

Your first Four Pillars explorations

(this article presents only a small part of the 580 pages workbook of Master Heluo and this has been presented with the kind agreement of Master Heluo)

Assuming this is the first time you encounter this form of astrology, and assuming also that you have been aware of your annual animal sign in Chinese astrology, then your first question would probably be:

What distinguishes Four Pillars astrology from popular Chinese astrology?

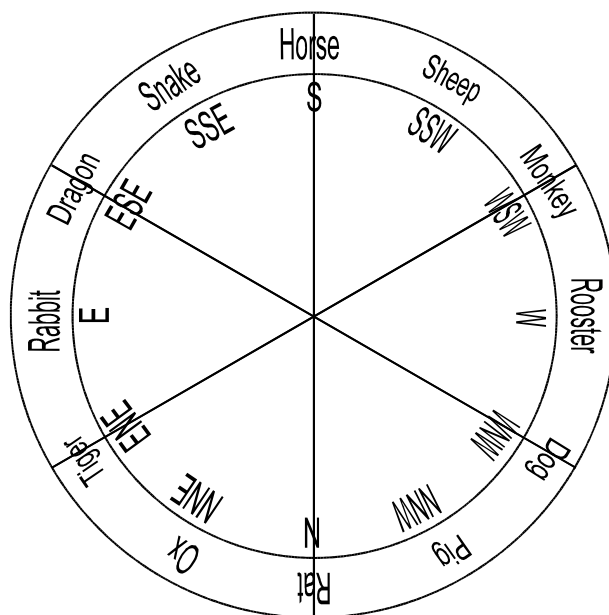
Well, we already saw how Four Pillars is not astrology in the strictest sense, but before we proceed with the theoretical foundation and take you through the basic technique, this introduction will show you the bones of this traditional Chinese fate calculation system. Four Pillars of Destiny unlocks your complete birth chart by showing specific Stem and Branch combinations for year, month, day and time of birth, whereas popular Chinese astrology concentrates on your annual animal sign only.

Chinese zodiac

The Chinese Zodiac consists of Twelve Earthly Branches that can be shown around the perimeter of the Chinese compass. These Earthly Branches came to be popularly known as the twelve 'animal' signs of the Chinese zodiac and each covers 30 degrees of circumference. But, the Earthly Branches are not animals as they only became associated with certain animals through myth. Through our earth's rotation and by way of centrifugal force, twelve distinct terrestrial energies are being released from within the planet. We will first introduce you to the notion of Ten Heavenly Stems and Twelve Earthly Branches.

Twelve Earthly Branches

Here are the cyclical Twelve Earthly Branches, each into its appointed direction over the Chinese compass – or Luo Pan -, more commonly known also as the 12 animal signs of the Chinese zodiac, but these are of course not animals.



Earthly Branches are to show waxing and waning of twelve distinct directional terrestrial energies surfacing from within the earth, being produced by and carried on the back of earth magnetism, this magnetism itself being influenced by the annual earth orbit around the sun.

During the course of a solar year, earth energy will surface and it will withdraw back under the earth surface, this dynamic heavily depending on heliocentric dynamics, such as the constantly changing distance between earth and sun as well as earth's relative position on its orbit around the sun.

The cycle of Earthly Branches is to signify that the dynamics of earth Qi waxing and waning change on an annual and monthly basis, this dynamic being linked

directly to the earth orbit around the sun, while due to earth's rotation around its axis we are also able to connect the Earthly Branches to the occurrence of days and hours.

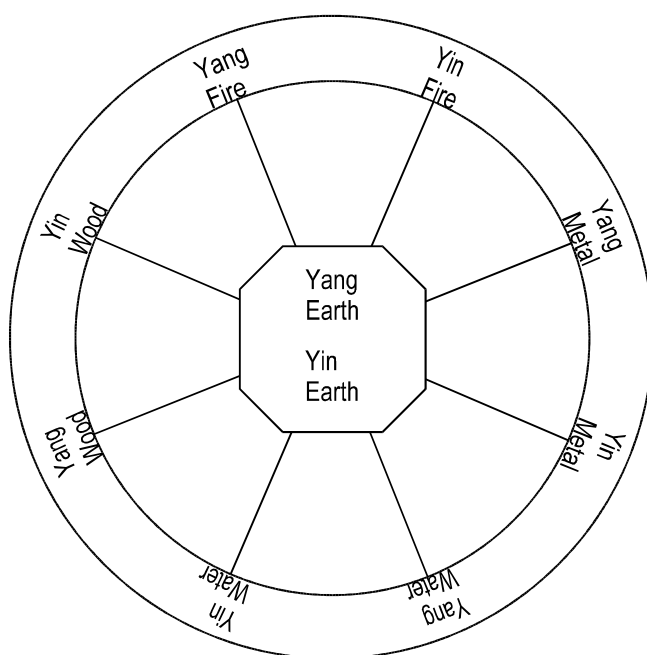
- Months and years are defined according to earth's orbit around the sun. We will later see that this also defines larger time cycles.
- Days and hours are defined according to the earth's rotation around its axis.

These dynamics need to be proclaimed valid for the entire globe, for reason that season and seasonal changes were not at the base of this formula. Seasons are reversed for Northern and Southern Hemispheres and merely produced by the earth's tilted axis. The Earthly Branches precede the thinking in apparent season and seasonal change as they measure earth magnetic field as it appears for the entire planet, regardless of locale.

The scale on which the Earthly Branches were calculated and the scale on which they function, is simply too huge to justify any difference between Hemispheres. The earth fits a million times into the sun and the distance between sun and earth (even any solar flare can measure two million kilometers in length) are too huge to justify any difference.

Yet, for reason that seasons are reversed on the Southern Hemisphere, and for reason that some – again wrongly – focused on the sun's apparent path from East to West (rendering warm winds to the South and cold winds to the North for the Northern Hemisphere and a reversed situation for the Southern Hemisphere), we have meanwhile seen alternative schools emerge that will have reversed the directions of the Twelve Earthly Branches accordingly. Rat, originally linked to the month of December, the direction of North and since ancient times considered the prime of Water energy, now becomes wrongly linked to the Month of June and the direction of South.

Most people are aware of their annual sign – i.e. the Chinese animal belonging to their year of birth -, but as you will see this is only a 12.5%, or less even, of your complete chart. Ten Heavenly Stems. Here are the cyclic Ten Heavenly Stems, each into its appointed direction. They are the Five Transformations of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water, each in their Yin and Yang appearance.



Note how the Heavenly Stems of Yang Earth and Yin Earth hold no directional position, but are instead positioned in the center.

The Heavenly Stems are not treated having come from one specific source, but rather as the accumulation of different heavenly energies, the gathering of star energies and the energy of heavenly bodies.

The Heavenly Stems follow a ten year cyclic pattern and they show the governing energy for years, months, days and hours.

Gānzhī

Taken together, Heavenly Stems (Tiān Gān) and Earthly Branches (Dì Zhī) are often referred to as Gānzhī.

The Chinese term Gānzhī may be somewhat inaccurately translated as Stems and Branches, this translation providing us with the image of a tree. It supposes a relationship that the ancients did not intend, in which the stem of a tree will act as support to a branch of a tree.

