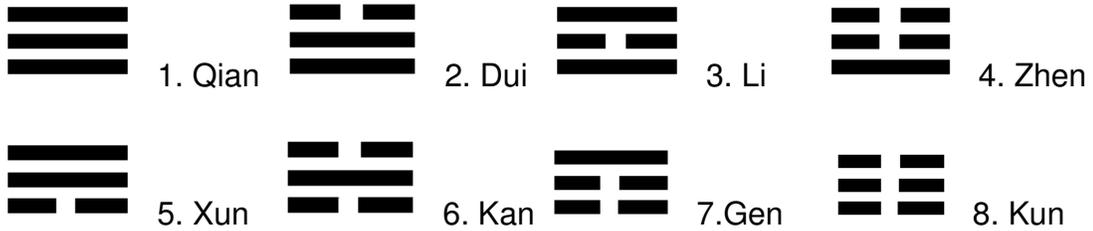


The Trigram and other Fundamental Philosophies

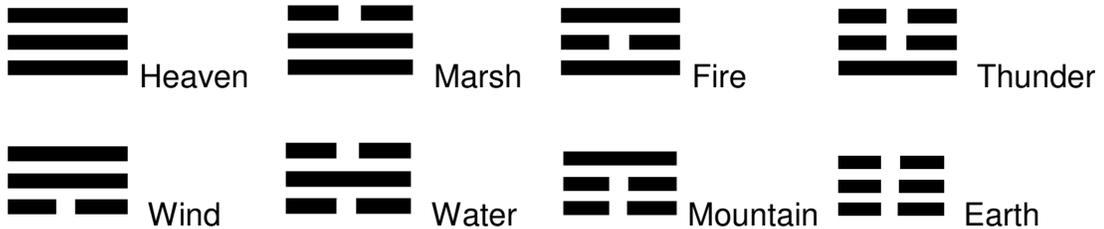
by Weimin Kwauk
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The following offers a minimal introduction to the trigram and other Chinese fundamental philosophies.

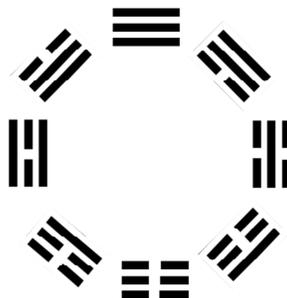
A trigram consists of three lines combining of Yin and Yang. The eight trigrams (Ba Gua) are:



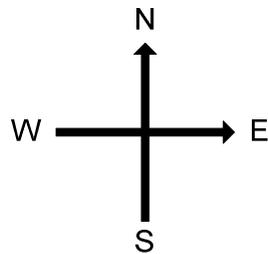
Each trigram symbolically corresponds to a characteristic of Nature:



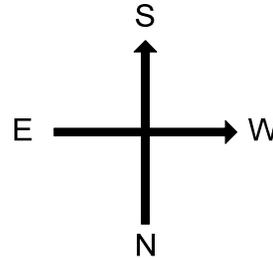
According to legend, Fu Xi (or Fu Hsi), a King or tribal leader during the pre-recorded days of Chinese history, was inspired while watching celestial phenomena in the sky and observing things on Earth and created the first 8-Trigram pattern. This first trigram is called the Congenital 8-Trigram:



The directional orientation of the 8-Trigram is different from the cartographic map.



Cartographic map



8-Trigram

The *I Ching* is the classical text of Chinese philosophy, as well as a manual for divination practice. The *I Ching* we read today includes the core writings by Zhou Wen Wang, as well as contributions by other known and unknown authors. In the *I Ching*, Zhou Wen Wang lists in great detail the meaning of each Hexagram (which we'll talk about later) and its constitutive lines.

Zhou Wen Wang describes the representation of the Congenital 8-Trigram in the *I Ching* as:

Heaven and Earth settled their positions;
Mountain and Marsh established their connections;
Thunder echoing with the Wind;
Water and Fire inconsistent;
Eight trigrams reacting to each other;
To know the past follow the order;
To foresee the future inverse.

