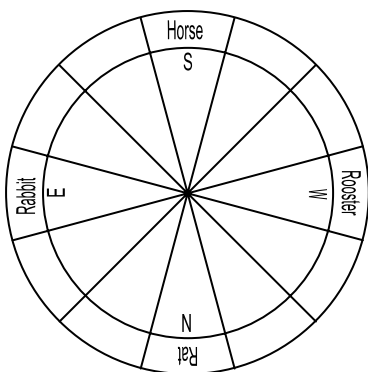


### Stems contained in Branches

We saw earlier that the 'animals' in the Chinese zodiac are in fact Earthly Branches. Earthly Branches are terrestrial forces induced by a combination of the earth's annual orbit around the sun and the earth's spinning around its own axis, by which it will release centrifugal forces, resulting in twelve distinct energies, besides the Earthly Branches also further being linked to organs and meridians. Unlike Heavenly Stems – which basically show us timely, pure and indivisible Heaven Qi -, Earthly Branches may represent a melting pot of merging energies. Each Earthly Branch can contain one, two or three Heavenly Stems, commonly known also 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 energy emerge before our eyes. Let us start by showing Stems contained in Earthly Branches in the cardinal directions.



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

Because Earthly Branches represent earth energies having proportionally surfaced or submerged in specific months, it is important to gain a working knowledge of their waxing and waning properties throughout a solar year. Depictions given here will be true for both Northern and Southern Hemispheres, regardless of local apparent season.

Zi Rat	to the North	is a <b>Yang</b> Branch	while it contains <b>Yin Water</b>	- Gui
Mao Rabbit	to the East	is a Yin Branch	while it contains Yin Wood	- Yi
Wu Horse	to the South	is a <b>Yang</b> Branch	while it contains <b>Yin Fire</b> (and Yin Earth)	- Ding
You Rooster	to the West	is a Yin Branch	while it contains Yin Metal	- Xin

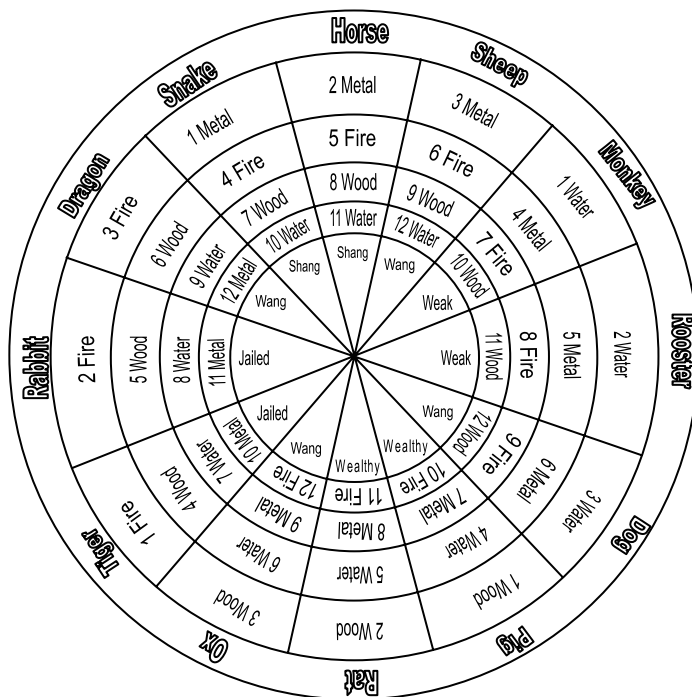
Above table first shows the Stems contained in the Earthly Branches to the cardinal directions and we will further clearly distinguish between the Yin or Yang temperament of the *Branches* themselves, and the Yin and Yang dynamics of the Stems contained in these Branches. In other words, a Branch may be Yin in temperament, but what it contains may still be Yang and vice versa. Below 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, cardinal Branches in black.

