

# Mastering the BaZi Basics



[www.sherrymerchant.com](http://www.sherrymerchant.com)

## Understanding the basics

In the course of my teaching journey, I have, time and time again, prepared many “prep lessons” for my students before they attend any of my classes, to make life easier for them in class.

This lesson is one of them, condensed for simplicity.

BaZi is a really fascinating topic and is the starting point of any Metaphysics study. With BaZi comes the understanding of the elements, which are the foundation upon which every metaphysical study is based.

This lesson is very flexible, and can be used as a foundation for whatever field or stream of metaphysics one is planning to further their studies in as it outlines the essential interaction of the elements, that are the building blocks of the system.

Once you master this, everything becomes simple to understand.

Of course, in order to interpret a BaZi chart, you need to know a lot more and if you are interested, you can “attend” my Bazi Bulls Eye, a comprehensive 6 day long BaZi class, that comes as a video recording you can watch online over and over again, of the actual class, its almost like being there in person!

It is accompanied by workbooks, diagrams, short-cut charts and so on. Email us for a sample of the class recording if you are interested in following this line.

Meanwhile, enjoy this section!

Sherry Merchant

## Understanding the basics

This section contains all the painful reading one must go through and has probably encountered a million times before, so let's get it out of the way. I have taken SOME of the information from Joey Yaps website directly as that is the most accurate and well written source. However, I have my own little comments at the end. Which you may pay heed to as well. Please read everything regardless.

### What is BaZi?

Your BaZi is a chart that is made using the date and time of one's birth. This chart outlines events and life-path that are in store for you in the future. The events are predetermined to some extent but can be modified by the effects of your environment and your own free will to some extent.

### What is the purpose of BaZi?

If your destiny is fixed, what is the point of knowing? It is very simple. If you don't have a map, how do you know or reach your destination. By having a map, the road may not change, but a map at least gives you the direction to take, choose the best route as it were. You don't have to try and pour water uphill, instead, BaZi advises you how to go along with the flow and take advantage of it as opposed to fighting your destiny. It gives you the power to make an INFORMED DECISION.

In simple terms BaZi is all about doing the right thing at the right time and being in the right place, to make the most of what destiny has in store for us.

### Essential Learning

#### I. Reading List:

Destiny Code

Destiny Code Revealed, both by Joey Yap  
These books will give you a fair idea of the subject and familiarize you with the terms we will be using throughout the class.

#### II. Get yourself access to any BaZi calculator,

Joey Yaps BaZi Ming Pan V2 is my top favourite. ([www.masteryacademy.com](http://www.masteryacademy.com))

**III. Know the characters:** I cannot tell you how important this is and anyone without that knowledge may as well be sitting in the class with earplugs and an eye mask. Hence the two pages that follow later should be printed out and practiced on ad nauseum. Even if you can't write them at first, at least learn to recognize them. Before you come to the class, you **must** be able to identify & write all 27 Chinese characters.



## Understanding the basics

There are a few letters you need to learn to at least recognize if not write, so as to be well acquainted with the Chinese Charts you will read from time to time. These are the bare minimum. Later you will find some practice pages as well to help you to write if you so desire.

### 10 Heavenly Stems

Chinese	Pinyin	Element
甲	Jia	Yang Wood
乙	Yi	Yin Wood
丙	Bing	Yang Fire
丁	Ding	Yin Fire
戊	Wu	Yang Earth
己	Ji	Yin Earth
庚	Geng	Yang Metal
辛	Xin	Yin Metal
壬	Ren	Yang Water
癸	Gui	Yin Water

### 12 Earthly Branches

Chinese	Pinyin	Element
子	Zi	Yang Water
丑	Chou	Yin Earth
寅	Yin	Yang wood
卯	Mao	Yin wood
辰	Chen	Yang Earth
巳	Si	Yin Fire
午	Wu	Yang Fire
未	Wei	Yin Earth
申	Shen	Yang Metal
酉	You	Yin Metal
戌	Xu	Yang Earth
亥	Hai	Yin Water

### Five Elements

Chinese	Pinyin	Element
木	Mu	Wood
水	Shui	Water
火	Huo	Fire
金	Jin	Metal
土	Tu	Earth

### Numbers

Chinese	English	Chinese	English
一	1	六	6
二	2	七	7
三	3	八	8
四	4	九	9
五	5	一十	10

# Getting to know the Language – Writing Practice

We need to know a few Chinese characters, 10 stems and 12 branches, that's all. Learning to say them aloud, and writing them will help. Use these pages to practice writing them or make flash cards and keep looking at them while saying the names aloud to familiarize yourself with these 22 characters. Print multiple pages and keep practicing...  
It is helpful to remember the sequence of the branches and stems, as they follow a particular cycle known as the production cycle.

