material, but include subtle energies of . . . a spiritual nature. . . . In the inner world, a central sun is also the source of life. The inner sun is our true self. . . .

Vasant Lad and David Frawley
The Yoga of Herbs

THE URGE TO ORDER OUR PERCEPTIONS AND DEFINE THE WORLD IS AS old as humankind itself. From observation and contemplation, we generate symbols that reflect our experience back to us, demystifying existence by discovering and deciding how reality is organized. Chinese philosophy does this through the notions of Tao, Yin-Yang, and the *Five Phases*.

Tao is a composite of everything, the intrinsic order of all things. The way we interact with Tao, with nature, is described by Yin-Yang and the *Five Phases*. Chinese cosmology suggests that life's movement is like a spinning ball on a flowing river, a tide of wind and water, a vortex revolving while rhythmically contracting and expanding (*Yin-Yang*) as we are carried along by the currents of Tao.

The *Yin-Yang* model symbolizes the creation process through the interaction of bipolar forces. *Five-Phase Theory** further differentiates this dynamic into the relationship between five fundamental powers, partitioning the continuum of movement into identifiable stages. *Five-Phase* thinking pro-

**Five Phases* is a translation of the Chinese phrase *Wu Xing*, meaning five (*wu*) fundamental processes, agents, interactive phases, movements, transformations, or powers (*xing*).

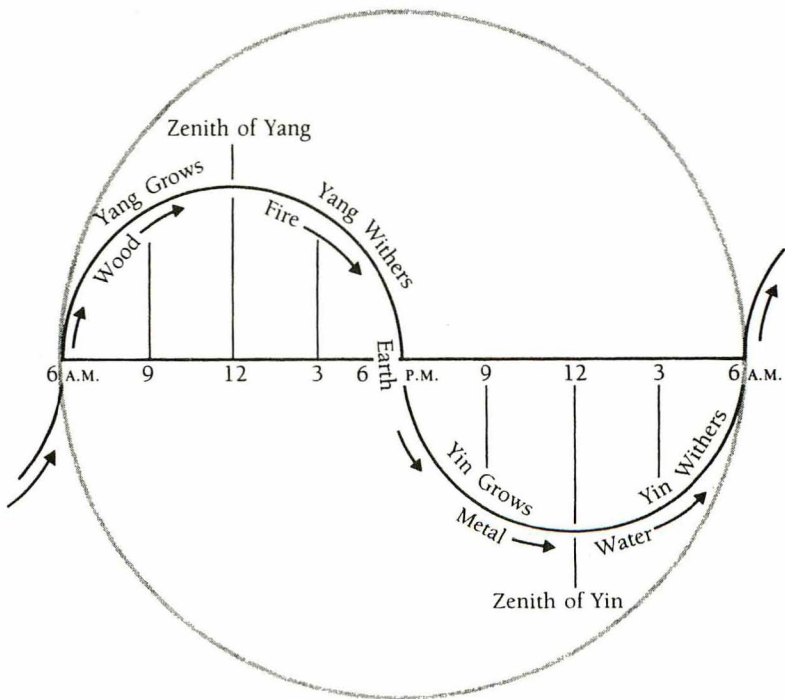


vides the basis for describing the development of forms, systems, and events. It postulates that everything in creation can be categorized within these basic parameters: *Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water.*¹

If *Yin-Yang* is like shadow and sun in varying proportions, *Five-Phase* is like the rainbow spectrum. Shades of darkness and light create the drama and intensity, and the *Five Phases* provide the shape, character, and hue. *Green, Red, Yellow, White, and Black* correspond to each of the *Phases*.

Five affords a more complex description of phenomena than two. Combining *Yin-Yang* and *Five-Phase* generates an even more intricate system of two times five, or ten. Any process that can be described in terms of *Yin-Yang* can be further differentiated into *Five-Phase*. Any of the *Five Phases* can be further differentiated into *Yin-Yang*. Each of the five colors can be distinguished as bright and intense, *Yang*, or pale and diffuse, *Yin*.

Just as *Yin-Yang* can be used to describe the alternation between sun



Five-Phase Yin-Yang Rhythms

The stages of transformation that define all processes in nature can be similarly described by the two interpenetrating paradigms of *Yin-Yang* and *Five Phases*.



and shade, heat and cold, dry and wet, so the *Five Phases* represent the seasons of the earth, the stages of human life, the waxing and waning of *Yin* and *Yang*. Just as day is *Yang* and night *Yin*, so the dawn is *Wood*, midday *Fire*, afternoon *Earth*, evening *Metal*, and nighttime *Water*. *Five-Phase* and *Yin-Yang* concepts always illuminate and cast shadows upon each other.

FIVE-PHASE THEORY: A HOLOGRAPHIC MAP

The underlying assumption of Chinese philosophy is that the forces that govern the cycles of change occurring in the external world are duplicated within our human bodies and minds. Patterns in nature are recapitulated at every level of organization—from the rotation of the planets to the behavior of our internal organs. These ancient Oriental ideas conform to what some modern thinkers call the “holographic paradigm”: the organization of the whole (nature) is reflected by each and every part (plants, animals, human beings).²

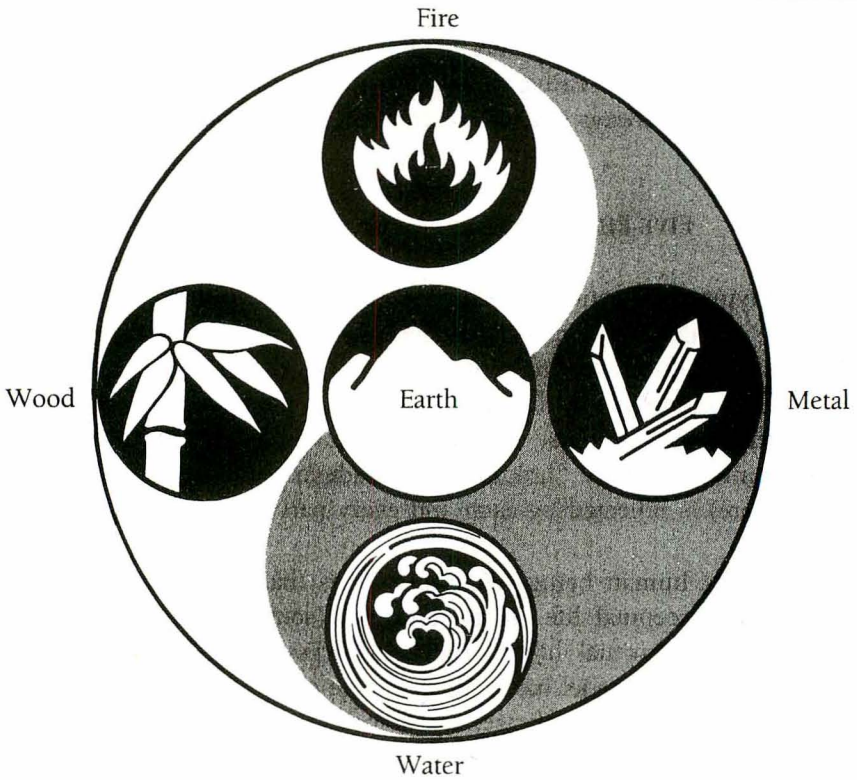
Within the human being, the same forces that organize the physical, sensory, and perceptual life of the organism (soma) affect the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual life of the person (psyche). Within this framework, the *Five-Phase* model has a diverse range of application. Using anthropologist Gregory Bateson’s phrase, it is a “pattern which connects.”³