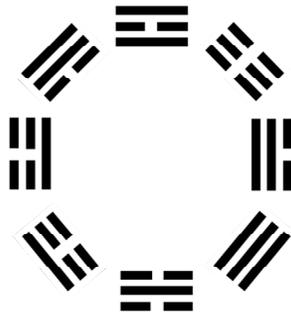
The Congenital 8-Trigram rotates in a counterclockwise direction. To "read" the trigram and to foresee the future you must follow the inverse of the trigram order.

Another way to look at this is to think that counting top down is following order. To know the past is following the order. To count the years to the past, for example, you go from a bigger number to a smaller number. To foresee the future you have to reverse directions; which is why to interpret a trigram or a hexagram you must read it from the bottom up.

It is named the Congenital 8-Trigram because its pattern represents the relationship between our world and our universe before all living things existed.

Zhou Wen Wang (1152 B.C. – 1056 B.C.), known first by the name Ji Chang, was the "Duke of the West" during the Shang Dynasty. He created the Postnatal 8-Trigram during his seven year imprisonment at You Li (present day Tang Yin, He Nan Province) by the corrupt King of the Shang. Ji Chang was accused for treason, but was later released. His son, Zhou Wu Wang, overthrew the Shang Dynasty and created West Zhou (1046 B.C. – 771 B.C.). Ji Chang was invested as Zhou Wen Wang (King Wen of Zhou) after Ji Chang's death.

The eight trigrams in the Postnatal 8-Trigram pattern has a different order than the Congenital 8-Trigram and rotates clockwise.



Zhou Wen Wang described the symbolic meaning of the Postnatal 8-Trigram:

The King raised from the Zhen;
 Everything on Earth comes to live at Xun;
 Everything on Earth grows strong at Li;
 Everything on Earth is ready for its offspring at Kun;
 Everybody is happy about harvest at Dui;
 Yin and Yang fight for change at Qian;
 At Kan everything finishes its transformation and returns to Nature;
 Everything on Earth is ready for a new beginning at Gen. *

- * King: the Sun, the Tao or the Chi of Mother Nature
- Zhen: Spring (with an eastern orientation)
- Xun: the later Spring and early Summer
- Li: the Summer
- Kun: end of Summer and beginning of Autumn
- Dui: Autumn
- Qian: end of Autumn and beginning of Winter
- Kan: Winter
- Gen: end of the Winter and beginning of Spring

Since this trigram represents all living things existing in our world, it is called the Postnatal 8-Trigram. Trigrams in the Postnatal 8-Trigram pattern each have their own directional orientation.

Philosophically, the principle of eight transformations that it carries can be applied to many disciplines. The Postnatal 8-Trigram has been widely used in military strategy, Feng Shui, divination and other areas.

Hexagram

Zhou Wen Wang not only created the Postnatal 8-Trigram pattern but also expanded the 8-Trigram concept to the 64-Hexagram. The 64-Hexagram contains the code for everything on Earth.

If we compare a 64-Hexagram table (there are many representations) to a DNA Code table, we can see the similarities: both tables have 64 codes organized in a triplet code system.

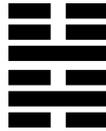
								←Upper ↓Lower

The Genetic Code (DNA)

TTT	Phe	TCT	Ser	TAT	Tyr	TGT	Cys
TTC	Phe	TCC	Ser	TAC	Tyr	TGC	Cys
TTA	Leu	TCA	Ser	TAA	STOP	TGA	STOP
TTG	Leu	TCG	Ser	TAG	STOP	TGG	Trp
CTT	Leu	CCT	Pro	CAT	His	CGT	Arg
CTC	Leu	CCC	Pro	CAC	His	CGC	Arg
CTA	Leu	CCA	Pro	CAA	Gln	CGA	Arg
CTG	Leu	CCG	Pro	CAG	Gln	CGG	Arg
ATT	Ile	ACT	Thr	AAT	Asn	AGT	Ser
ATC	Ile	ACC	Thr	AAC	Asn	AGC	Ser
ATA	Ile	ACA	Thr	AAA	Lys	AGA	Arg
ATG	Met	ACG	Thr	AAG	Lys	AGG	Arg
GTT	Val	GCT	Ala	GAT	Asp	GGT	Gly
GTC	Val	GCC	Ala	GAC	Asp	GGC	Gly
GTA	Val	GCA	Ala	GAA	Glu	GGA	Gly
GTG	Val	GCG	Ala	GAG	Glu	GGG	Gly

A trigram is called "Gua" in Chinese; a hexagram is also called "Gua." The difference between the two is whether the Gua is associated with an 8-Trigram or a 64-hexagram pattern.