Dìzhī is taken as Earthly Branch, while Zhī more accurately translates as support, or to sustain. A more accurate understanding of Gānzhī is, that the Heaven Qi of Stems will find support – sustention - in Earth Qi of Branches.

Our planet produces earth magnetic field. By way of earth's rotation it produces a dynamic that is centrifugal in nature, and so this earth energy can be understood as taking on twelve different temperaments, relative to their appointed directions.

Pillars structure

The following structure shows a first representation of a complete Four Pillars of Destiny astrological chart, along with the Eight Pillars of Luck. Each Pillar has an upper segment and a lower segment. We read the Pillars from right to left.

The upper row shows the static Four Pillars of Destiny with the appointed elements for year, month, day and hour of birth. The bottom row shows the dynamic Eight Pillars of Luck. Again reading right to left, these shows our most probable destiny, each Pillar covering 10 years of life. The little boxes below the Four Pillars and Eight Pillars unlock yet other information to be discussed later.

As you can see, for a person born in the year of Rat, popular Chinese astrology would leave us with the annual animal sign only. However, any western astrologer would be only interested in your complete astrological chart. It is not sufficient to say: "I am an aries". The same is true for the difference between popular Chinese astrology and the traditional Chinese astrology of Four Pillars of Destiny. You want to know your complete astrological chart, rather than just your annual sign.

Four Pillars of Destiny

Static astrological chart, showing basic elements for year, month, day and time of birth.

Hour	Day	Month	Year
			+F Yang Fire
			Rat Water

Eight Pillars of Luck

Showing progression of your life and most probable destiny. Each pillar covering ten years of life.

Popular Chinese astrology would position the annual Zodiac sign – here Rat - in the lower segment of the year Pillar and leave it at this. As you will agree, only positioning the annual Zodiac sign is not remotely satisfactory. Yet, this is the way Chinese astrology was first related to – and oftentimes still commonly practiced - in the west.

Popularly, and for a person born in the Year of the Rat, we would be inclined to take 'Rat' into the lower segment of the year Pillar. However, we know that the Earthly Branches are no animals. Rat is only to represent the element of Water, so instead we take in Water into the lower segment of the year Pillar.

Where we would want our Four Pillars astrological chart to show the full dynamics between the Five Transformations (Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water), popular Chinese astrology ignored the elements of month, day and hour and based character descriptions and divination on the year sign only. Only in its complete format, will Four Pillars of Destiny reveal essential information about your emotions, temperament, character, as well as showing your family life, marriage, career, talents, health, money and opportunities.

Also, popular Chinese astrology will not arrive to the Day Pillar and as we will proceed, you will see that it is the Day Pillar that becomes the focus – the pivotal point - of an astrological chart, rather than any year sign. Last but not least, popular Chinese astrology can never arrive at the Eight Pillars of Luck, because these are to be built on the information contained by the month Pillar, as you will see as we proceed. The month Pillars is still left empty here.

This example shows a person born in a Rat year. Rat is an 'animal' under the elemental phase of Water, shown in the year Pillars' lower segment. Like all other Chinese animal signs, Rat comes in five types: Wood-Rat, Fire-Rat, Earth-Rat, Metal-Rat and Water-Rat. Some western resources of popular Chinese astrology would at the most also give the type of Rat in the upper segment of the year Pillar, here shown as Fire. We will see that this person was born in 1936, which was a year of the Yang Fire-Rat.

Summary

Before we move on to yet other basic dynamics, let us explore the Four Pillars a bit more.

- Contrary to popular believe, the twelve Chinese zodiac signs do not symbolize animals at all. They are Twelve Earthly Branches representing terrestrial forces. The earth is a huge rotating magnet and the 'animals' are merely codifications to clarify twelve distinct surfacing earthly energies that are directional and produced by earth magnetism. Rat is not an animal, but an Earthly Branch.

From hereon these energies will be therefore referred to as Earthly Branches. The Earthly Branch Rat is shown as Water in the lower segment, because Rat occupies the North sector of the compass, which is the domain of Water. All other 'animals' are to be likewise converted into their appointed Earthly Branch equivalents before being positioned into the lower Pillar segments in their 5 elemental phase.

- The Twelve Earthly Branches, commonly associated with animals, each occupy 30 degrees around the perimeter of the Chinese compass, thus symbolizing a calendar of waxing and waning earth energies that can be divided into - and be associated with - the twelve year Chinese zodiac cycle, with years, months, days and the Chinese double hours.
The Earthly Branches have a directional significance and they always appear with their definite element: Rat is always Water, Ox is always Earth, Tiger is always Wood and so on.
- The upper segments of the Pillars show the Heavenly Stems, i.e. any of the 5 elements in their Yin or Yang appearance: Yin or Yang Wood, Yin or Yang Fire, Yin or Yang Earth, Yin or Yang Metal and Yin or Yang Water.
These show Heavenly influences, more specifically associated with the planets Wood-Jupiter, Fire-Mars, Earth-Saturn, Metal-Venus and Water-Mercury. The example shows the person is a Fire Rat, so a person born under the Earthly Branch Rat, but in that particular year much under the influence of the planet Mars.
- Any Pillars show a combination of a Heavenly Stem and an Earthly Branch. The upper segment in the year Pillar in the above example shows Yang Fire. Yang is shown by + and Yin is shown by -.
- We distinguish between Yang Heavenly Stems and Yin Heavenly Stems, and between Yang Earthly Branches and Yin Earthly Branches. Yang Stems can be only combined with Yang Branches, Yin Stems can be only combined with Yin Branches.
- Therefore we can combine five Yang Stems with six Yang Branches, rendering thirty Stem-Branch combinations. Likewise we will arrive to another thirty Stem-Branch combinations when we combine five Yin Stems to six Yin Branches. Ultimately we will arrive to sixty Stem-Branch combinations which form the basis of Chinese timing.

The cycle of sixty Stems and Branches

The Earthly Branches represent a recurring cycle of twelve, e.g. covering twelve years, months, days or twelve double hours. The Heavenly Stems show a recurring cycle of ten, e.g. covering ten years, months, days and ten double hours. Because the Chinese consider time to be circular, rather than linear, they use Stems and Branches to show repetitive cycles of ten and twelve. Of course, at one point the cycle of ten and twelve would have to synchronize and to understand its mechanism is anyone's first step into these amazingly interesting studies.

Using each Stem and Branch representative, coupling Yin Stems to Yin Branches and Yang Stems to Yang Branches, and if we tried to fit a smaller cycle of Ten Heavenly Stems into a larger cycle of Twelve Earthly Branches, the first time they coincide will be after 5 times one Stem cycle of ten and 6 times one Branch cycle of twelve. This equals 60 years, also referred to as Jia Zi cycle. In other words, each of the twelve animals coupled to each of the 5 elements gives 60 Stem-Branch combinations. To stay with our initial example of a person born in 1936 and Yang Fire Rat, it means that also 1996 is Yang Fire Rat.