A complex web of relationships was spun between the *Five Phases* and human culture. Affairs of state and society were conducted according to these principles. Proper times to plant and harvest, advance and retreat in battle, wed and procreate, and the methods of preserving health were prescribed by this system. The *Five Phases* are an almanac of the human cycles of momentary and lifelong change, a map that charts the course of process, a guide for comprehending our unfolding.

PHASES AS TRANSFORMATIVE STAGES

The *Five Phases* identify stages of transformation, patterns of expansion and contraction, proliferation and withering. Each *Phase* has an intrinsic primal energy, an ontological influence that shapes events. For example, human beings go through cycles in their lives similar to the seasons in nature—beginning in birth and ending in death, with stages of growth, maturity, and decay in between. Within the life cycle, the power of each *Phase* can be observed.

The *Wood Phase* is seen in birth, new life bursting forth. The newborn, at first small and fragile like a tender green shoot, mobilizes tremendous energy for swift growth. The baby moves from the *Yin* phase of gestation,



WOOD	FIRE	EARTH	WATER	METAL
East	South	Center	North	West
Dawn	Midday	Late afternoon	Midnight	Dusk
Awakening	Wakefulness	Transition	Slumber	Quieting
Spring	Summer	Late summer	Winter	Autumn

Five Phases With Earth in the Center

One representation of *Earth* within the *Five-Phase* model is as the center or axis, the point of reference of the four cardinal directions, the middle of the Middle Kingdom that was ancient China. Later on, in an effort to align *Yin-Yang* and *Five-Phase Theory*, *Earth* came to represent the time and space of transition from one stage to another, particularly the passage between the apex of *Yang* (*Fire*) and ascendance of *Yin* (*Metal*). For example, between summer and autumn is late summer, between noon and dusk is late afternoon. Within this logic, *Earth* was placed schematically along the circular continuum between *Fire* and *Metal*. This diagram has become the one conventionally used to describe the *Five-Phase* relationships in Chinese medicine.



corresponding to *Water*, to the *Yang* phase of growth, corresponding to *Wood*. The peak of this *Yang* phase is reached in adulthood when we are in our prime. This corresponds to *Fire*. Our “ripening,” the stage during which we luxuriate in our maturity, corresponds to the *Earth Phase*. We revisit *Yin* through degeneration and aging, which corresponds to *Metal*. In our dying we return to the *Yin* state of dissolution, the *Water Phase*, and the emptiness from which we emerged.

Just as the *Five Phases* delineate transformations of the life cycle, they also describe the process of our daily existence. Our awakening is associated with *Wood*, and our movement toward a state of complete wakefulness corresponds to *Fire*. Becoming sleepy represents *Metal*, and the state of sleep itself corresponds to *Water*. *Earth* represents the still point, the balance between the polar movements, when neither one nor the other ascends. Our integrity is based on the proportion and rhythm of each of the *Five Phases* within us, regulating our waking and sleeping, activity and rest, arousal and inhibition.

PHASES OF PULSATION

The power, quality, and direction of each *Phase* can be observed in any given internal process. In expanding the chest, for example, we move out into our world, and in contracting we gather our resources, experiencing ourselves as contained within our own boundaries. *Wood* is the *Phase* of expansion, culminating in the *Phase* of *Fire*, which spreads energy across and away from the surface (*Yang*). *Metal* is the *Phase* of contraction, culminating in the *Phase* of *Water*, which consolidates energy at the core (*Yin*). Our *Wood* aspect leads us outward toward *Fire*, where we feel at one, a part of it all; our *Metal* aspect leads us inward toward *Water*, where we recognize our separate and historical self. Our *Earth Phase* stabilizes us so that we can handle the gyrations of our oscillating process. Consciousness that exists beyond time, in the realm of space, belongs to *Fire*. Our bodies, lineage, genes, and will to pass from generation to generation through time belongs to *Water*. The realm of action belongs to *Wood*, definition to *Metal*, and balance to *Earth*. Familiarity with each of the *Five Phases* acquaints us with the individual waves within the common sea of our being.

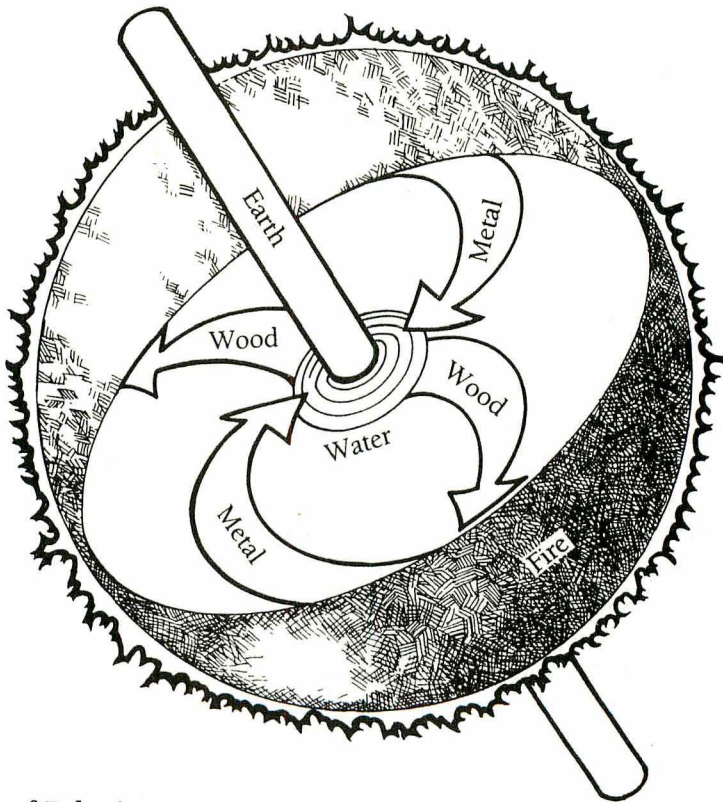
In tension with the great *Yin Phase*, *Water*, is the great *Yang*, *Fire*. *Water* gives rise to the germination of substance, and *Fire* gives rise to the completion of materialized form. The latent power of the apple seed in the creation of the apple tree derives from *Water*. The manifest power of the tree to mature and bear shiny red apples, completing and fulfilling its potential, derives from *Fire*. Whereas *Metal* and *Wood* represent stages of expansion



and contraction, *Water* and *Fire* represent stages of generation and completion.