## The Ten Heavenly Stems

Chinese	Pinyin	English				
甲	Jia	Yang wood	甲	甲	甲	
乙	Yi	Yin Wood	乙	乙	乙	
丙	Bing	Yang Fire	丙	丙	丙	
丁	Ding	Yin Fire	丁	丁	丁	
戊	Wu	Yang Earth	戊	戊	戊	
己	Ji	Yin Earth	己	己	己	
庚	Geng	Yang Metal	庚	庚	庚	
辛	Xin	Yin Metal	辛	辛	辛	
壬	Ren	Yang Water	壬	壬	壬	
癸	Gui	Yin Water	癸	癸	癸	

## Getting to know the Language – Writing Practice

### The 12 Earthly Branches

Chinese	Pinyin	English				
子	Zi	Rat	子	子	子	
丑	Chou	Ox	丑	丑	丑	
寅	Yin	Tiger	寅	寅	寅	
卯	Mao	Rabbit	卯	卯	卯	
辰	Chen	Dragon	辰	辰	辰	
巳	Si	Snake	巳	巳	巳	
午	Wu	Horse	午	午	午	
未	Wei	Goat	未	未	未	
申	Shen	Monkey	申	申	申	
酉	You	Rooster	酉	酉	酉	
戌	Xu	Dog	戌	戌	戌	
亥	Hai	Pig	亥	亥	亥	

## What a BaZi chart looks like

For those who are familiar with BaZi, skip this bit. For those for whom it is yet just a four letter word, BaZi is a chart of 8 Chinese characters, four “stems” stacked upon four “branches” to form four columns of pairs of stems & branches.

Stems are characters that represent one of 10 simple elements, well actually the 5 elements (fire, earth, metal, water, wood) in 2 polarities, Yin and Yang.

You see two charts here, the top one is called the basic natal chart and tells the story of one's life, and journey, that begins today, is to know where to look and how to unlock that world of wisdom contained in these innocuous little 8 characters.

A BaZi chart looks something like the picture below. The lower chart is what is called “luck pillars” which represent your life in ten year stages, each stage is known as a luck pillar. Now you know what a BaZi chart looks like.

Each column or “pillar” is formed by different aspects, reading from the right to the left, it's the Year, Month, Day & Hour of birth. Each of these points in time are represented by a “pillar” or a “Jia Zi”. Collectively they form your NATAL chart.

JOEY YAP.COM				Hour Pillar	Day Pillar	Month Pillar	Year Pillar	Heaven Stems 天干	Earth Branches 地支
JoeYap BaZi Ming Pan™ Professional Four Pillars Calculator for Destiny Analysis				Direct Officer 官 Jia Yang Wood	元日 日 Ji Yin Earth	Seven Killings 殺 Yi Yin Wood	Eating God 食 Xin Yin Metal		
Personal Particulars				甲 Yang Wood	己 Yin Earth	乙 Yin Wood	辛 Yin Metal		
Name: barac O Sex: Male Date of birth: 4 Aug 1961 Time of birth: 19:16 Country of birth: U.S.A. Self element: Yin Earth Celestial Animal: Ox Noble People: Monkey, Rat Emptiness: 戌亥				戌 Dog Yang Earth	巳 Snake Yin Fire	未 Goat Yin Earth	丑 Ox Yin Earth		
Elemental Values 金 木 水 火 土 4 3 1 3 5 Regulating Useful God 癸 丙				丁戌辛	庚丙戌	乙己丁	辛己癸		
Remarks									
震 生 氣 天 醫 延 年 伏 位 禍 害 五 鬼 六 煞 絕 命 卦 3 S N SE E SW NW NE W									

89	79	69	59	49	39	29	19	9
Bing 印 丙 Yang Fire	Ding P 丁 Yin Fire	Wu 劫 戊 Yang Earth	Ji 比 己 Yin Earth	Geng 傷 庚 Yang Metal	Xin 食 辛 Yin Metal	Ren 財 壬 Yang Water	Gui 才 癸 Yin Water	Jia 官 甲 Yang Wood
Xu 戌 Dog Yang Earth	Hai 亥 Pig Yin Water	Zi 子 Rat Yang Water	Chou 丑 Ox Yin Earth	Yin 寅 Tiger Yang Wood	Mao 卯 Rabbit Yin Wood	Chen 辰 Dragon Yang Earth	Si 巳 Snake Yin Fire	Wu 午 Horse Yang Fire
丁戌辛	壬甲	癸	辛己癸	戊甲丙	乙	癸戊乙	庚丙戊	丁己