This cycle of sixty is at the underlying mechanism of all Chinese understanding of time. Although we will limit ourselves to the sixty year cycle, the cycle of sixty

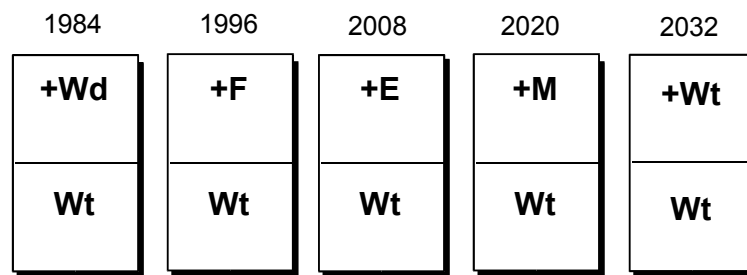
Stems and Branches can be used to show larger time cycles e.g. 180 years and beyond.

Five types of Rat

This next example covers all possible Rat years within a sixty year cycle, each combined with a different Heavenly Stem. Remember, Rat is a Yang Earthly Branch, so each of the Stems assigned to Rat must be Yang also.

Start of a new sixty year cycle in the year:	1924	Yang Wood	Rat;	} One
and 12 years later	1936	Yang Fire	Rat	
and 12 years later	1948	Yang Earth	Rat	
and 12 years later	1960	Yang Metal	Rat	
and 12 years later the cycle concludes in	1972	Yang Water	Rat;	
again 12 years later yet another cycle in	1984	Yang Wood	Rat.	

Here are the same Stem-Branch combinations, but taken into Pillars. Remember that Rat is a Yang Branch and it represents the Water (Wt) phase.



What makes the Chinese method of timing easy is, that years, months, days and hours follow the exact same format of sixty Stem-Branch combinations. We then arrive to a cycle of hours that comes within – and relies on - a cycle of days and a cycle of months that comes within a cycle of years.

Once a cycle is completed, the next cycle is simply repeated with again the first Stem and Branch. Shown further down is the first part of the cycle of sixty Stem-Branch combinations, i.e. the first cycle of Ten Heavenly Stems combined with the first cycle of Twelve Earthly Branches. As you will notice the first range of Ten Heavenly Stems will have already completed a full cycle, while the cycle of Twelve Earthly Branches will then have yet two Branches to go in order to complete its cycle.

Void Branches

This would render two 'left over' Branches which would initially stay without a Heavenly Stem and these Branches are therefore referred to as 'Empty Branches', or 'Void Branches'. Notice how these two Branches (XI Dog and XII Pig) then become adopted by the first (Yang Wood) and second (Yin Wood) of a second cycle of Ten Heavenly Stems. Heavenly Stems are given as 1-10, Earthly Branches as I-XII.

Heavenly Stem	Yin-Yang	Earthly Branch	Yin-Yang	Branch element
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1.	Wood	Yang	I.	Rat	Yang	Wt
2.	Wood	Yin	II.	Ox	Yin	E
3.	Fire	Yang	III.	Tiger	Yang	Wd
4.	Fire	Yin	IV.	Rabbit	Yin	Wd
5.	Earth	Yang	V.	Dragon	Yang	E
6.	Earth	Yin	VI.	Snake	Yin	F
7.	Metal	Yang	VII.	Horse	Yang	F
8.	Metal	Yin	VIII.	Sheep	Yin	E
9.	Water	Yang	IX.	Monkey	Yang	M
10.	Water	Yin	X.	Rooster	Yin	M
1.	Wood	Yang	XI.	Dog	Yang	E
2.	Wood	Yin	XII.	Pig	Yin	Wt
3.	Fire	Yang	I.	Rat	Yang	Wt

Referring to above list, here is the most important information.

- Yang Stems are coupled with Yang Branches, Yin Stems are coupled with Yin Branches.
- Stems can be counted as 1-10. Branches can be counted as I-XII. Now we can use binomials.
- Odd Numbers are Yang and can be shown as +. Even Numbers are Yin and can be shown as -.
- In sequence, Yang Stems are always followed by Yin Stems. Yang Branches are always followed by Yin Branches.
- The Ten Heavenly Stems are the Five Transformations, each assigned Yin or Yang.
- Earthly Branches are the 12 'animals', each in their Yin-Yang appearance and assigned to a fixed element out of the Five Transformations.
- The first combination of a Stem with a Branch is shown as binomial 1-I. Note that Rat is a Yang Earthly Branch – not an animal.
- Now refer to the part of above list immediately following the first completed cycle of Ten Heavenly Stems. Note the start of yet another cycle of Heavenly Stems in Yang Wood (1) and Yin Wood (2), to accommodate the first cycle of Twelve Earthly Branches not having completed yet. This is to accommodate the Empty Branches of XI Dog and XII Pig and to connect also these Earthly Branches to a Heavenly Stem. Now the first set of Twelve Earthly Branches is completed and a new set of Branches starts in Rat, coupled this time with Yang Fire, shown as binomial 3-I.

Building the Four Pillars

Four Pillars of Destiny separates itself from popular Chinese astrology on at least two essential points.

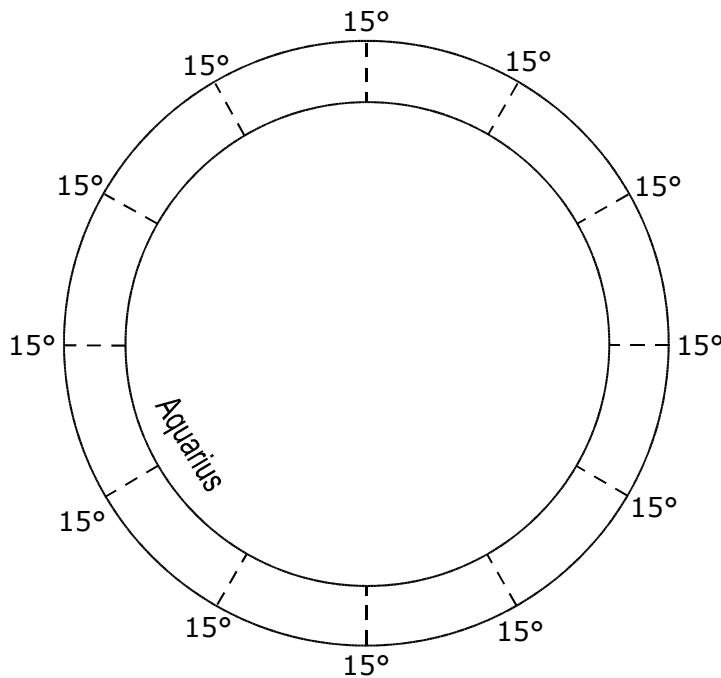
- Chinese 'animals' are not animals, but they are Earthly Branches showing earth directional energies in an recurrent annual waxing and waning pattern.
- Starting point of the horoscope is the Heavenly Stem of the day of birth, rather than the 'animal' sign of the year of birth. The Day Stem defines the chart and is seen as the 'self element' and from hereon referred to as Day Master.

For sake of showing how the Four Pillars are built, we will use the example of a woman born 5 July, 1936. Local time of birth 2.40 a.m..

Timing years and months

We can follow planet earth along its annual orbit around the sun and divide its

path into twelve distinct zodiac signs. Each zodiac sign will then receive 30 degrees, for reason that 360 degrees of compass divided by twelve gives 30.



The sun will apparently travel through twelve zodiac signs of 30 degrees each and it is in this apparent sun pattern that Chinese timing – as applied in Four Pillars of Destiny, Chinese Feng Shui and Nine Star Ki astrology – finds its basis.