The lines of correspondence between the *Five Phases* and human experience divide the body into *Five Organ Networks*, each of which corresponds to one *Phase*. These *Organ Networks*, echoing the nature of each *Phase*, describe the physiology and psychology of the organism. By extrapolation people can be generally classified into five character types by matching healthy and distorted expressions of the soma and psyche with the characteristics of each of the *Five Phases* and *Organ Networks*.

Five-Phase Theory is like a fugue, with ascending and descending rhythms and recapitulations, repetitions, echoes, and variations on a theme. Each



Phases of Pulsation

Symbolizing the organism as a sphere: *Metal* (*Yin*) represents contraction, movement inward toward the core. *Water* (extreme *Yin*) represents the core, the site of germination and creation. *Wood* (*Yang*) represents expansion, movement outward toward the surface. *Fire* (extreme *Yang*) represents the surface, the site of culmination and completion. *Earth* represents the axis, the point of balance, around which the forces of *Yin-Yang* revolve and spin.



Organ Network is a living system, a melody, expressed through the instrument of the soma and psyche. In the body, dissonance manifests as physical symptoms and patterns of dysfunction. In the psyche, bothersome traits, fixations, and dilemmas manifest as distortions of character and patterns of distress. The function and interaction of the *Five Organ Networks* establish the basis for understanding the five character types.

FIVE ORGAN NETWORKS: TRADITIONAL CHINESE PHYSIOLOGY

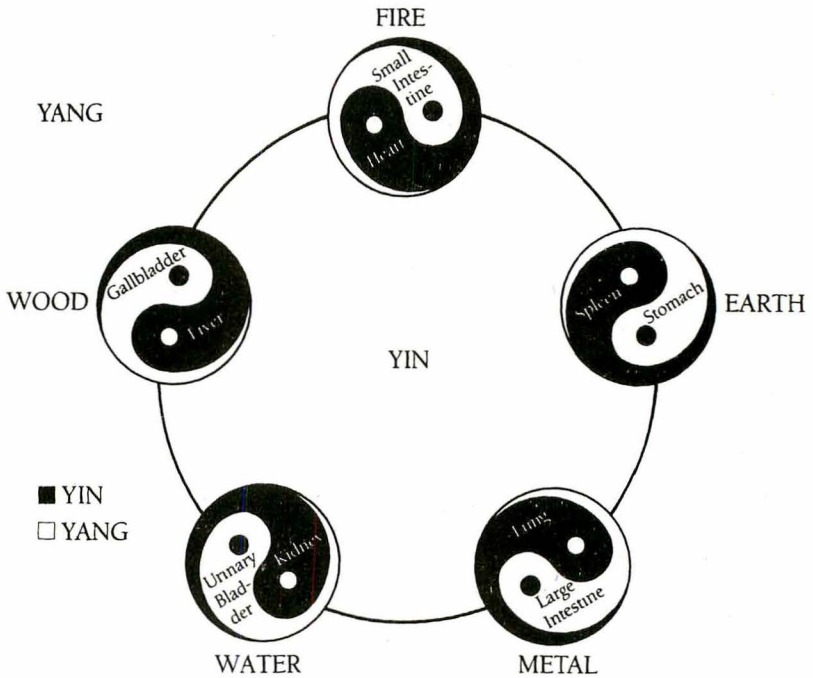
To maintain the abundant circulation of *Qi* and *Blood* is to sustain the material life of the organism, the integrity of mind and tissue. Each *Organ Network* refers to a complete set of functions—physiological and psychological—rather than to a specific and discrete physical structure fixed in an anatomical location. For this reason they are referred to as *Organ Networks* rather than simply organs. Identified by the names of the *Yin Organs*, each paired system consists of *Liver-Gallbladder*, *Heart-Small Intestine*, *Spleen-Stomach*, *Lung-Large Intestine*, and *Kidney-Bladder*.*

Yin corresponds to organs that store *Qi*. Here *Qi* means *Essence*—the most refined state of material substance. The *Yin* organs are more stable and constant, representing the more homeostatic mechanisms that regulate pressure, temperature, distribution, and metabolism. Constituting the body's foundation, they're both more consequential and more vulnerable. Disease of these organs is considered deeper and more critical. *Yang* corresponds to the organs that transform matter. They are more active and unstable in character because of their participation in the process of digestion and elimination.

As an aggregate of organs, tissues, channels, and physiologic functions, each *Network* is critical for the sustenance of life. Each embodies a distinctive intellectual, emotional, and behavioral style as well as physiological corre-

*Although there are five *Organ Networks* and ten viscera, there are twelve channels. Two functional entities called the *Pericardium* and *Triple-Burner* have no corresponding visceral structures yet have acupuncture channels associated with them. The *Triple-Burner* is viewed as an integrating function that ties together and harmonizes the physiologic processes of the primary *Organ Networks*. It regulates the metabolism and the distribution of body fluids other than *Blood*. The *Triple-Burner* is represented by the three cavities of the body: the chest, abdomen, and pelvis. The *Pericardium*, or *Heart Protector*, is viewed as the active mechanism of the *Heart*, whereas the *Heart* itself is accorded the role of harboring the spirit and maintaining conscious awareness.

In the historical development of Chinese medical theory, the existence of other organs such as the brain and uterus were defined as "strange organs" outside of *Five-Phase* or *Yin-Yang* theory. These "strange organs" such as the uterus, brain, *Pericardium*, and *Triple-Burner* do not fit neatly into the *Five-Phase* model. For our purposes, the *Pericardium* and *Triple-Burner* can be subsumed within the *Phases of Fire* and *Water* respectively. Although they are anatomically distinct structures, the brain and uterus are not understood as functionally separate from the *Organ Networks* of the *Kidney*, *Heart*, *Liver*, and *Spleen*, and neither do they have their own distinct channels.