Luck Pillars 大運								
--------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

# Understanding the basics – Location of Stems & Branches

What is a stem?		
Chinese	Pinyin	Element
甲	Jia	Yang Wood
乙	Yi	Yin Wood
丙	Bing	Yang Fire
丁	Ding	Yin Fire
戊	Wu	Yang Earth
己	Ji	Yin Earth
庚	Geng	Yang Metal
辛	Xin	Yin Metal
壬	Ren	Yang Water
癸	Gui	Yin Water

What is a Branch?		
Chinese	Pinyin	Element
子	Zi	Yang Water
丑	Chou	Yin Earth
寅	Yin	Yang wood
卯	Mao	Yin wood
辰	Chen	Yang Earth
巳	Si	Yin Fire
午	Wu	Yang Fire
未	Wei	Yin Earth
申	Shen	Yang Metal
酉	You	Yin Metal
戌	Xu	Yang Earth
亥	Hai	Yin Water



## What is a Jia Zi

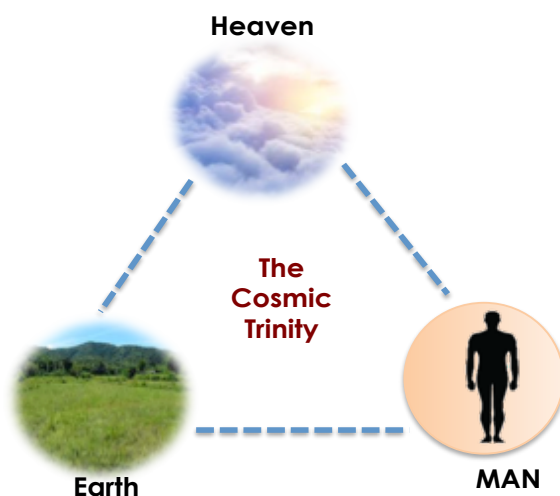
One stem pairs with one branch to make a pair known as a Jia Zi, since the first pair that forms is Jia Zi.

In a Jia Zi, both the stem and branch have the same polarity.

12 stems combine with 10 branches in sequence thereby producing 60 such pairs.

甲子 Jia Zi	甲戌 Jia Xu	甲申 Jia Shen	甲午 Jia Wu	甲辰 Jia Chen	甲寅 Jia Yin
乙丑 Yi Chou	乙亥 Yi Hai	乙酉 Yi You	乙未 Yi Wei	乙巳 Yi Si	乙卯 Yi Mao
丙寅 Bing Yin	丙子 Bing Zi	丙戌 Bing Xu	丙申 Bing Shen	丙午 Bing Wu	丙辰 Bing Chen
丁卯 Ding Mao	丁丑 Ding Chou	丁亥 Ding Hai	丁酉 Ding You	丁未 Ding Wei	丁巳 Ding Si
戊辰 Wu Chen	戊寅 Wu Yin	戊子 Wu Zi	戊戌 Wu Xu	戊申 Wu Shen	戊午 Wu Wu
己巳 Ji Si	己卯 Ji Mao	己丑 Ji Chou	己亥 Ji Hai	己酉 Ji You	己未 Ji Wei
庚午 Geng Wu	庚辰 Geng Chen	庚寅 Geng Yin	庚子 Geng Zi	庚戌 Geng Xu	庚申 Geng Shen
辛未 Xin Wei	辛巳 Xin Si	辛卯 Xin Mao	辛丑 Xin Chou	辛亥 Xin Hai	辛酉 Xin You
壬申 Ren Shen	壬午 Ren Wu	壬辰 Ren Chen	壬寅 Ren Yin	壬子 Ren Zi	壬戌 Ren Xu
癸酉 Gui You	癸未 Gui Wei	癸巳 Gui Si	癸卯 Gui Mao	癸丑 Gui Chou	癸亥 Gui Hai

## Understanding the basics - The Cosmic Trinity



Our life is influenced by three kinds of luck, which form the COSMIC TRINITY. Roughly a third is influenced by our BaZi, (Heaven Luck), another third by the influence our environment exerts on us (Feng Shui aspect) and the last third is Man Luck, which relates to our conscious decision making power, aspects that WE have control over.