In order to complete a zodiac segment, the sun needs to travel a full 30 degrees. However, Chinese timing starts at 15 degrees of any zodiac sign.

Years and months are thus defined as to start with the sun reaching 15 degrees in a given zodiac sign.

February occurs in Aquarius, but the solar month of February (Tiger) only starts with the sun – on its progression from 0 degrees to 30 degrees - reaching 15 degrees Aquarius. March then starts with the sun reaching 15 degrees Pisces and so on.

Therefore, Four Pillars of Destiny uses the Luni-Solar calendar, rather than the moon calendar and we need to again emphasize that time calculations done for Four Pillars of Destiny, as well as time calculations done for Chinese Feng Shui and Nine Star Ki, are identical for both Northern and Southern Hemisphere. It is only for Zi Wei Dou Shu astrology that the Lunar calendar is used for timing of years, months, days and hours. The Lunar calendar is a moon phase calendar, the Luni-Solar calendar is the Gregorian calendar calibrated to the 24 Solar Terms.

Our Qi studies are Longitude based, rather than Latitude based. Therefore, if I am on the Northern Hemisphere and born on a Yang Water Rat day, a person born the same solar date, but on the Southern Hemisphere, is born under the same day sign. For both Hemispheres, and due to the changing distance between earth and sun, years and months start anywhere between the fourth and ninth of a solar month. Furthermore, the Luni-Solar calendar solves the differences in length for Solar years and Lunar years. The Luni-Solar calendar takes care of Leap months. The Luni-Solar calendar, oftentimes referred to also as Ten Thousand Year calendar, uses the Beijing Time Meridian at 120 degrees East as its point of calibration. This calendar may show that a certain year starts at 4 February at 2:11 am., which means that we need to take this time, but still do calculations to arrive at True Local Solar time for our locale to arrive at the hour and minute that the change of year or month occurs at our exact Longitude.

If we take a year to start when the sun enters 15 degrees Aquarius, it means that Four Pillars of Destiny considers the start of a year in our times to fall around 4 or 5 February anywhere around our globe. It also means that we define the start of years and months on astronomical grounds, which will give us yet another argument why timing should be not based in seasons, seasonal change or

apparent sun path.

You will see the aforementioned Southern school follow the rationale of seasons and seasonal changes, thus not just focusing on the sun's apparent path through the skies, but also allowing Latitude into the equation. This school claims a year to start around 6 or 7 August, because they wrongly assumed that a year needs to start at 'Spring Begins'.

Li Chun

When we consult a Chinese cosmological treatise, we will at some point encounter the term Li Chun, which translates to Spring Begins, or Beginning of Spring.

At one point in time, astronomers, mathematicians and other scholars were still linked to the emperor and the emperor demanded exclusive rights to astronomical knowledge. It was considered a capital offense, punishable by death, to take this knowledge outside of the emperor's range. Again later, however, matters became more relaxed and it became possible for advisors to the emperor to advise others.

Some scholars would take their knowledge of astronomical realities to commoners, who would be either farmers or in any case illiterate. It becomes conceivable how these commoners would have no clue at all as to astronomical cycles, and it is then only natural that a scholar would have translated certain astronomical realities in relation to the apparent immediate environment, so that it would fit geocentric and egocentric - rather than heliocentric - observations, but based mostly in easy to chew analogies.

Surely, having to explain rather complicated Qi cycles of time and space, at one point one of these scholars would have perhaps pointed to the East and in his plainest Chinese would have used the expression 'Li Chun', to indicate 'Spring Begins', but in so doing not so much deliberately pointing at the seasonal component, but rather to its related astronomical event.

Nevertheless, at one point this must then have been documented, from thereon rather than referring to 'Li Chun' as an astronomical event, using analogy of apparent observations to describe the Five Transformations, and this then became part of the curriculum, seasons and seasonal change having eventually become an integral part of the explanation of the Five Transformations.

Hence, the confusion around Oriental timing that we have seen emerge since the mid seventies of last century. Even though the use of 'Li Chun' is just circumstantial, just notional, it is even today taken as if a year should start at the beginning of Spring season. It is not, where a year is instead taken to start when the sun rises in the East and this is no different for Hemispheres. It is for reason that actual Spring season on the Southern Hemisphere starts in August, that some teachers adjusted the entire system of Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches to meet local conditions. Some have been quite laborious at it.

This is pertinently wrong, because a year in Four Pillars of Destiny, Feng Shui and Nine Star Ki does not start when 'Spring Begins' but rather when the sun reaches 15 degrees Aquarius, which just happens to coincide with the start of the Spring season on the Northern Hemisphere, but occurs during the season of Autumn on the Southern Hemisphere.

Waxing and waning Qi

The months of February, March and April are being regarded a season in which

the element Wood prevails, regardless of your being on the Northern Hemisphere or Southern Hemisphere, because it is not seasons that decided on this, but the earth orbit around the sun and just plain geomagnetism. Again, Spring has been wrongly taken as the starting point for the Chinese calendar. The Chinese calendar shows the waxing and waning of earth Qi.

Later on, when we study the 24 Solar Terms, we will see how the annual waxing and waning of earth magnetic forces can be shown by Hexagrams. This process of waxing and waning can be shown by increasing or decreasing the amount of Yin or Yang lines in a seasonal Hexagram. We will see how this process is in perfect accordance with the earth orbit around the sun, the position of earth on its orbit and the changing distances between earth and sun.

For any year, the dynamic of earth Qi retreating back under the earth surface or earth Qi resurfacing is no different for either Hemisphere. For both Hemispheres, the December Solstice – note that we do not use the term Winter Solstice, because it is Summer season for the Southern Hemisphere in December - is taken as the birth moment of Yang. On the December Solstice moment – and for either Hemisphere - Yang Qi is born and earth magnetic field will have commenced its journey towards the earth surface, but this energy build up will still stay hidden under the earth surface, until around 4 or 5 February when this energy will again surface.

That this occurs on the Northern Hemisphere when we see Spring season is just notional. Would the Australians have been the ones to have discovered the Stems and Branches, we would have come to know the start of a year as 'Autumn Begins' probably. If 15 degrees Leo (August) would have then be taken as the start of a year for the Southern Hemisphere, we would have seen a year once more start at 'Spring Begins', but the Chinese would have probably taken this as a year to start at September.

February being the start of a year, a new cycle of months starts with the month of Tiger, the first Earthly Branch of Wood. February of any year will be thus always Tiger, anywhere. Also months follow a cycle of sixty Stem-Branch combinations. Each 60 months, or five years, the Earthly Branch Tiger for February is repeated five times. Within a five year period we will have seen a month of Yang Wood-Tiger, Yang Fire-Tiger, Yang Earth-Tiger, Yang Metal-Tiger and Yang Water-Tiger.

12 months in a year x 5 elements equals 60 Stem-Branch combinations = 5 years.