<b>Snake</b>	<b>Horse</b>	<b>Sheep</b>	<b>Monkey</b>
Yang Fire Yang Metal Yang Earth	Yin Fire Yin Earth	Yin Earth Yin Fire Yin Wood	Yang Metal Yang Water Yang Earth
<b>Dragon</b>			<b>Rooster</b>
Yang Earth Yin Wood Yin Water			Yin Metal
<b>Rabbit</b>			<b>Dog</b>
Yin Wood			Yang Earth Yin Metal Yin Fire
<b>Tiger</b>	<b>Ox</b>	<b>Rat</b>	<b>Pig</b>
Yang Wood Yang Fire Yang Earth	Yin Earth Yin Water Yin Metal	Yin Water	Yang Water Yang Wood

### Twelve Stages of Life around Luo Pan

During the course of a solar year, the phases of Wood, Fire, Metal and Water progress through twelve distinct stages of alternating prevalence and feebleness. The Earth phase keeps to its own progression. Any element will experience its highest radiance at Life Stage 4 and 5. The first Life Stage of Wood occurs in the month of November during the Hai Pig Branch. By the time Wood reached Life Stage 5 at Mao Rabbit in March, Fire in March will be Life Stage 2, Water will be Life Stage 8 and Metal will be Life Stage 11. A Yang Fire Daymaster born in March will be therefore Life Stage 2, Bathing, enjoying all Water elements in Life Stage 8.

- |     |             |    |   |  |
|-----|-------------|----|---|--|
| 1.  | Cháng Shēng | 長生 | Birth   | Energetic, needs care.                       |
| 2.  | Mù Yù       | 沐浴 | Bathes after birth (indicating the first time one ever washes his hair. | Energetic, needs care. Childhood.            |
| 3.  | Guān Dài    | 冠帶 | Youth. Getting dressed.   | Energetic, needs guidance.                   |
| 4.  | Lín Guān    | 臨官 | Graduation. (on the verge of) becoming an official.                     | Upwardly mobile. Be given official position. |
| 5.  | Dì Wàng     | 帝旺 | Prime (prosperous) years  | Reached the peak.                            |
| 6.  | Shuāi       | 衰  | Declining (wane).   | Enjoying the past glory.                     |
| 7.  | Bìng        | 病  | (Fall) sick, disease.   | Getting weak.                                |
| 8.  | Sǐ          | 死  | Die, death.   | Body dies.                                   |
| 9.  | Mù          | 墓  | Bury, buried (grave, tomb).   | In the grave, storing up.                    |
| 10. | Jué         | 絕  | Totally vanished, Void.   | Prepares for new life.                       |
| 11. | Tāi         | 胎  | Embryo (formed).  | Beginning of new era.                        |
| 12. | Yǎng        | 養  | Developing. Raise, nourish.   | New life develops, embryo.                   |



Here is a representation of the Twelve Stages of Life for all elements around the Chinese compass. The first thing to remember is that the Branches of Hai Pig, Yin Tiger, Si Snake and Shen Monkey are the Birth Places for the elements, respectively Wood, Fire, Metal and Water. These are also called the corner Branches. In Hai Pig Branch, Wood is at Life Stage 1, at Zi Rat, Wood is at stage 2 and at Chou Ox, Wood is at stage 3. Then in Mao Rabbit, Wood has to proceed inwardly along the spiralling movement of waxing and waning energy, giving way

to Fire that appears in stage 1 in the Yin Tiger Branch. Earth does not answer to the Twelve Stages. The inner most circle then shows the stages of Earth: Shang, Wang, Weak, Wealthy and Jailed, which we will discuss further down.

**Bā Zì**

One of the names by which Four Pillars will be known in Chinese speaking regions is Bā Zì 八字. Bā means eight and Zì means character. The name refers to the eight Stems and Branches produces by year, month, day and hour of birth. Bāzì may be oftentimes referred to also as Zǐ Píng Bāzì - 子平八字, named after its founder.

Bā Zì measures Qi by its influence of Heaven or Time (Stems, Gān - 干) and Earth or Space (Branches, Zhī - 支), once projected to form your birth chart, all relative to your solar time and Longitude of birth. As such Ba Zi follows what is known as Gānzhī (干支), combining a total of 60 combinations of Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches, also referred to as the Jiǎ Zǐ cycle (甲子), because this recurrent cycle starts in Yang Wood-Rat.

**Lǐ Xū Zhōng - 李虛中**

Lǐ Xū Zhōng (790-835) lived during the Táng dynasty - 唐 (618-907 AD) – and he played an important role in developing this astrological system. However, in the earliest stage of development – much in line with ancient Chinese astrology -, Lǐ Xū Zhōng emphasized on the *year Branch* to determine Luck and this continued until finally the *year Stem* was included in reading destiny. Finally also the month, day and hour Pillars were added, but with emphasize still very much on the year Pillar.

In other words, Lǐ Xū Zhōng took the year Pillar as the Heavenly Beginning - Tiān Yuán 天元. It is whispered that even earlier than Lǐ Xū Zhōng, a man referred to as the *Devil Valley master* – having lived in the Warring States around 400 BC – must be given credit for already having used year and hour Branch, where in such statements it would be claimed that the hour Pillar was invented by him.