In Feng Shui, yin and yang takes on a different dimension. The mountain or landscape, which is unmoving and still is classified as Yin. The rivers, sea or lakes which contains active, moving water, is classified as Yang. Thus, a general rule for an ideal site would be a place where the rivers and hills converge harmoniously – a matrimonial combination of yin and yang. Of course, this goes further on as we start to analyze the qualities of the mountain (be it edged, sharp, rocky or undulating) and water (be it rushing, fierce, loud, calm or still).

### **Heaven Luck:**

The talents that you are born with, potentials and the capacity to make the most of your potential. Your family background, health condition and where you are born is also determined by Heaven Luck.

### **Man Luck:**

The actions that you take to capitalize upon your potential also opportuneness that may present themselves. Your education, perseverance, beliefs and principle also from the basis of your man luck.

### **Earth Luck:**

The area in which you reside This is what is known as Feng Shui. Your external environment, where you work and where your house is located all plays a a role in your earth Luck.



**From Joey Yaps article:** There exist two opposing and interrelating forces in our Universe. Yin and Yang are natural forms of energy that are in a constant state of change, movement and interaction. This dynamic relationship creates and governs all life. From Birth, Growth, Sickness and Death, the stages of existence are in constant evolution. The interaction of Yin and Yang is reflected by Night and Day, Positive and Negative, Active and Passive, Hard and Soft, Fast and Slow, Male and Female, Hot and Cold, Anger and Happiness, and so forth. We can see this interplay in nature in the form of the 4 seasons where yang is reflected as the peak of summer and yin in the coldness of winter. Yin and Yang are therefore the two primordial forms of Qi. The interaction between Yin and Yang subsequently relates to the Five Phases of Qi. These are later known as the Five Elements.

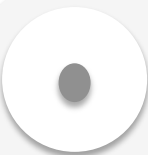
### Where does Yin & Yang come from?

Chinese sages state that the Tao or Tai Ji comes from the Great Void (Nothingness). The great void is known as the WuJi. The WuJi is the netherworld of all creation and the pure land of all wisdom and life in the Universe.

## Understanding the basics - Yang & Yin



The Wuji is depicted as a circle. This expression was meant to Symbolize the all encompassing, completeness, entirety and all existence. Its picture can be interpreted as being empty or as a whole. This is the concept of the Wuji.



Within the Wuji there comes existence and that is symbolized as the DOT in the circle. This is called the Taiji – the great limit with the unlimited. The Taiji is the boundary that encompasses substance and matter in the universe.



The Taiji subsequently produces Yin and Yang, the Dual forces.

For our purpose, it is important to remember that Yin and Yang do not represent gender but POLARITY.

Yin is not bad and Yang is not good or vice-versa. It is a difference of polarity and perception, one is a mirror image of the other, and we need both.

Throughout all metaphysical studies, the importance of Yin & Yang cannot be disregarded. It is the tool that brings balance, order, harmony & equilibrium to any situation. If a chart has a balance of Yin & Yang, an individual is capable of facing situations much more easily than someone with a chart that is imbalanced. Too Yin or too Yang is IMBALANCE.

Overly Yin charts turn Yang & Overly Yang charts turn to Yin.

## Understanding the basics – Five Elements

### The 5 elements

The basis of all metaphysical studies begins with the 5 elements. These 5 elements are like the basic ATOMS in science, and they form molecules, mixtures, solutions and compounds, so to speak, when thrown together with each other and result in chemical reactions, so to speak, and that is what BaZi is all about, the interaction of these basic 5 elements with one another.

These 5 elements are:

### Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water

There is a particular order that is always followed as I have set out above and that is the "Production Cycle"

A short version (long one follows)

**Wood burns to produce fire;** easy to visualize a log fire? That's it.

**Fire burns to produce earth:** Ashes to ashes dust to dust...visualize a dead body in a crematorium. Turning to dust that returns to the earth. Like ghouls? At least you won't forget this example!

**Earth produces metal:** Think of gold mining, exactly that image. Metal buried in dirt, coming out of the bowels of the earth...and all the effort that goes with it. (Soon we will discuss the process too, very interesting)

**Metal produces water:** that's a tough one to describe, but think of metal attracting water, when you pour cold water in a metal tumbler and the tumbler gets beads of sweat on the outside... production? Not exactly, attraction? Maybe. In any case we now have water where earlier there was none, so another variety of PRODUCTION.

**Water produces wood:** so easy, think of watering a plant. So simple..... No, not that simple, now the first complication:

**Each of these 5 elements then are further divided into two polarities, YIN and Yang.** So we have: Yin Fire and Yang Fire, **and** Yin Earth and Yang Earth and so on.