Month Stems

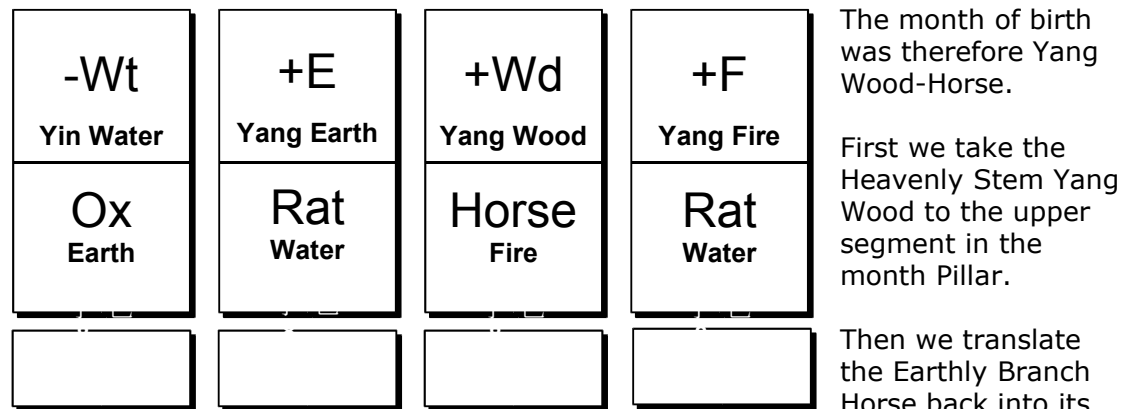
Both the year of 1936 and February 1936 started on 5 February. February is always Tiger and February 1936 was a Yang Metal-Tiger month. The solar months in 1936 started anywhere between the fifth and the eighth. Please note that months in other years can start on different dates. Here are the months for 1936:

Start of Month	Solar month	Heavenly Stem	Earthly Branch	Branch element
5	February	Yang Metal	Yin - Tiger	Wood
6	March	Yin Metal	Mao - Rabbit	Wood
5	April	Yang Water	Chen - Dragon	Earth
6	May	Yin Water	Si - Snake	Fire
6	June	Yang Wood	Wu - Horse	Fire
7	July	Yin Wood	Wei - Sheep	Earth

8	August	Yang Fire	Shen - Monkey	Metal
8	September	Yin Fire	You - Rooster	Metal
8	October	Yang Earth	Xu - Dog	Earth
7	November	Yin Earth	Hai - Pig	Water
7	December	Yang Metal	Zi - Rat	Water
6	January 1937	Yin Metal	Chou - Ox	Earth

Calculating the Heavenly Stem and Earthly Branch for the month of birth for the chart under survey, gives you the first opportunity to familiarize yourself with the different starting dates of solar months.

The woman under survey was born 5 July and if you check the above list, you will see that July 1936 did not start until the seventh of that month. This means the woman was born with environmental Qi still very much in the month of June, when the Qi of the Horse Branch was still prevailing. Therefore we find the Heavenly Stem and Earthly Branch for June 1936 and take it to the month Pillar in her chart, i.e. Yang Wood-Horse. We can see how, around the time this woman took her first breath at 5 July, the sun was already within the confines of 0-30 degrees of the zodiac sign of Cancer, however not having reached 15 degrees Cancer yet.



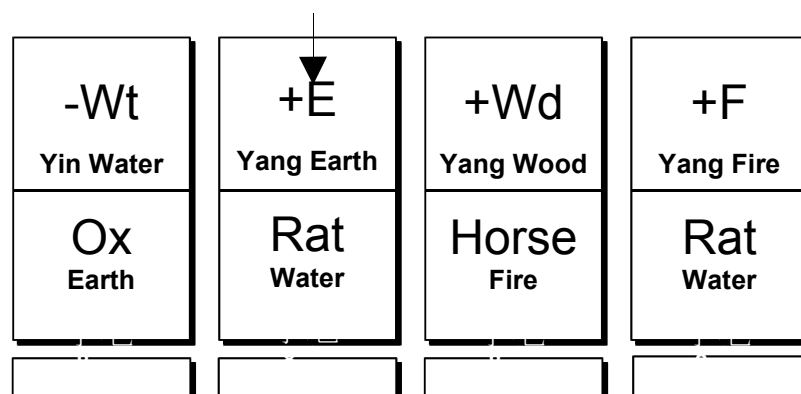
elemental component Fire and take it to the lower segment of the month Pillar. If we leave further explanation of the entire system and the Heavenly Stems that are contained in the Earthly Branches, or hidden elements, to rest for now, here you see the complete Four Pillars chart. It is the result of translating the year, month, day and hour of birth into their respective Stem-Branch combinations.

Daymaster

A Four Pillars horoscope is defined around the Day Stem, that will be referred to as Daymaster. Surrounding the Daymaster – representing the person and in this case Yang Earth -, we see a dynamic world of elements.

Each of these elements has a distinct impact on the Daymaster as well as influence on one another. All correspondences between the elements strongly depend on the month Branch, which will decide on the strengths and weaknesses of the chart.

Day Stem is the Daymaster representing the person.



Heavenly Stems ►

Earthly Branches ►

Concealed elements ►

So far, our initial question seems to have been answered: What distinguishes Four Pillars astrology from popular Chinese astrology? With the traditional Chinese Four Pillars of Destiny your Chinese horoscope is finally complete. Once you layed down your birth data in the Four Pillars a whole new world opens up before you. You can now interpret your life using the Five Transformations. What is the influence of each of the Heavenly Stems on the Daymaster? What are the Heavenly Stems contained by – or hidden in - the Earthly Branches and how do they again impact the Daymaster? The Fire of the year Stem enhances the Yang Earth of the Daymaster, whereas the Wood of the month Stem controls the Yang Earth Daymaster. What does this signify?

Family and environment

The Pillars can be taken to signify much more than just their hosting Stems and Branches. We can personify the Pillars and find family associations. What does it mean when in the parents Pillar the Wood and Fire are in a generating relationship and what does it mean to one's love life when the marriage Pillar seems to have Earth and Water in a controlling relationship?

Children	Marriage	Parents	Grandparents
-Wt Yin Water	+E Yang Earth	+Wd Yang Wood	+F Yang Fire
Ox Earth	Rat Water	Horse Fire	Rat Water

What does it mean when in the parents Pillar the Wood and Fire are in a generating relationship and what does it mean to one's love life when the marriage Pillar seems to have Earth and Water in a controlling relationship?

Now that you have at least an idea how the Four Pillars are being built, there is still work to do.

- We did not complete the Four Pillars, as we still need to take the Stems contained in the Branches to the boxes that are left empty here.
- We still left the Eight Pillars of Luck, unlocking your life's most probable destiny, untouched.