Five-Phase Organ Network Correspondences

Each *Organ Network* refers to a complete set of functions—physiological and psychological—rather than to a specific and discrete physical structure fixed in an anatomical location. For this reason they are referred to as *Organ Networks* rather than simply organs. Each paired system is identified by the names of the *Yin Organs*.

spondences. Each has its own responsibilities (a job to do), a strategy (how to do the job), and a character (a way of being, a personality) that reflect the power of each *Phase*.

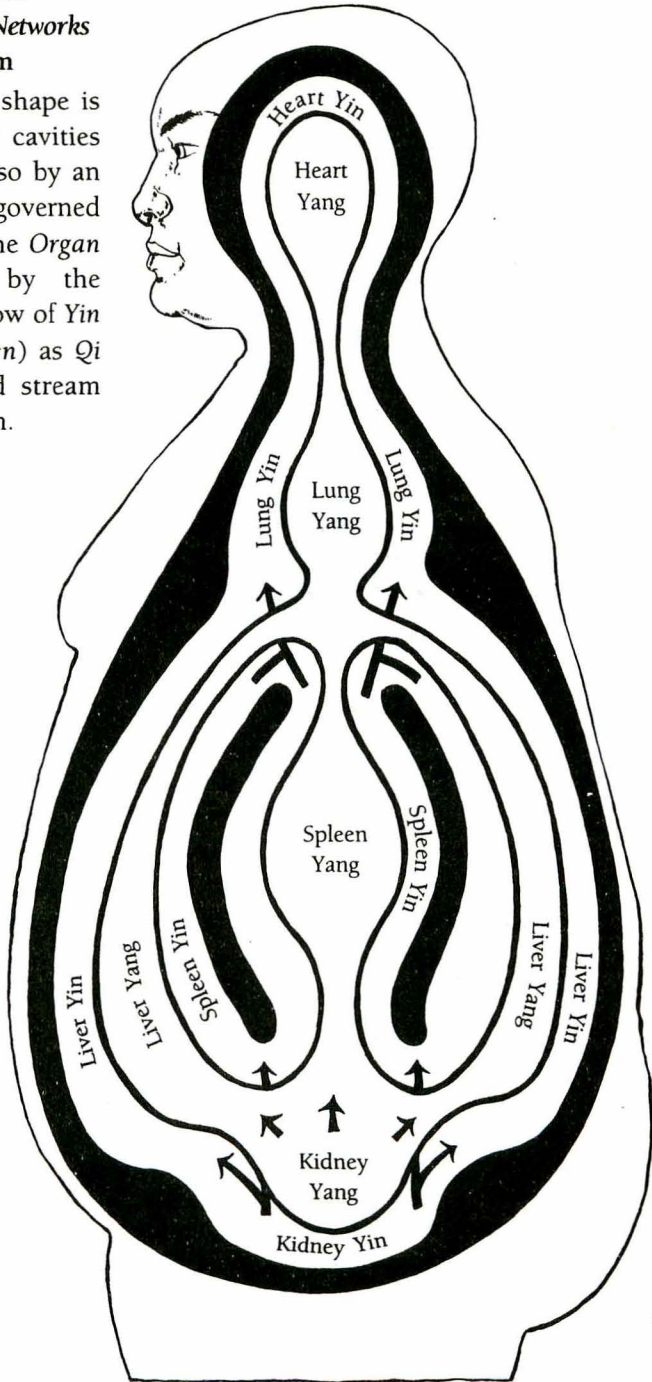
The *Liver* stores the *Blood* and regulates the even movement of *Qi*. The *Heart* propels the *Blood* and is the seat of consciousness. The *Spleen* generates and distributes nourishment. The *Lung* receives and disperses *Qi*. And the *Kidney* stores the *Vital Essence*. Together the *Organ Networks* comprise the team that gets the work of the body done. Through the division of labor, all tasks are accomplished.

CIRCULATION OF QI FROM DAY THROUGH NIGHT

Qi and *Blood* circulate continuously in an orderly sequence from one *Organ Network* to the next throughout the day and night, accounting for maximum

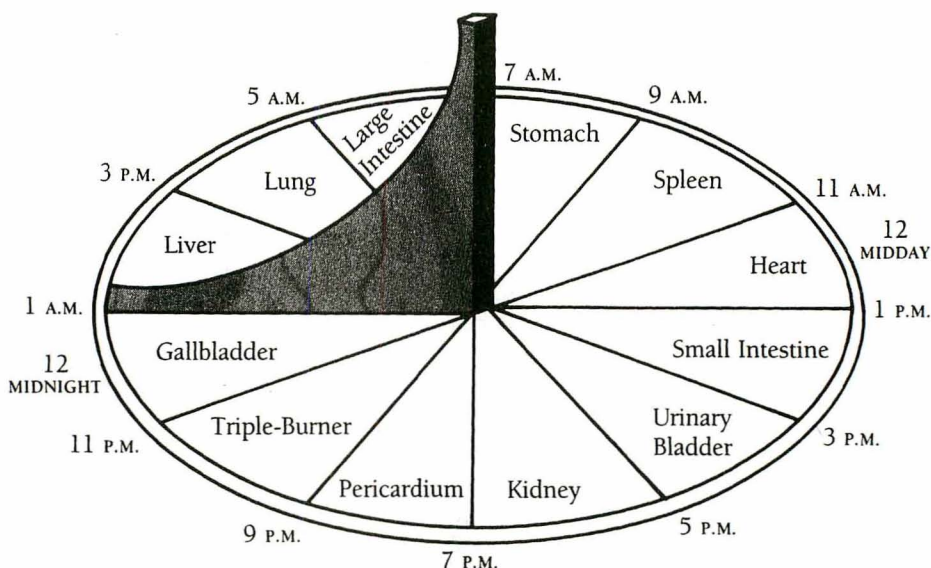
Our Functional Shape: A Continuum of *Organ Networks* as Yin-Yang Protoplasm

Our inner and outer shape is defined not only by cavities and structures, but also by an alchemy of processes governed by the functions of the *Organ Networks* impelled by the inexorable ebb and flow of Yin (*Jing*) and Yang (*Shen*) as *Qi* and *Blood* pulse and stream through the organism.





and minimum periods of function. During the day, *Qi* expands outward toward the surface of the body (*Yang*) and during the night *Qi* retreats into the body's core (*Yin*). *Yang* peaks at midday, *Yin* at midnight. Every two-hour period during the day and night clocks an alternating ebb and flow of *Qi*. One *Organ* and its associated channel fills, while another empties. For example, from three to five A.M., the *Qi* of the *Lung* reaches its peak, while the *Bladder* is at its lowest ebb. At noon the *Heart* reaches its peak and the *Gallbladder* its ebb.