Traditional metaphysics does not lay emphasis on the fact that the Polarity or Yin and Yang of each element makes such a difference to the character and quality of each element that in fact, they are actually 10 distinct elements, each with a mind of their own. Take for example: Yang fire is the Sun. Yin Fire is a candle flame. Now the common factor is that both generate heat, but see the differences: The sun does not need a source, but a flame needs wood to burn, hence one

## Understanding the basics – Five Elements

ELEMENT	IMAGE	COLOUR	SHAPE	NUMBER
Yang Wood	Trees	Dark green	Log	3
Yin Wood	Grass	Pale green	Log	4
Yang Fire	Sun	Red, orange, purple pink	Triangle	9
Yin Fire	Candle flame	Red, orange, purple pink	Triangle	9
Yang Earth	Mountain	Brown	Flat	8
Yin Earth	Field	Brown	Flat	2
Yang Metal	Axe	Black grey	Round	6
Yin Metal	Gold	White silver	Round	7
Yang Water	Ocean	Blue	Wavy	1
Yin Water	Pond	Blue	Wavy	1

Fire is totally dependent on resource to exist while the other does not.....and so on. We will discuss this in detail later in this lesson. You will now agree that clubbing both the sun (Yang fire) and a flame (Yin fire) as the element (one of the 5 elements) FIRE is meaningless as they are so very different. I prefer to refer to them as the 10 elements, and will do so as we go along.

When we speak about elements, we are not actually referring to the physical element but energy or Qi that replicates the behavior of these elements. They are, so to speak, factors that behave like physical elements, and react to each other as the real physical element would and produce those very same, for lack of a better word, VIRTUAL results.

Instead of getting confused, as it will take a while to actually wrap your head around these very abstract concepts, just learn, Yang wood is a tree, and its color is green, for the moment. Next we will give it its Chinese name and character, for now, this is enough.

I will be using color as I feel it makes stuff easier to remember. In metaphysics, we associate color and shape with each element so I will add these factors in as well as I like to be flexible with information and this may be useful to you in other variants like Yi Jing, Feng Shui etc. The same with numbers so here is a very basic chart that you need to memorize by heart.

Now in BaZi, only the first two columns matter, the rest in FYI but recommended to be learnt. This is the first half of 5 elements, and the rest will follow shortly.

## Understanding the basics - The 10 Heavenly Stems

### LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO THE STAR CAST.....

In BaZi, the chart is completely made up of stems, either appearing solo in the top layer, where they are known as stems, or appearing under a branch, again either solo, or with one or two other stems, collectively known as hidden stems. For now, we are dealing with the 10 stems only so if you are confused, we can sort that out in the next lesson, for now, just 10 stems.

In all branches of Chinese Metaphysics the Ten Stems are of crucial importance. Even the 12 branches consist of one, two or three of these stems and, and these stems are represented by fixed directions in Feng Shui.



Although we don't technically use directions on the 24 mountain ring in BaZi, viewing the stems on a **24 mountain** ring is always easy (more so when we go to the special relationships) and throughout this course I will be using the 24 mountain ring so, it will be good if you familiarize yourself with the ring henceforth. There are totally 10 stems and they follow the production cycle.

Traditionally one begins with JIA 甲 and ends with GUI 癸. However, if we were to make a circle of eternity then GUI 癸 would automatically loop and make a production cycle by joining up to Jia 甲.

I assume by now you are all familiar with the Chinese characters for the 10 stems. If not, this is a great place to begin. Henceforth I will be adding in the Chinese symbols just to get you slowly used to them.



## Understanding the basics - The 10 Heavenly Stems

There are 8 stems on the **24 mountain** ring, and they lie on either side of the four cardinals Wu 午(S2), You 酉(W2), Zi 子(N2), and Mao 卯(E2).

I AM COLOUR CODING SO YOU GET IT FASTER:

They go in the order of first yang and next yin if you are looking at it from the clock wise direction. Do take a look at each of these on the 24 mountain chart so you begin getting familiar with them all.

We have

**BING** 丙 (yang fire) and **DING** 丁 (yin fire) in the south on either side of Wu 午(S2) or the horse direction,

**GENG** 庚 (yang metal) and **XIN** 辛 (yin metal) in the west, on either side of YOU 酉(W2) or the Rooster direction,

**REN** 壬 (yang water) and **GUI** 癸 (yin water) in the north on either side of Zi 子(N2) or the Rat direction and

**JIA** 甲 (yang wood) and **YI** 乙 (yin wood) in the east, on either side of Mao 卯(E2) or the Rabbit direction.

**WHAT ABOUT "EARTH"?** In Ba Zi we have ten stems and here we have accounted only for the eight mentioned, so what about earth?