Looking at the Four Pillars, we can summarize the most important information so

far:

- We find no difference is assessing Time factors between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.
- The person is represented by the Heavenly Stem in the day Pillar, the Daymaster.
- Daymaster in this case is Yang Earth, and all elements surrounding the Daymaster are to be compared against the Daymaster for their impact on the Daymaster and for their mutual relationship. We also focus on Daymaster's ability to impact the surrounding elements.
- The elements of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Wood answer to the dynamic of Timeliness and will be waxing and waning throughout the course of one year. This information will be revealed by the month Branch. Fire may be the prevailing Qi in May, but it will have its power weakened in August and vanished in November.
- Before we can assess the relationships between the elements in a chart, based on their strength, we must therefore look at the month of birth. The month of birth indicates the relative strength of the Five Transformations through the 'seasons'.
- However, when we say 'season', we are not referring to Spring, Summer, Autumn or Winter. We are referring to the Twelve Stages of Life and waxing and waning Qi. 'Season' refers to any combination of a Stem and Branch, be it for year, month, day or hour. For a Daymaster born in May, any Fire to be found in the chart may be strong, any Water in the chart will be weak. For a Daymaster born in November, any Water in the chart may be strong and any Fire in the chart will be weak.
- If you give up your association of the May month with either being Summer for the Northern Hemisphere or being Winter for the Southern Hemisphere, you will not have any problems understanding the basic foundation of our Qi studies, being geomagnetism.
- The Four Pillars reveal Daymaster's relationship towards parents, children, siblings, superiors, marriage and the Pillars show Daymaster's ability to relate to society and maintain a career and his chances for good fate and luck in money affairs and health.
- There are several type charts. Once type of chart is determined and once the type of chart is brought into relationship with the strengths and weaknesses of the chart, this will unlock Daymaster's most (in)auspicious elements so that efforts can be made to reach and maintain good destiny.
- A completed Four Pillars structure shows in what way Daymaster may relate to certain opportunities.

Charting the Eight Pillars

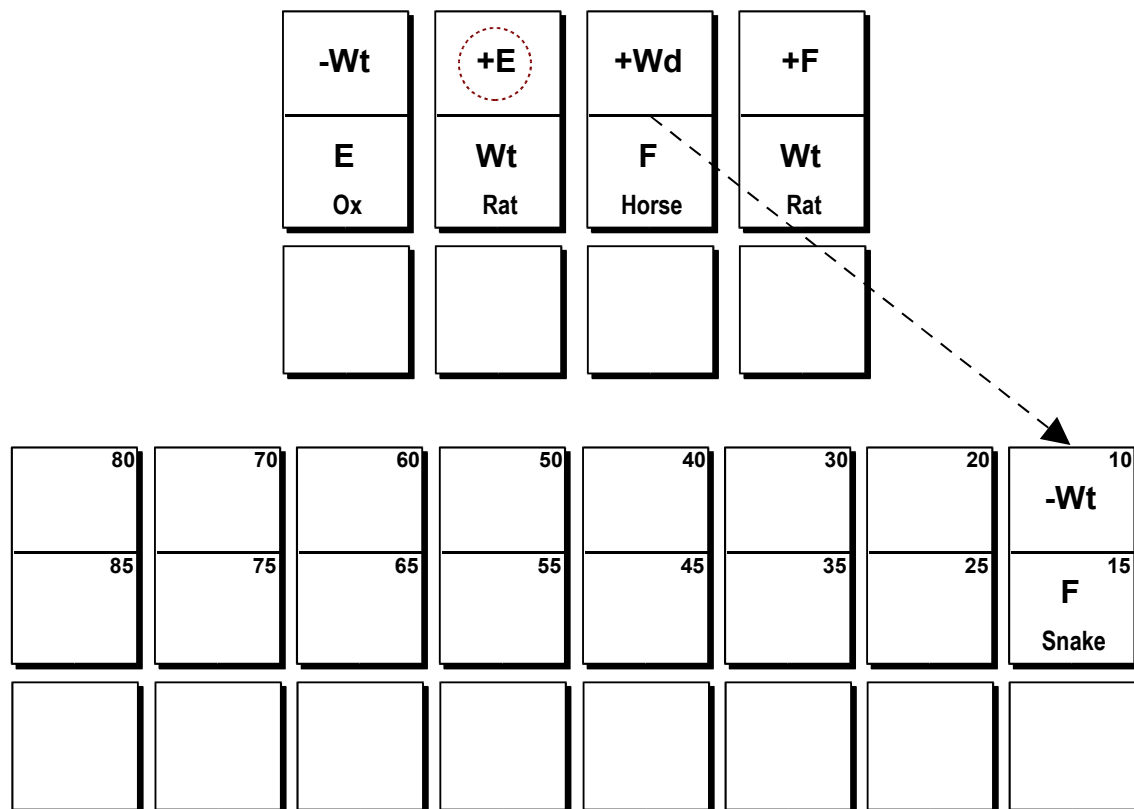
We already know how the Four Pillars of Destiny structure looks and we know that it is built around the Stem-Branch combinations of year, month, day and hour of birth. We know that the Day Stem represents the person and is called Daymaster.

The Four Pillars – however dynamic – show your static astrological chart. Your Four Pillars of Destiny structure remains unchanged throughout your lifetime. The real dynamic part of this astrology is found in your Eight Pillars of Luck. A simple and straightforward formula, incorporating the month Pillar of birth, will help you find Stem-Branch combinations for the Eight Pillars of Luck.

Each of the Eight Pillars covers 10 years, 5 years for both upper and lower segment. Reading from right to left, this particular person's first Luck Pillar starts at age 10 and covers the period 10-20. However, Luck Pillars can start at any age up to the age of ten.

Having reached the age of 10, this particular Daymaster enters a Luck Period of Water over Fire. We can now assess the dormant or not so dormant influence that this Water and Fire combination has on the Daymaster, interpret the impact that this Ten Year Luck Period will have on Daymaster's life, and further interpret the function of the Water for the first 5 years and the Fire for the second 5 years of this Luck Pillar.

Of course this period of ten years can be then further divided into sections of five years as well as into Stem-Branch combinations for their respective years, months, days and double hours.



The foundation

In order for you to be able to work with the actual Four Pillars of Destiny fate calculation system, these are the foundations pertinent to its structure that you should have a firm, active and growing knowledge of.

- You need to maintain an active perception on what Qi pertains. Qi can pertain to Heaven Qi (or Time aspect, heliocentric), Earth Qi (or Space aspect and geocentric) or Human Qi (or aspects of action and choice, egocentric).
- You need to disassociate Qi from being linked to seasons, for this link has just been functioning as an analogy, and should not be at the actual explanation of Heaven and Earth forces.
- You need to do further research into cosmology and dynamics of Yin and Yang, using both Oriental and Occidental insight into astronomical realities.
- Study the doctrine and dynamics of Five Transformations, using both heliocentric, geocentric and egocentric observations, but mostly disconnecting Five Transformations to the idea of apparent seasons, seasonal change and apparent sun path.
- Have a basic, but accurate, understanding of Chinese timing and some basic calendric principles and do web searches on the subject of Chinese calendar and other worldly calendrical systems.

- Use the 24 Solar Terms and Twelve Stages of Life as your basis, dividing a year into 24 distinguishable phases of waxing and waning Qi. Disassociation of the 24 Solar Terms from apparent seasons.

The reason for this foundation being threefold:

- These are the basics necessary to your ability to even work with this system.
- These doctrines are at the very basis of intelligent interpretation of destiny.
- Firm knowledge of key technique and key theory underlying this system strengthens your ability to discriminate between true and false teachings as well as enabling you to further your research in this field.