Stacking two trigrams together creates a hexagram. Each hexagram has its own name. For example, the hexagram Jie looks like:



Looking at Jie from the bottom up, we can see that it is the combination of the trigrams Kan  and Zhen .

The top trigram is called the Upper or Outer trigram. In ancient times it was called Zhen (similar pronunciation as the trigram Zhen).

The bottom trigram is called the Lower or Inner trigram. In ancient time it was called Hui.

Each Line in a Gua (trigram and hexagram) is called "Gua Yao" or "Yao" for short. A trigram has three Yao, while a hexagram has six Yao. From the bottom up, each line name indicates its position: Beginning, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and the Top.

Each line corresponds with Yin and Yang. To identify a Yang line, use a Yang number like the number Nine; to identify a Yin line, use a Yin number like the number Six (more will be explained later about the Yin and Yang numbers). For example, "Nine-Second" or "Six-Fourth" indicates a line's location and whether it is a Yin or a Yang line. The way to determine a line is covered in the book of *Ching*.

Each hexagram has four properties:

1. The Hexagram Name (Gua Ming).
2. The Hexagram Image (Gua Xiang), or the abstract divinatory meaning of the Hexagram image.
3. The Hexagram Statement (Gua Ci), or the divination of the Hexagram.
4. The Hexagram Line Statement (Yao Ci), or the divination of each Line.

There are different ways to obtain a hexagram or Gua for divination purposes. And once obtained, before achieving the final hexagram, you have to follow

certain rules to manipulate the hexagram. For example, since Yin and Yang are always changing, some of the lines on the hexagram may need to be changed first. The divination of the final "Gua" will be interpreted according to the text in the *I Ching*.

The Five Elements Concept

It is difficult to track when the Five Elements Concept was first created. We do know that it was documented during the West Zhou period (before 771 B.C.).

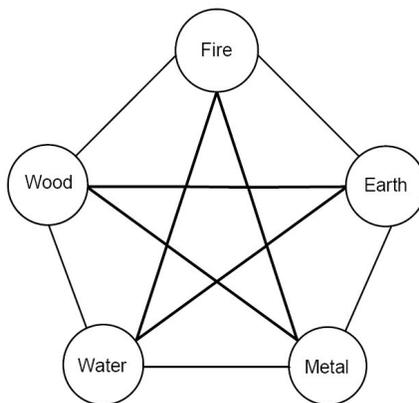
The Five Elements are Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth.

The relationship between the Five Elements is:

Fire creates Earth;
Earth creates Metal;
Metal creates Water;
Water creates Wood;
Wood creates Fire.

Fire destroys Metal;
Earth destroys Water;
Metal destroys Wood;
Water destroys Fire;
Wood destroys Earth.

Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth are the basic elements used to classify all objects in the world. "Create" and "Destroy" are the relationships between them.



Examples of Five Elements in nature:

Element	Direction	Color	Location on the body
Fire	South	Red	Heart, tongue
Earth	Center	Yellow	Spleen, mouth
Metal	West	White	Lung, nose
Water	North	Black	Kidney, ears
Wood	East	Blue-Green	Liver, eyes

The orientation of the Five Elements:

Fire

Wood Earth Metal

Water

There are four mythological deities who guard the four directions:

Water is located on the North. The warrior of the North is the Black Tortoise (a creature that combines a tortoise and a snake).

Wood is on the East. The guardian of the East is the Blue Dragon.

Fire is on the South. A Thunder Bird guards the South.

Metal is on the West. A White Tiger looks after the West.

According to this tradition, a King, or the Master of a house always sits in the North and faces the South. In the unseen space on his left, he has the Blue Dragon (East, Wood); and on his right is White Tiger (West, Metal). Thunder Bird (South, Fire) is in front and the Black Tortoise is behind (North, Water). These are the four guardians.