To help remind ourselves that in the strictest sense Bā Zì is not so much a system for astrology, but rather denoting imprint unto the personal magnetism of prevalent environmental energies at birth – closely associated with a person's organ and meridian Qi -, we can refer to it as Bā Zì Míng Lǐ 八字命理, or Eight Characters Fate Calculation.

**Xú Zǐ Píng - 徐子平**

Xú Zǐ Píng, who lived during the Five Dynasties (907-960 AD), further developed and popularized the system.

While either system agrees on the use of Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches to interpret a person's life, the most notable difference is that Xú Zǐ Píng now took the Heavenly Stem of the day Pillar as Heavenly Beginning - Tiān Yuán, so that the day Stem represents the person. Xu Zi Ping took to a rather more scholarly approach and he declined the use of folklore and superstition that had been up to then widely spread. It seemed that each master tried to attract attention and praise by inventing his own Gods and Devils, so Zi Ping abandoned most of the Gods and Devils in use at those times and derived just the ones that he regarded functional. Starting with Xú Zǐ Píng, the system became much more sophisticated and attracted the interest of scholars. Xú Zǐ Píng initiated the sole use of Five Agents and their influence on a life and today, his system is the most popular and most widely followed system and subject also of our studies here.

**Wàn Yù Wú - 萬育吾**

Although Xú Zǐ Píng is the founder of the *Daymaster* (Rì Yuán - 日元) and the father of today's Bāzì applications, we don't know that he published any techniques on how to plot a chart. There was no available material on plotting the hour Pillar,

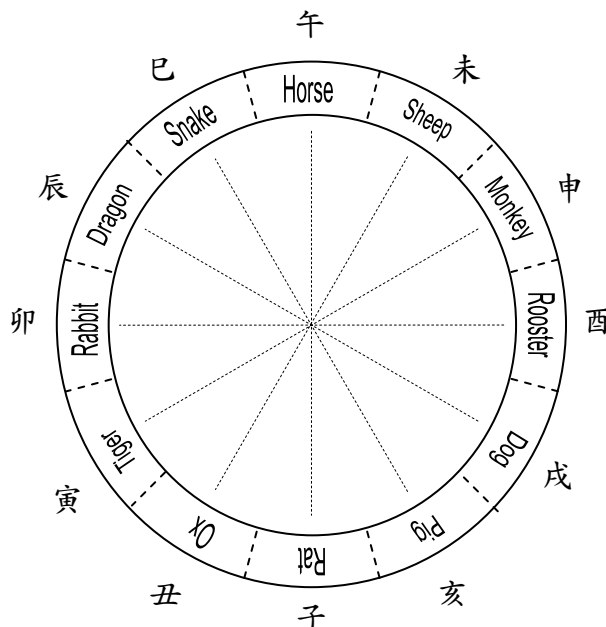
## Branch Clash

Counting away seven Branches from any Branch – including the base Branch as the first one in your count – you will arrive to its clashing element. The clashing Branch is then 180 degrees away from the base Branch and it signifies a relationship bearing least affinity. Whether such relation is still functional does not only relate to these elements relating to one another as from the 'controlling cycle'. In other words, beneficial or inauspicious relies on factors of timeliness, proportion, location and if the elements appear as your favorable or unfavorable Gods. This relation can be rather antagonising. If the antagonizing element is your Power element and under certain conditions, this dynamic is known in Bazi also as Seven Killings (Qī Shā - 七杀). The controlling Branch may not be Seven Killings if there is Output available, because Output controls Power, protecting Daymaster. If you are born in a Zǐ Rat year, your highest affinity will be with Qī from the North direction. Clashing with Zǐ would then be Wǔ Horse Branch and South direction. We may very well loose the connotation as if Zi Rat and Wu Horse were sworn enemies, whereas it is just a matter of lack of affinity, or opposing magnetism, if you will.

Whenever Zǐ Rat appears in a Bazi structure, it will clash with Wǔ Horse if they are found in adjacent Pillars. Clash between adjacent Pillars will be rather obstructing to flow of Qi. There is also clash if clashing elements come in through a Ten Year Luck Pillar, or an annual-, month-, day- or hour Pillar. Because it concerns Branch clashes, such may invoke clash in the associated fields, concerning the associated circumstances, a person's foundation. If a Wǔ Horse Day Pillar is clashed by Zǐ Rat, the latter is considered Water Shā, the moreso if Zi Rat also functions as Qī Shā by lack of Output (Earth). The effect of a clash may be felt in the marriage when the day Pillar is being clashed. There may be still antagonism when two elements within a Ba Zi structure clash but not to adjacent Pillars.