Remember in the Lo Shu we have 5 in the central palace, (no direction), well it's the same in the 24 mountains, we **assume** that the earth stems go in the middle and for quick reference we depict it like this.

**Joey Yap says** "earth stems go in the middle", so that's it.

Wu 戊 is Yang earth (do not confuse this with the Wu 午 that is the horse and element Fire) Ji 己 is Yin earth.

Now for some practice, just to get it right. You may think this is kindergarten methodology, but I find it worked for me, and will surely work for you.



- Please highlight the Yin and Yang stems.
- Do this again and again till you get it right. Use color as much as possible as it is very helpful in the beginning.
- Begin at JIA 1甲 (Yang Wood). Follow the clockwise order on the 24 mountain chart with the insertion of Wu 戊 (Yang Earth) and Ji 己 (Yin Earth) which comes in the center between fire and metal.



## Heavenly stems in the 24 mountains chart.



You are now going to wonder, that if earth has no direction, then how does it fit in?

Well it follows the production cycle so let's do this one more time:

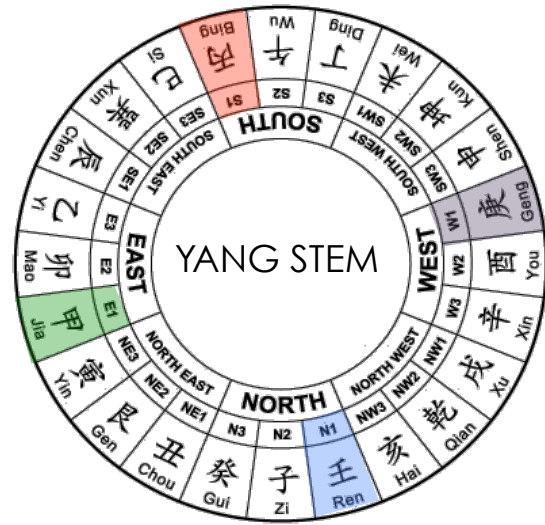
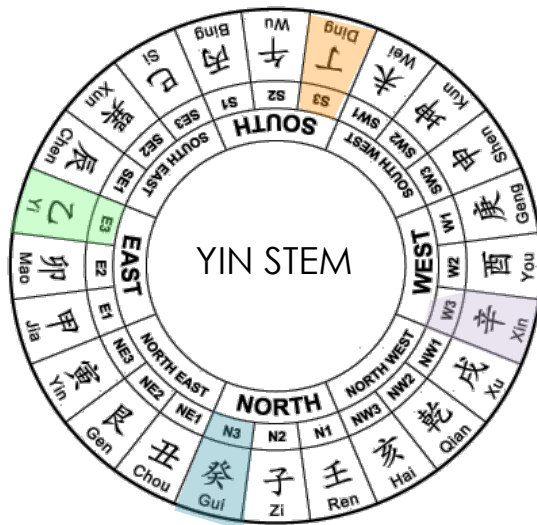
- Wood produces Fire (East clockwise to South)
- Fire produces Earth. (South detour to the Center)
- Earth produces Metal (Center to the West)
- Metal produces Water (West to the North, again clockwise)
- Water produces Wood (North to the East)

So, tucked between fire and metal on the 24 mountain ring, we take a slight detour for earth!

Once again, let me remind you that we don't use the 24 mountains in BaZi, but I am using it as a tool to help you understand it better, as my teaching style is a bit different so at this stage, please bear with me. Now take the time to be sure that you know which the 10 stems are and where they lie on the 24 mountain ring and all the qualities that we discussed in the earlier Lesson.

In the next lesson we will discuss the nature of each of the 10 stems so we end up knowing them like individuals.

## Understanding the basics - The 10 Heavenly Stems



- The 10 **Heavenly Stems** are like Clothes and appear on the surface. Stems appear in the top row of the Ba Zi chart.
- Stems are visible and obvious, and generally give the impression that is obvious or what you see at first glance.
- Stems show the apparent, while branches show what is actual, it's the reality.
- What you **see** is in the stems, what you **get** is in the branches.
- Each rotation of the earth is represented by a stem (day). The elements are not five but, five into two polarities. That is TEN elements in reality.
- Of the ten stems, 5 (YI 乙, DING 丁, JI 己, XIN 辛 GUI 癸) are yin and 5 (JIA 甲, BING 丙, WU 戊, GENG 庚 & REN 壬) are yang. Yin and yang are only indications of polarity. Yin is not weak and Yang is not strong. They are equal in strength, just different in the type of strength each one exudes. Yin and yang only denotes the NATURE OF THE STRENGTH.
- Yin is more flexible BUT it is not weaker than yang. If yin is timely, a yin stem can be stronger than a yang stem.
- Each stem has qualities that are inborn and indicative of its strengths and weaknesses. They are visible and have an obvious character.
- Stems do not contain time (unless they are rooted). Branches carry an element of time.