Each deity also leads seven constellations. The 28 constellations are the fundamentals of Chinese astronomy and astrology. They are also the origins of the hieroglyphic representations of Feng Shui practice. The 28 constellations are similar to the zodiac signs in the Western culture.

Chinese traditional music is based on the pentatonic scale, C, G, D, A and E, also known as Gong, Shang, Jiao Zhi and Yu in Chinese, and each corresponds to one of the Five Elements.

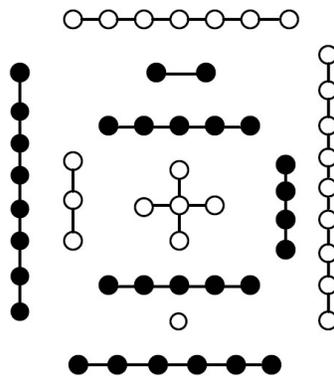
C – Earth, G – Metal, D – Wood, A – Fire, and E – Water.

Because of this correspondence, it is believed that listening to music related to the organs of your body will help to improve your health.

The Five Elements of Chinese philosophy have been applied everywhere in Chinese culture.

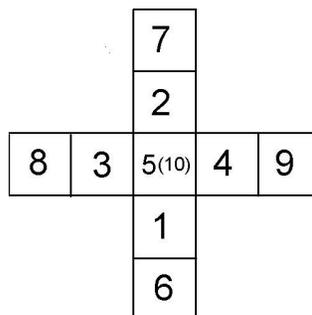
River Map

Several thousands of years ago, a Dragon Horse carried the River Map out from the Yellow River. It was believed that the Yellow River was connected to the heavens.



The black circles mean Yin and the white mean Yang. If we simplify the River Map, we will get:

Numbers of the River Map:



All the numbers can then be divided into Heavenly numbers and Earthly numbers.

The Heavenly (Yang) numbers are 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9; which when added together equals 25.

The Earthly (Yin) numbers are 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10; which equals 30 when added together.

The Total Number of Heavenly and Earthly numbers is 55.

The numbers on each side of the River Map consist of one Heavenly number and one Earthly number. Each side has a relationship with the number 5. Five is the Master Number. Ten is the Complete Number.

In association with the Five Elements, 1 and 6 are at the bottom with Water (North); 2 and 7 are at the top with Fire (South); 3 and 8 are at the left with Wood (East); 4 and 9 are at the right with Metal (West); and 5 and 10 are in the middle with Earth.

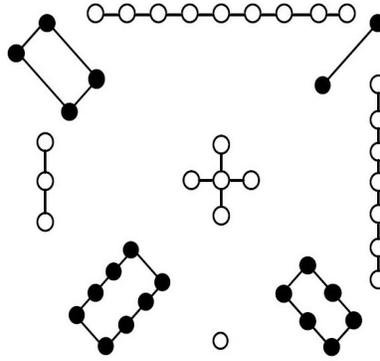
South is on the top, North is on the bottom, East is on the left, and West is on the right. The directions are different from the cartographical directions.

	Young Yang	
	10-7=3	
	5-2=3	
Young Yin		Old Yang
10-8=2		10-9=1
5-3=2		5-4=1
	Old Yin	
	5-1=4	
	10-6=4	

The River Map represents the Heavens around us.

Luo Book

Around the same time as the Dragon Horse, a Divine Tortoise appeared from the Luo River and carried with it the Luo Book.



To simplify the Luo Book, we will get:

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

The Total Number: $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9=45$

The numbers 1 through 4 are called the basic numbers. One and 4 creates 5, the number of the Five Elements.

If you add any of the three horizontal lines, any of the vertical lines or any of the diagonal numbers, the total will always equal 15, which is the same as the combination of the Master Number and the Complete Number from the River Map.

Recall the Complete Number for the River Map is 10 and the Total Number is 55. The Complete Number for the Luo Book is 9 and the Total Number is 45. The Total Number of both the River Map and the Luo Book is 100.

The Luo Book represents the Earth with four corners and directions.

Visit hsvtaichi.com for more information about the author and his Tai Chi class.