If a clash occurs we need to determine whether the clash involves favorable or unfavorable elements. If Fire is the clashing element and Fire is the Annoying God or unfavorable, the impact will be stronger and much more malign than when Fire is the Useful God or a beneficial element, in which case the Shā of Fire will be less antagonizing. With a clash or Qī Shā occurring when a person is in a bad Luck Period and with a clash activated in any way, this will cast ill effect much more than when a clash or Qī Shā will be activated but in a fortunate Ten Year Luck Pillar.

Zǐ Rat Branch contains Yin Water (癸) that clashes with Yin Fire (丁) contained in Wǔ Horse Branch, but the Yin Earth (己) contained in Wǔ also controls the Yin Water contained in Zǐ. Zǐ can win this battle when strength is in its favor.



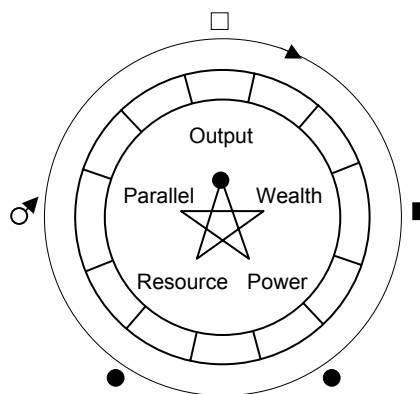
Yín Tiger Branch contains Yang Wood (甲) and Yang Fire (丙) that clashes with Yang Metal (庚) and Yang Water (壬) contained in Shēn Monkey.

Combat can be severe and note that a clash can remove favorable elements, including the Useful God.

Clashes between Earth Branches will function along their own logic, where they will not so much as clash, as they will release their intrinsic potential, which we will be looking into further down as we proceed.

### Qi flow amongst Pillars

One elementary process that you engage in anywhere around the initial stages of reading a life is explore Qi flow, i.e. you now examine how transference of Qi lies organized within a structure, between Pillars. Purely concentrating on flow of Qi - for the purpose not yet incorporating perhaps other conditions in our considerations -, here is an example of what seems a superior flow of Qi in this chart for a male Yang Wood Daymaster. This structure serves as a splendid first example into the subject of Qi flow, because the transference starts in the birth month Si Snake (Fire) to flow either way into the structure, while it meets obstruction nowhere. We know that the birth month hosts the strongest element, so it is superior to have Qi flow commence from Vibrant stage. One part of the path of Qi for us to discern here runs from the birth month Branch of Si Snake (Fire Output) to the year Branch Chou Ox (Earth Wealth), to further progress over the year Stem Xin Metal and the month Branch Gui Water to reach Daymaster Jia Wood. Another way of saying this, is that we detect flow of Qi from Output to Wealth, over Power and Resource to arrive to Parallel. You can appreciate the smoothness and culmination.



Another progression of Qi flow is again from the birth month Si Snake, this time pouring over in Chen Dragon in the day Pillar, then to hour Branch You Rooster and finally Gui Water in the hour Stem to once more arrive at Daymaster. This flow of Qi again runs from Output to Wealth, over Power and Resource to Parallel. From this image we can deduce that this Daymaster will find his entire astrological environment working to confirm Daymaster. We will see how this may translate to everyday life. Having done this, we must, however, also consider Clashes, Pairings, Combinations and other formations between Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches.

If this Daymaster was your client, you would communicate the healthy flow of Qi, but you could be taking your reading a bit farther by pointing out the perhaps twofold function we may find coming from birth month Si Snake. Considering only the Major Gods contained in Earthly Branches, we know that the strongest element contained in Snake is Bing Fire (丙), which is Gracious Output and telling of his vision, the style in which he expresses himself, his projects. The Fire in Snake will now devote its capacity into two directions. We first note how Snake engenders year Branch Ox which contains Ji Earth (己) - Proper Wealth -, location hinting also to his more distant environment, perhaps his country. Then Snake will pour into day Branch Dragon, which contains Wu Earth (戊) - Unbecoming Wealth.