The Rhythmic Circulation of *Qi* from Day through Night

Stomach peaks 7 A.M.–9 A.M.

Spleen peaks 9 A.M.–11 A.M.

Heart peaks 11 A.M.–1 P.M.

Small Intestine peaks 1 P.M.–3 P.M.

Urinary Bladder peaks 3 P.M.–5 P.M.

Kidney peaks 5 P.M.–7 P.M.

Pericardium peaks 7 P.M.–9 P.M.

Triple-Burner peaks 9 P.M.–11 P.M.

Gallbladder peaks 11 P.M.–1 A.M.

Liver peaks 1 A.M.–3 A.M.

Lung peaks 3 A.M.–5 A.M.

Large Intestine peaks 5 A.M.–7 A.M.

The *Stomach* and *Spleen* are at their peak function between seven and eleven A.M. This is the time of optimal digestion and assimilation and helps to explain why the first meal of the day is so important for maintaining adequate energy. The time of peak function for the *Large Intestine* occurs at five to seven A.M., just prior to that of the *Stomach*. This suggests that the natural rhythm is to empty in preparation for receiving. During sleep, the anabolic or regenerative phase is at its maximum. The time of awakening is



the beginning of the catabolic phase, when energy is liberated for the purpose of doing work. Symptoms that appear and disappear regularly during different times of the day correspond directly to this ebb and flow of *Qi*.

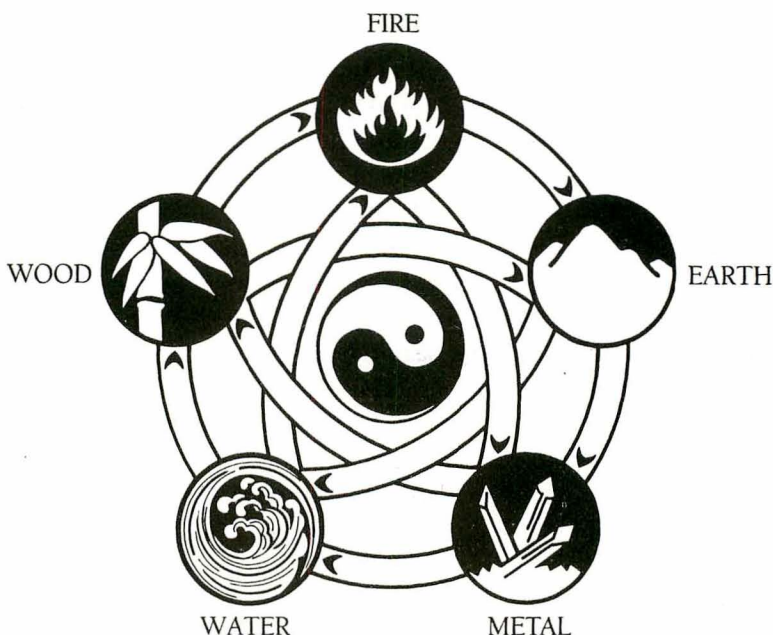
Symptoms of *excess* appear during peak hours, those of *deficiency* during the ebb tides of *Qi*. Symptoms of *Kidney deficiency* often manifest between five and seven A.M. This accounts for the difficulty some people have in awakening with vigor and enthusiasm. Conversely, excessive *Kidney Qi* may manifest as increased stiffness and pain in the lower back during the peak hours of *Bladder* and *Kidney* function, between three and seven P.M. Heart disease has particular hours of aggravation: heart attacks occur more frequently around midday and heart failure at midnight. People subject to migraines often awaken during the peak function of the *Liver*, between one and three A.M., with a severe headache. These same people may experience fatigue, mental lethargy, and perhaps even a weakening of vision between one and three in the afternoon, following lunch.

According to the classical theory, the most opportune time to intensify the *Qi* of any channel is just after it peaks, when it has the greatest momentum. The best time to disperse *Qi* is prior to the peak period, before it gathers full strength. This same dynamic applies to the seasonal rhythms of ebb and flow. The best time to strengthen the *Lung* is during the fall, which also subdues and restrains *excesses* of the *Liver* and *Gallbladder* (*Metal* controls *Wood*). *Kidney Essence* and *Fire* are best supplemented in the winter; this is a time when elder Chinese men and women drink their ginseng tonic. The *Liver* is nourished in the spring, the *Heart* during summer, and the *Spleen* in late summer. The Chinese classics also say it is important to treat a disease in the time and season of its origin. Allergies that arise in the spring are treated in the same season to achieve the greatest results. Rheumatism that occurs after exposure to the cold of winter may become full blown in spring, yet it must be treated during the season of its origin, winter, and may only be palliated in spring, summer, and fall. Patience becomes practical virtue since it is often necessary to return full cycle and wait for the most propitious time to resolve a dysfunctional pattern.

INTERACTION OF THE FIVE PHASES: SHENG AND KE SEQUENCES

The *Five Phases* interact according to patterns of generation and restraint. Along the *sheng* sequence the *Phases* generate, nourish, and support each other, counterbalanced by the *ke* sequence, which represents the dynamic of restraint, inhibition, and control. Equilibrium is maintained by these contrary patterns of proliferation and limitation.

These relationships are like those between parents and children. In the *sheng* sequence one *Phase* gives birth to the next, and in the *ke* sequence



The Pattern of Five-Phase Relationships

The *Five Phases* interact according to patterns of generation and restraint. Equilibrium is maintained by these contrary patterns of proliferation and limitation. In the *sheng* sequence one *Phase* gives birth to the next, and in the *ke* sequence each *Phase* sets limits, insuring that no *Phase* oversteps its bounds.

each *Phase* sets limits, insuring that no *Phase* oversteps its bounds. Metaphorically this can be understood as follows: *Water* nourishes *Wood* by moistening it and restrains *Fire* by quenching it. *Wood* generates *Fire* by providing fuel for combustion and inhibits *Earth* by covering it. *Fire* generates *Earth* by reducing matter to ash that forms soil; *Fire* restrains *Metal* by burning and melting it. *Earth* supports *Metal* by forming minerals and bringing them to the surface but controls *Water* by damming and absorbing it. *Metal* vitalizes *Water* by permeating it with refined substances that enhance its life-giving properties. *Metal* restrains and inhibits *Wood* by cutting it.