## Understanding the basics - The 10 Heavenly Stems

- 1 Stem = 1 day.
- Stems represent the prevailing Qi.
- The elements have two polarities, each have their own special qualities that are different. Selection of the RIGHT element is important.
- Problems with stems are temporary.  
Chinese is a pictorial language based on characters.
- In order to know and understand the **Ten Heavenly Stems**, you must have an **image** in your mind. IF you don't have an image, you will not be able to understand as well.
- When you convert Heavenly Stems into pictures, we can see the quality of a chart. When you look at a Ba Zi chart, it will seem like a painting and slowly you will see the fine details. At the first look it will be difficult.
- Of course you will see the characters. But, unless you convert them into pictures, give them the elemental values; recognize them as "individuals" in that chart and know how they present themselves, then you can start appreciating this art. And that art will explain the qualities of that person.

Understanding the basics - A brief description of the TEN STEMS

<div>JIA 甲</div> <div>3</div> <div>East 1</div>	<p><b>Yang Wood:</b> Big thick wood, large tree trunks, wood pillars, strong, solid and very sturdy more independent, stubborn, persistent, deeply rooted.</p> <p>Wood requires BING 丙 fire, (the sun) to grow. It grows in North; its resource (GUI 癸 water, rain). Wood also needs the earth (JI 己) to grow. Wood conquers JI by using it for support. An appearance of control with JI is harmonious because JIA 甲 + JI 己 = EARTH.</p> <p>It also requires XIN 辛 metal (Sentimental) to carve it into an object of beauty, GENG 庚 is merciless as in the process wood is destroyed. People of wood Day Master are very versatile.</p>
<div>YI 乙</div> <div>4</div> <div>East 3</div>	<p><b>Yin Wood:</b> Green twigs, leaves, flowers, grass, twine, objects of beauty. Secretive, grows without you noticing.</p> <p>These are weak wood and always need support to grow. (No Backbone). Can use fire better hence is more radiant or prosperous. A twig can catch fire at once.</p> <p>Sometimes requires XIN 辛 to render it useful. GENG 庚 is overkill. Will find its way to the sun. also needs GUI 癸 and JI 己。</p>
<div>BING 丙</div> <div>9</div> <div>South 1</div>	<p>It has to be seen in the upper stems position.</p> <p>Should be born in the day time and be there to warm a chart. A BING 丙 person born in the daytime will have different qualities from one born at night, as the sun does not shine at night. Can warm metal and is required to bring warmth to cold pillars. Eg. If there is too much water in winter (but too much kills wood).</p> <p>BING 丙 cannot produce earth, but can help earth to produce metal and can actually nourish the growth of wood. Needs NOTHING. Cannot be controlled by REN 壬. GUI 癸 can control BING.</p> <p><b>Yang Fire:</b> Fire of the Sun.</p> <p><b>One SUN</b> is enough. Every chart needs BING 丙, it is required to render a chart useful.</p>

Understanding the basics - A brief description of the TEN STEMS

<p>DING 丁</p> <p>9</p> <p>South 3</p>	<p><b>Yin Fire:</b> Fire of the cauldron, Candle's fire, used to forge or create metal.</p> <p>Not useful in the presence of Bing, as in bright sunlight it is of no use. It cannot shine. However, in darkness it can provide light.</p> <p>Heats/ trains metal. NEEDS resource, but, the wood has to be in good condition.</p>
<p>WU 戊</p> <p>8</p> <p>Centre</p>	<p><b>Yang Earth:</b> Mountain, Boulder, big hard rocks, riverbeds. A dam makes it usable. Can contain water.</p> <p>WU 戊 does not need anything to grow. To become useful, Wu 戊 needs wood to "aerate" it.</p> <p>Does not need to be produced. Independent people. Fire hardens earth therefore when there is too much fire, it dries out. Can produce metal with great difficulty.</p> <p>WU 戊 Day Master cannot be moved. They obstruct others and expect others to move around them.</p>
<p>Ji 己</p> <p>2</p> <p>Centre</p>	<p><b>Yin Earth:</b> Soft soil of the earth, sand, mud, paddy fields, is yielding earth. It does not need anything to grow.</p> <p>Needs wood to be controlled, in order to make it useful and productive. Ji can produce metal. (When it is not wet) and plants but cannot hold or contain water. It can become "muddy water" as a result of interaction with water.</p> <p>For earth people, (2 &amp; 8) and earth Day Master, Fire <i>appears</i> to produce, or help earth. More fire is more irritation. Only a show.</p>
<p>GENG 庚</p> <p>6</p> <p>West 1</p>	<p><b>Yang Metal:</b> Raw, unusable metal, machinery, heavy tools, weapons, axe, sword. Geng 庚 can be used to chop wood.</p> <p>This metal cannot be used without being trained or forged. It likes to be controlled and NEEDS Ding.</p>