After you acquainted yourself with the techniques to build up the Pillars and while continuing to improve you abilities to accurately interpret dynamics of destiny, you may further your studies with:

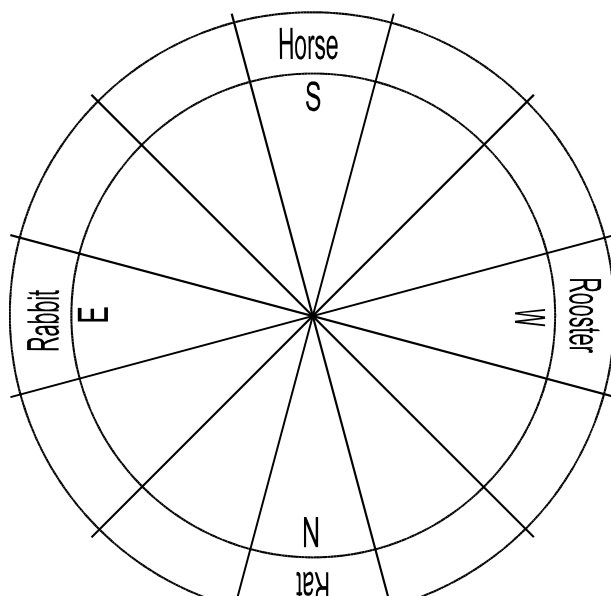
- More advanced knowledge of Chinese timing, calendric systems, oriental cosmology.
- Further your knowledge of Five Transformations and the Laws of Change by studying (books that explain) Yi Jing.
- Learn the basics underlying fate and destiny and study biological and physiological function of diet, external treatments, exercise, meditation and self reflection.
- Study - e.g. by doing web searches on the Internet – sun physics and geophysics.

Somewhere around here is where our having explored the system should be sufficient enough to pursuit with our technical studies.

Stems contained in Branches

We saw earlier that the 'animals' in the Chinese zodiac are in fact Earthly Branches. Unlike Heavenly Stems – which basically show us Timely, pure and undividable Heaven Qi -, Earthly Branches show a melting pot of merging energies. Each Earthly Branch can contain one, two or three Heavenly Stems, also commonly known as 'Hidden Elements'.

If we position the twelve Earthly Branches around the perimeter of the Chinese compass, and include the Heavenly Stems contained in them, we will see a dynamic world of waxing and waning Qi emerge before our eyes. In order not to confuse you at this stage, let us first show the Heavenly Stems contained in the Earthly Branches belonging to the cardinal directions, North, East, South and West.



Reading the Luo Pan clockwise, the cardinal directions of the Luo Pan will be occupied by the Branches of Rat, Rabbit, Horse and Rooster, or North, East, South and West respectively.

As a first example, we will suppose that a person was born in the year of the Rat, the month of the Rabbit, the day of the Horse and the hour of the

Rooster.

Because the Earthly Branches represent certain earth energies surfacing in specific months, it is important to have a working knowledge of their waxing and waning structures throughout a year.

We will first look at the Stems contained in the Earthly Branches of these cardinal positions and we will further clearly distinguish between the Yin or Yang temperament of the Branches themselves, and the Yin and Yang dynamics of the Stems contained in these Branches. In other words, a Branch may be Yin, but what it contains may be Yang and vice versa.

Rat to the North is a Yang Branch while it contains Yin Water
Rabbit to the East is a Yin Branch while it contains Yin Wood
Horse to the South is a Yang Branch while it contains Yin Fire and Yin Earth
Rooster to the West is a Yin Branch while it contains Yin Metal

Here is a format by which the Earthly Branches can be presented and that you should familiarize yourself with. It shows the Stems contained in the Earthly Branches. The Earthly Branches of our example on the previous page are shown in black. These are the cardinal directions.

Rat to the North is December and it is strongest in Water Qi.
Water is at its Prime.

Rabbit to the East is March and it is strongest in Wood Qi.
Wood is at its Prime.

Horse to the South is June and it is strongest in Fire.
Fire is at its Prime.

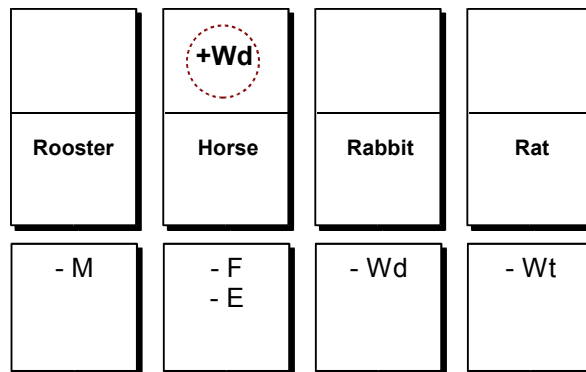
Rooster to the West is September and it is strongest in Metal.
Metal is at its Prime.

This is true for both Hemispheres, regardless of apparent season.

Snake	Horse	Sheep	Monkey
Yang Fire Yang Metal Yang Earth	Yin Fire Yin Earth	Yin Earth Yin Fire Yin Wood	Yang Metal Yang Water Yang Earth

Dragon			Rooster
Yang Earth Yin Wood Yin Water			Yin Metal
Rabbit			Dog
Yin Wood			Yang Earth Yin Metal Yin Fire
Tiger	Ox	Rat	Pig
Yang Wood Yang Fire Yang Earth	Yin Earth Yin Water Yin Metal	Yin Water	Yang Water Yang Wood

Here then is how we take the Stems contained in the Branches to the Four Pillars structure. Originally these so-called hidden elements will be taken into each Pillar in a right to left order, but we will not follow this convention.



The environment

For convenience, by far most of the examples used in this workbook will be from a Yang Wood Daymaster.

We can show male and female Daymasters, either Yin or Yang, in this manner.



Heaven Qi can be shown by circles. Stems in the upper segments of the Pillars have their origin from Heaven and can therefore appear as either Yin - ● - or Yang - ○ -.

Earth Qi can be shown by squares. Stems contained in the Earthly Branches in the lower segments of the Pillars have their origin from Earth and can therefore appear as either Yin - ■ - or Yang - □ -.

We may take the information derived from the Four Pillars structure along a Five Transformations circle with a five star. We may take indicate for the month of birth to the Wood-, Fire-, Earth-, Metal- or Water leg of this five star.

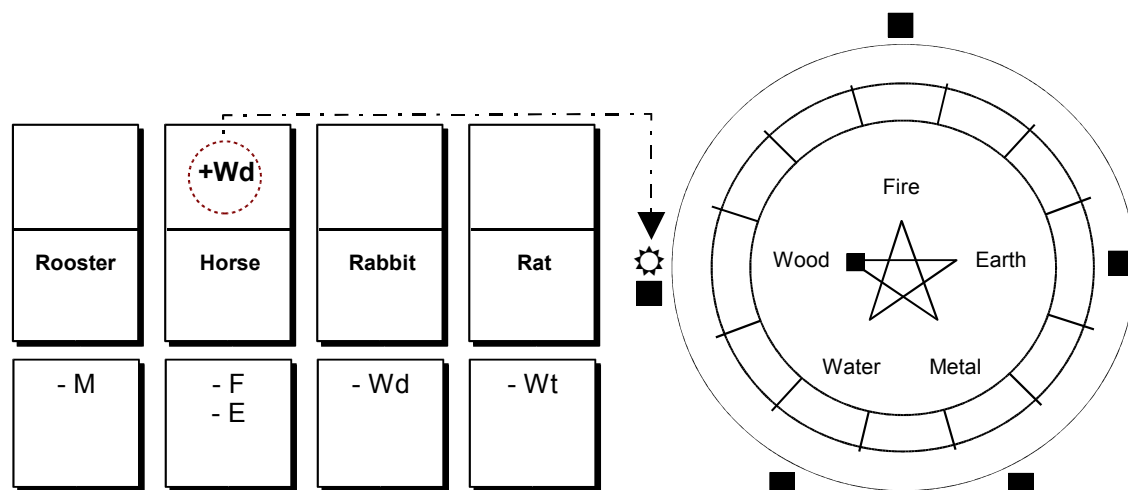
Daymaster is Yang Wood, which before anything we take to the circle, but as ☼ because male of female is of no importance at this time.