Just as *Water* nourishes *Wood*, within the body, the *Kidney Essence* can be understood to generate the *Blood* stored by the *Liver*. As *Wood* feeds *Fire*, the *Blood* of the *Liver* can be said to nurture the spirit of the *Heart* by providing the mind with its basis. As *Fire* generates *Earth*, the *Heart* supports the *Spleen* by providing the warmth and metabolic energy (oxygenated blood) necessary for the transformation and assimilation of food. As *Earth* gives rise



Supporting Sequence: *Sheng*

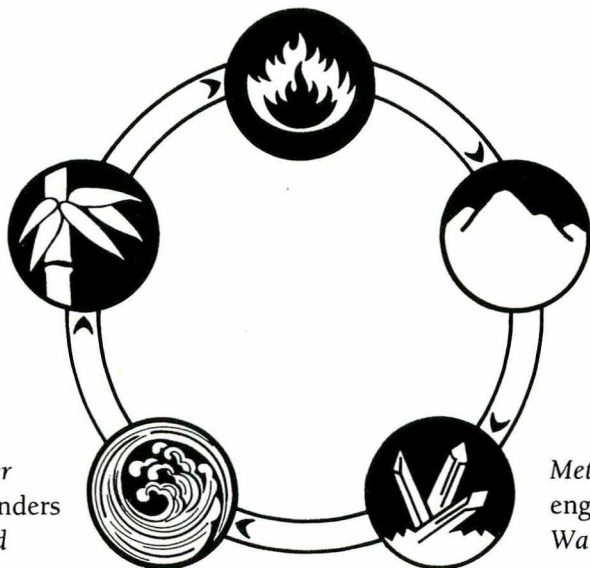
Fire engenders Earth

Wood engenders Fire

Earth engenders Metal

Water engenders Wood

Metal engenders Water



Restraining Sequence: *Ke*

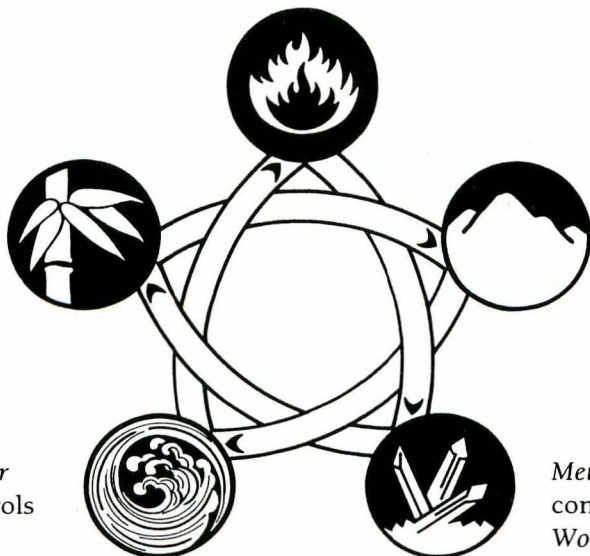
Fire controls Metal

Wood controls Earth

Earth controls Water

Water controls Fire

Metal controls Wood





to *Metal*, the *Spleen* supports the *Lung* by raising *Food Essence* upward to be combined with *Air Essence*, forming the pure *Qi* that circulates in the channels. And just as *Metal* vitalizes *Water*, the *Lung* nurtures the *Kidney* by precipitating its moist *Qi* downward to be collected and stored as *Essence* by the *Kidney*.

Sheng and *ke* define the relationships between the *Organ Networks*. In correspondence with the *ke* sequence, as *Water* controls *Fire*, so the Yin moisture of the *Kidney* counterbalances the *Yang* fire of the *Heart*. As *Fire* controls *Metal*, so the *Heart's* capacity to rule the *Blood* complements the *Lung's* capacity to govern the *Qi*. As *Metal* restrains *Wood*, so the *Lung's* power to mobilize *Qi* counteracts the *Liver's* power to gather the *Blood*. As *Wood* dominates *Earth*, so the activating power of the *Liver Qi* awakens the transformative function of the *Spleen*. And since *Earth* dams *Water*, the *Spleen's* ability to absorb and distribute *Moisture* counterbalances the *Kidney's* ability to concentrate *Essence* and excrete fluid.

An *Organ Network* overly restrained *collapses* and, if not kept within proper limits, becomes *exaggerated*. Overly restrained, its force and influence dissipate and diminish, becoming passive and impotent. Inadequately restrained, it magnifies, becoming bound up, intensified, and oppressive. When prolonged, either situation will transform into the other and lead ultimately to the attrition of the power and potential of the person.

Five-Phase Theory explains the interaction of the *Organ Networks* in a broad and general way. Descriptions of physiologic processes in Chinese medicine can become very complex, just as they do in Western medicine. For our purposes it is sufficient to have a circumscribed understanding of the *Organ Networks* and their correspondences within the *Five-Phase* model.

THE FIVE PHASES

(*Wu Xing*)*

The theory of the Five Phases is an attempt to classify phenomena in terms of five quintessential processes, represented by the emblems Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. Its place in Chinese medicine and other Chinese intellectual pursuits has been misunderstood ever since the first Occidentals tried to explain Chinese natural philosophy to the West over 300 years ago. During this century, the academic world has made some advances toward a better appreciation of the Five Phases theory.¹

The Five Phases are not in any way ultimate constituents of matter. This misconception has long been embodied in the common mistranslation “Five Elements” and exemplifies the problems that arise from looking at things Chinese with a Western frame of reference. The Chinese term that we translate as “Five Phases” is *wu xing*. *Wu* is the number five, and *xing* means “walk” or “move,” and, perhaps most pertinently, it implies a process. The *wu xing*, therefore, are five kinds of processes; hence the Five Phases, and not the Five Elements. The theory of Phases is a system of correspondences and patterns that subsume events and things, especially in relationship to their dynamics.