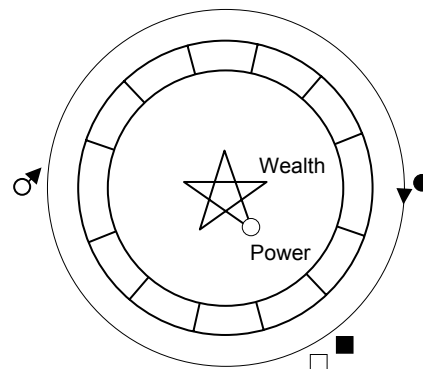
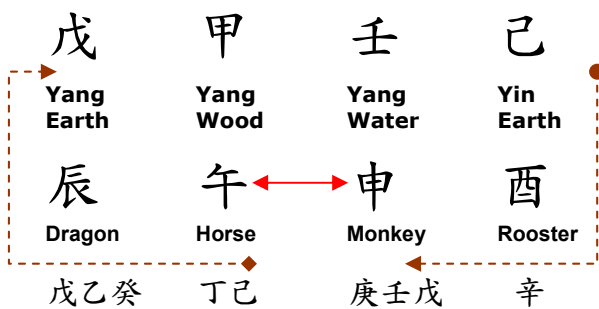
Reading Ba Zi fate from this style must be absolutely fabulous at least where we can point out that either Qi flow from Snake will eventually culminate in Gui Water, which to this Daymaster is Proper Resource. Daymaster is shouldered by Gui Water which tells us he is a scholar with great capacity to obtain - and offer - proper teachings. The adventure only continues as we now ask our client to tell us context, his career endeavors, whether he is married or not, so as to make further sense of the life events instigated by Snake Fire. Looking at the Proper Wealth in year Chou and the Unbecoming Wealth in day Chen we may suggest he is engaged in two careers, then contemplating on the function of either one of these careers - if we

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have to, also further distinguishing between a Dragon or Ox invoked career -, in an attempt to help Daymaster focus on the more appropriate one. It only becomes better where we then also note how the year Branch produces Proper Wealth and therefore the spouse element, so we may ask client to confirm his interest in working abroad, or if he has been engaged with a woman living in far away region, this last observation then carrying special significance if Daymaster is already married.

Apart from looking at smooth flow of Qi, but noting that, since Si Snake (Output) is so pertinent to all of this, we may further sidestep into examining the internal flow of Qi within Snake and we conclude that the Stems contained in Snake will eventually culminate in Daymaster's Power element, where the Major God contained in Snake is Bing Fire (丙), which will engender Wu Earth (戊), to then transfer into Geng Metal (庚). This will only set you into motion even more as in itself this may inspire you to suggest that Daymaster will be rather more ambitious (Geng Metal is Unbecoming Power) and you may try read details to the then antagonizing relations between the Geng Metal (noting also that Geng appears in Life Stage 1) and Jia Wood Daymaster, and you will have an idea on the true brightness of this type of fate reading.

On the other hand, internal Qi flow in a structure would be interrupted once we stumble into two controlling elements, or find elements either engaged in clash or caught up in a combination. We need also consider whether the then involved Qi will confirm the Useful God, the Annoying God and so forth, as we also further establish whether the flow of Qi stops at Resource, Parallel, Output, Wealth or Power. Here is an example of what could be clearly the chart of a corporate or political leader, Daymaster being both wealthy and authoritative. We find elements in controlling relationship between month Shen Monkey and day Wu Horse, which bodes antagonism between Fire and Metal, or Output and Power respectively. This suggests interruption in Qi flow and we ask Daymaster if he can confirm that at one point he broke ties with his family. We find several indications for gay tendency.



The flow of Qi shown along the Wuxing circle runs from the year Stem Yin Earth over the year Branch of You Rooster (Metal) to culminate into the month Branch of Shen Monkey (Metal) – showing Parallel flow between Rooster and Monkey. Another way of saying is, that the flow runs from Earth Wealth to Metal Power. The flow halts at Unbecoming Power. The source of the authority is the year Pillar, which would indicate Daymaster's ancestors and his country. He will be from a wealthy family and much of his wealth will come from his country. It then reaches the Parents Pillar, suggesting that Daymaster was born from influential parents, his Metal Power element firmly based. We can see that Daymaster is pre-occupied with money and business and that he will be obviously successful in these fields, because the second flow of Qi confirms that the person is wealthy. This second flow of Qi runs from the day Pillar Branch Wu Horse (Fire) over the hour Branch of Chen Dragon (Earth) to end in Yang Earth, again showing Parallel flow between Dragon and Yang Earth. This flow runs from Output to Wealth. This flow of Qi starts off in the marriage Pillar, indicating Daymaster's otherwise feeble marriage favors wealth.

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