Birth year is Rat, and Rat is an Earthly Branch of which we take the concealed Yin Water outside the circle as ■. Month is Rabbit, of which we take the contained Yin Wood outside the circle as ■. The month of birth is most important as it decides on the strength of the entire structure. To signify this and to further highlight that Daymaster was born in a Yin Wood month, we take ■ to the Wood leg of the five star within the circle to indicate that Rabbit is a Yin Branch.

As you can see, the Horse Branch contains two elements, the first one is the major God of Yin Fire, the minor God then being Yin Earth. Note however, that the major God contained by Horse Branch is projected outside the circle, while the Yin Earth contained in the Horse Branch is here projected inside the circle. We will learn the significance a little later.

Finally, the hour Branch is Rooster, of which we take in the contained Yin Metal.

If we ignore the Heavenly Stems in the upper segments for now, we see the Earthly Branches for a person born in the year of Rat, Month of Rabbit, Day of Horse and hour of Rooster, not just projected in the Four Pillars but as they would appear along the Wu Xing circle.



Note again how Rat as an Earthly Branch may be Yang, but that Rat contains the Heavenly Stem of Yin Water. Horse is a Yang Branch, but what is contained in Horse is Yin Fire. We need to yet build the entire Four Pillars structure, but we can already appreciate some of the dynamics shown in this chart for a Yang Wood Daymaster.

- Daymaster is Yang Wood.
- Daymaster is born in a Rat year, which is Water, which will engender Wood.
- Daymaster is further strengthened by Wood contained in the birth Month.
- Daymaster is drained by the day Pillar which contains Fire.
- Daymaster controls the Earth contained in the day Branch, which is strong Earth because it was engendered by Fire, also in the day Branch.
- Daymaster is under control of Metal in the hour Branch.

Whether it is fortunate or unfortunate for a Yang Wood Daymaster to be controlled by Metal or whether it is fortunate or unfortunate to be engendered by Water, strengthened by Wood, drained by Fire or keep Earth under control, remains to be seen and is of later concern in our studies.

Proficiency

Is the system complicated? Building the Four Pillars of Destiny and the Eight Pillars of Luck as discussed is no problem at all. Starting out – and getting used to Chinese timing - you may initially scratch the back of your head, but pretty soon also this will prove to be no problem at all and quite doable actually.

Then, building further on your ability to correctly interpret and unlock deeper dynamics of fate and destiny is yet another story. Any educational program, any teacher, any book can only suggest some basic rules for interpretation. You shall have to build your own experience and proficiency to unravel the mysteries of life and death. By far most of the system's dynamics are pretty straightforward, but having said this, it is also true that you may have to invest time and effort learning several explanations to any one given rule.

There is something for everyone. If it is your desire to just be able to build up your own Pillars and do basic interpretations for yourself and close friends, then what is being presented in this master class is already sufficient for that purpose.

If you want to lift yourself up to a more advanced level or proficiency, you need do further theoretical studies and plot numerous charts for people, even more so when you decide to work as a consultant or teacher. Finally, reaching true mastery over matters of fate and destiny requires for one to live one's own life to the fullest, study with different masters, either through correspondence courses but certainly through formal teachings which can be consumed only when you care to attend live classes and this requires a never ending journey of truth seeking, self-criticism, trial and error and self-reflection.

In my feeling, in order to reach true and actual mastery over matters of destiny further requires one to endeavor on building special personal traits such as benevolence, courtesy, honesty, passion, compassion and nobility. Taking your own Pillars to different masters will render different interpretations. When you have found a true expert, it is possible that the reading gets as accurate as: "Five weeks from now on a Jia-Xu day in the Si hour you may receive a letter offering you a new job, but any new job will come with a financial drawback", or comparable.

If you are not satisfied with this because you feel it is just a visionary statement of an event yet to be confirmed by the future, what to think of:

"Your father died when you were 9 years of age. He was a musician who had three children, one of whom died at an early age. He also had a concubine".

It is this type of subtleties that can be unlocked through Four Pillars of Destiny, but which have been always kept far from the West and even in Asia masters of the art continue to keep the secrets to themselves. When you are fortunate enough to have found a true visionary master, he may unlock your true destiny and suggest how to get there.

I first started my Bazi studies through private teachings from Chinese master prof. Chan Ping Woon from The Hague, the Netherlands.

The earliest I am aware of this traditional Chinese astrology having been opened up for the West was through Australian teacher Roger Green in London in April 1996. He conducted a three weeks class and I was very fortunate to be given the chance to attend that group. Since that time, many sources have been made available and now anyone can learn the system through formal training, correspondence courses, yahoo groups on the Internet or from books.

However, Roger – being inspired and amazed over the system of Stems and Branches – took it upon himself to adjust the system of Stems and Branches for the Southern Hemisphere, based on the assumption that the Stems and Branch cycles should be linked to the seasons. Because seasons are reversed on both Hemispheres, it seemed to have appeared only logic to him – and others – that the system should be adjusted for the Southern Hemisphere. I hope to have shown you ample proof that Qi is no different for either Hemisphere.

In this module we will not distinguish between the Northern and Southern Hemisphere, for reason that earth magnetism is the same around the globe. My greatest appreciation goes out to my shifu master Joseph Yu with whom I have studied since 1998. I would ask my students to take up his correspondence courses and do his live seminars, because they are stunningly profound.

Even though we may have gained access to the technique we have to realize that:

- We may still not have full access to hidden secrets, and many more techniques unknown to us at this time may still reach the West in forthcoming years.
- The technique has not been in the West long enough to have fully ripened, in the sense that it will take some generations of teachers and students for Westerners to get to the core of the system and get the hang of it and become equally proficient or visionary as our Asian counterparts.

It is a challenge therefore to at least become proficient in the techniques that have been made available today, and improve oneself, so as to be fully ready once new information reaches us and make them our own. Even the most proficient and senior exponent of Four Pillars of Destiny – including those of Chinese descent - will assure you he is merely a beginner and it is not at all a cliché that at least twenty years of continuous practice and study would be needed in order for one not to be making the obvious mistakes.

This master class aims for you to become independent as soon as possible and to enable you to single handedly apply the system of Four Pillars of Destiny to your own life and to take it to the benefit of others. As far as I am concerned you are ready to do people's charts and mind their destinies if you coupled your technical abilities to what you found described in the chapter 'Destiny Change'. In order to help you reach proficiency, we will from the very first lesson onward use Chinese characters to handle the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches, giving you immediate and full access to the Chinese Solar calendar for this purpose.

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