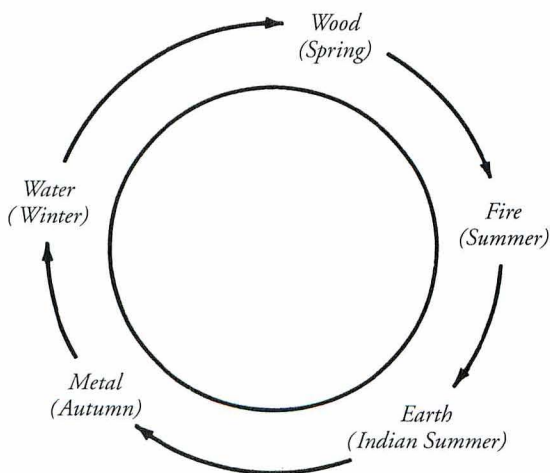
More specifically, each Phase is an emblem that denotes a category of related functions and qualities. The Phase called Wood is associated with

*This appendix was written in collaboration with Dan Bensky and the assistance of Kiiko Matsumoto.

active functions that are in a growing phase. Fire designates functions that have reached a maximal state of activity and are about to begin a decline or a resting period. Metal represents functions in a declining state. Water represents functions that have reached a maximal state of rest and are about to change the direction of their activity. Finally, Earth designates balance or neutrality; in a sense, Earth is a buffer between the other Phases. In the sense that the Phases correlate observable phenomena of human life into images derived from the macrocosm, they serve a similar function as that of elements in other medical systems.

In more concrete terms, the Five Phases can be used to describe the annual cycle in terms of biological growth and development. Wood corresponds to spring, Fire to summer, Metal to autumn, and Water to winter. And what of Earth? Earth may represent the transition between each season (and it is commonly used to represent “Indian summer”). These correlations, as diagrammed in Figure 49, are known as the Mutual Production order of the Five Phases. They represent the way in which the Five Phases interact and arise out of one another in the typical yearly cycle. There are thirty-six mathematically possible orders in which the Five Phases can be arranged, but only a few of them are actually used either in medicine or in other disciplines.

FIGURE 49 *Mutual Production Order of the Five Phases*



The application of the Five Phases to seasonable growth is only one example of how the system was used. In time, the five generic categories were used for classifying many more perceptions, from colors, sounds, odors, and taste sensations to emotions, animals, dynasties, the planets, and ultimately everything in the universe. (See Table 30.) Correlations were also made between the Phases and various Organs and anatomical regions, which is how the connection between the Phases and medicine came about.²

TABLE 30 *Five Phases Correspondences*

	WOOD	FIRE	EARTH	METAL	WATER
<i>Direction</i>	east	south	center	west	north
<i>Color</i>	blue-green	red	yellow	white	black
<i>Climate</i>	windy	hot	damp	dry	cold
<i>Human Sound</i>	shouting	laughing	singing	weeping	groaning
<i>Emotion</i>	anger	elation	pensive-ness	grief	fear
<i>Taste</i>	sour	bitter	sweet	pungent	salty
<i>Yin Organ</i>	Liver	Heart	Spleen	Lungs	Kidney
<i>Yang Organ</i>	Gall Bladder	Small Intestine	Stomach	Large Intestine	Bladder
<i>Orifice</i>	eyes	tongue	mouth	nose	ears
<i>Tissue</i>	tendons	blood vessels	flesh	skin	bones
<i>Smell</i>	goatish	burning	fragrant	rank	rotten
<i>Spirit</i>	Hun	Spirit	Yi	Po	will
<i>Virtue</i>	human kindness	propriety	faithful-ness	righteous-ness	wisdom

Before exploring the use of Five Phases theory in medicine, it is helpful to consider its history and relationship to Yin-Yang thinking. While Yin-Yang theory stretches back into China's remote antiquity, Five Phases theory was not documented until the fourth century B.C.E.³ It is nevertheless reasonable to assume that a scheme as complex as the Five Phases theory did not emerge spontaneously. The framework must have been gestating for some time. Some intimation of the Five Phases can be found in many writings of the period from about 500 B.C.E. to 200 B.C.E., which was a time of great intellectual, political, and social ferment in China.⁴ The Five Phases theory was first systematized

by Zou Yen (approximately 350 B.C.E. to 270 B.C.E.) and his followers.⁵ The original emphasis of the theory was as much political as it was scientific. The correct timing of rites and the succession of dynasties came to be interpreted through the dynamics of the Phases, which were then called the Five Virtues or Powers. As Joseph Needham comments, “there were intense and anxious debates about the proper color, musical notes and instruments, sacrifices, etc. [according to Five Phases], appropriate to a particular dynasty or emperor.”⁶

The number five was important in the numerology of the period, particularly for classifications of Earthly things. Various other numbers, such as six, four, and three, turn up in early classification schemes for things pertaining to Heaven.⁷ It is difficult to determine whether the importance of the number five led to Five Phases theory or the popularity of the Five Phases theory led to things being classified in fives.

During the third and fourth centuries B.C.E., the Five Phases theory and the Yin-Yang theory existed simultaneously and independently of each other.⁸ For example, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu refer extensively to Yin and Yang but do not mention the Five Phases. Unlike other traditional cultures with systems of elemental correspondences (e.g., the Greek Four Elements or the Hindu Three Doshas), the Chinese thus had two systems of referents. It was not until the Han dynasty, a period of great eclecticism and synthesis, that the two systems began to merge in Chinese medicine. “The five elements [Phases] [which] had not been part of the most ancient Chinese medical speculations” were incorporated into the clinical tradition that culminated in the *Nei Jing*.⁹ Certain parts of the *Nei Jing* refer to the Five Phases, while others do not. Yet other texts, such as the Discussion of Cold-Induced Disorders (the main early herbal text) and the biography of Bian Que in the *Shi Ji* or Historical Records,¹⁰ make no mention whatsoever of Five Phases theory.¹¹ The Five Phases theory continued to undergo changes even after its incorporation into Chinese medicine. It is not until the Song dynasty (960–1279 C.E.) that the relationships between the Phases were commonly used to explain the etiology and processes of illness.¹²

Many attempts were made to fit the Five Phases neatly into the Yin-Yang structure. For example, Wood and Fire were considered the Yang Phases, being active in character, while Metal and Water, associated with quiescent functions, were the Yin Phases. Earth was the balance point between Yin and Yang. Yet,

despite this apparently successful marriage between Five Phases and Yin-Yang theory, the two systems of correspondence frequently yielded different interpretations of health and disease.¹³ For example, Five Phases theory might emphasize the following correspondences stated in the *Nei Jing*: The Liver opens into the eyes; the Kidney opens into the ears; the Heart opens into the tongue. Disorder in a particular orifice would necessarily be linked to its corresponding Organ. Yin-Yang theory, on the other hand, might emphasize the following quite different assertions of the *Nei Jing*: The pure Qi of all Organs is reflected in the eyes; all the Meridians meet in the ears; the tongue is connected to most of the Meridians. Yin-Yang theory would not necessarily see a link between a part and a part. Rather, all disharmonies of the eyes, ears, or tongue would be interpreted in terms of patterns. Thus, an eye disorder could be part of a Liver disharmony or perhaps a Lung, Kidney, or Spleen disharmony, depending on the configuration of other signs. The differences between these medical interpretations stem from the fact that Five Phases theory emphasizes one-to-one correspondences, while Yin-Yang theory emphasizes the need to understand the overall configuration upon which the part depends.

—| USE OF THE FIVE PHASES IN MEDICINE

At the bottom line, the Five Phases theory is a crucial emblem system used to discuss and represent clinical phenomena. In fact, one could have written this entire book from a Five Phases perspective. If this had been done then Earth would correspond to Spleen, Qi, Dampness, worry, Consciousness of Possibilities, and faithfulness; wood would correspond to Liver, Blood, wind, Non-Corporeal Soul, and human kindness; water would correspond to Kidneys, Essence, Cold, fear, and the Will; fire would correspond to Heart, warmth, elation, Heart Spirit, and propriety; and metal would correspond to Lungs, Fluids, dryness, Corporeal Soul, and righteousness. Much of what was presented would have fallen into place. Few practitioners would agree with these relationships, but in some situations the correspondence could be forced and be more metaphysical than practical.

To be valuable, the Five Phases theory requires flexibility and sensitivity. Distinguishing between useful and not useful correspondences can be difficult,

and practitioners can disagree. For example, some practitioners are happy with such correspondence as those of plants and grains; others are not. Odors are excluded from many lists,¹⁴ but a number of practitioners feel that they are clinically quite useful.¹⁵ The correspondences that are in general use in medicine are listed in Table 30. The medically useful correspondences can be divided into two groups. There are those that make metaphysical sense in the Chinese mode of thought, or are construed to have associations outside the body (often forced associations). And there are correspondences derived not from metaphysical premises, but from the functions of the Organs or from empirical observation. The best example of the former is color: green for Wood (trees), red for Fire, yellow for Earth (the soil of northern China, where these correspondences originated, is yellow), white for Metal (silvery luster), and black for Water (the inky depths of the ocean). Similar explanations, however strained, are available for the seasons, climatic conditions, directions, tastes, and smells. An example of the latter type of correspondence is that between Metal and the nose. The nose has no actual relationship with Metal, and such a relationship was never posited by the ancient Chinese. The nose is, however, the opening most often affected by diseases of the Lungs, and in Chinese physiology the nasal tract is considered an extension of the Lungs. Because the Lungs are associated with Metal, the nose is also given that association. Similarly, the association of anger with the Liver is probably due to careful observation of people, rather than to any notion of the “woodenness” of becoming enraged. The distinctions between the two types of correspondence is important in explaining the dynamic behind the diagnostic use of the Five Phases theory, and also gives perspective on the whole system.

Chinese medicine has had to creatively adapt the Five Phases theory in order to fit it to actual medical experience. The physiology that grew out of Five Phases theory, for example, is not always identical with Eight Principal physiology. The Eight Principal tradition is based on empirical observation and is intimately connected to Yin-Yang theory, concentrating on the functions of the Organs and extrapolating their interrelationships from their functions. The Organs are thus the key to the system. Five Phases theory does not always agree with this understanding, and in that case, it is simply ignored.¹⁶ For example, in Five Phases physiology, the Heart corresponds to Fire. Traditional

Chinese texts, however, consider the Kidneys (Life Gate Fire) to be the physiological basis for the Fire (Yang) of the other Organs. And so, the Five Phases theory's formal correspondence would be conveniently forgotten.

The Five Phases correspondence is often a convenient way to organize significant clinical reality. Let us take facial color correspondence, delineated in Table 30, as an example. A yellow complexion often appears in a Spleen disharmony (yellow and Spleen are both associated with Earth), and a darkish complexion often appears in a Kidney disharmony (black and Kidneys are associated with water). A red face, however, although it can be part of a Heart pattern, is just as likely to be part of the Heat pattern of any Organ. A white face can appear with Lung disharmonies, but can also be part of the Cold pattern of any Organ. A blue-green complexion, while often part of a Liver disharmony, might as easily be part of a Congealed Heart Blood pattern. The correspondences of climate work much the same way. Although it is true that the Spleen is especially sensitive to Dampness, the Kidney to Cold, the Lungs to Dryness, and the Liver to Wind, Dryness does not necessarily imply a Lung disharmony, for it can easily affect the Stomach, Intestines, or Heart. Coldness does not necessarily imply the Kidneys, because the Spleen, Lungs, and Heart can also be affected by Cold. And so on. The Five Phases correspondence can be helpful as a guide to clinical tendencies, but the test of veracity in Chinese medicine remains the pattern. Pattern thinking overrules all formal rules. The flexibility of Yin-Yang theory, including Five Phases, resides in its insistence that all correspondences finally depend on the configuration of a unique whole.

The Five Phases are often used to describe clinical processes and relationships and to help in the conceptualization of proper treatments. It is an explanatory theory and is not meant as a binding doctrine. For example, as has been shown (see Figure 49), the Five Phases can be used to describe the general processes that take place during the annual cycle. That sequence—the Mutual Production order of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, Water—describes normal generative functions. In the sequence, the producer is called the Mother and the produced, the Child (an example of the tendency toward concreteness in traditional Chinese thought). Some patterns of disharmony can be explained by reference to the Mutual Production order, especially patterns of Deficiency.

The Child of a Deficient Mother, for instance, becomes Deficient for want of proper nourishment. Conversely, when the child is Deficient, it may “steal the Qi” of the Mother, making it Deficient as well. If an Organ is Deficient, therefore, treatment can be affected by strengthening the Mother Organ. When there is an Excess in an Organ, the Child can be drained. The concept of treatment is important in acupuncture, but is seldom used in herbal medicine.¹⁷

Another sequence is known as the Mutual Checking or Mutual Control order. In this sequence, each Phase is said to check or control the succeeding Phase (see Figure 50). The Control order, like the Mutual Production order, describes naturally occurring phenomena, and it works to ensure that the Mutual Production order does not overgenerate and cause imbalances. A disharmony within the Control order might mean that an Organ is exerting Excess control over the Organ that it regulates. This would lead to a Deficiency in the regulated Organ. Or the Organ that should be regulated may become the regulator. Other situations can arise, but these two are the most likely. The former imbalance is known as an insulting cycle, and the latter as a humiliation cycle.

FIGURE 50 *Mutual Control Order of the Five Phases*