<b>XIN 辛</b> <b>7</b> <b>West 3</b>	<b>Yin Metal:</b> Jewelry (good for performance) Penknife, chisel: cannot do hard work, cannot be controlled by Bing 丙, need to make use of others.  This type slowly cutting wood means long term money.
<b>REN 壬</b> <b>1</b> <b>North 1</b>	<b>Yang Water:</b> River, sea, lake, big pools of water. Use to flush out. Cannot be used to grow wood. It needs to be controlled by Wu 戊(Yang Earth). Will confuse or contaminate Ji 己 (Yin Earth).
<b>GUI 癸</b> <b>1</b> <b>North 3</b>	<b>Yin Water:</b> Rain, mist, cloud. Use to control fire.  Cannot be controlled or flush out anything.  Used to nourish wood element. Waters plants.  Yin water (rain) can make the dry earth usable. Can counter BING 丙.

## Understanding the basics - The 12 Earthly Branches.

Now that you are familiar with the 24 mountain ring, and hopefully know where the 10 stems lie, let us locate the 12 branches on the same ring. This makes it easier to memorize and recollect later on. Every alternate mountain on the 24 mountain ring consists of an Earthly Branch. I suppose you have gathered by now that the ring has 24 divisions each called a “mountain”.

In BaZi we refer to the 12 Earthly Branches as another major component of the chart, and all of them are present in the 24 mountain ring. None in the middle here, just every alternate mountain and that's all.

An animal sign – often referred to as the Chinese Zodiac, represents each of the 12 Branches. The animal's names are merely representative and do not indicate or attribute that animal's quality to the person or their behavior or attributes.

The animals indicate elements. An animal means nothing. It was used to help uneducated people understand how to represent and identify the quality of Qi.

A branch itself has no particular qualities based on its animal name; so a “pig” is not necessarily a dirty animal, unlike a stem that has very distinct attributes.

A branch is like a wrapping under which one, two or three STEMS reside.

Each branch holds 1 to 3 hidden elements (represented by the stems also known as HIDDEN STEMS because they appear UNDER the branch in a chart.)

When you say Hai 亥 (Pig) you are actually seeing its hidden stem Yang WATER, as well as Yang wood. It has absolutely no qualities of an actual pig, the animal.

Each stem is divided into dominant influences known as main Qi and gives the branch its primary “flavor” and sub-Qi, and the secondary and in some cases also the tertiary flavor.

We now understand that each of the 12 Branches carry certain elemental attributes called “Hidden Stems” which indicate what is within. It is very important to know the hidden stems because when you read the pillars, you actually read the hidden stems.

## Understanding the basics - The 12 Earthly Branches.

The description by way of the animal is totally meaningless. The main qi is contained in the “Hidden Stems” of the branches. They are the feet of the chart.

The hidden element, or Hidden Stem, detail can be found in any elementary Ba Zi book and we shall look at them for added insight. In a BaZi chart the stems lie on the top row and indicate what is within, from the external or superficial aspect. Branches and the hidden stems actually tell you what is contained within.

***A branch contains the quality of time and season and can represent a Year, Month, Day and Hour. A stem does not have these qualities, they are simply representative of a singular type of energy.***

**TRIVIA:** Each branch represents an hour of the day (2 normal hours make one Chinese hour hence; there are 12 hours in a Chinese day). The revolution of the earth around the sun is divided into 12 phases. Each Branch also represents a month.

The chart on the following page is a summary of all we need to know. Locate each of the branches on the 24 mountain ring so you can remember it. Again I have color coded it so that you can remember which season each branch belongs to.

You will notice that there is no season of earth, its not a mistake, explanation in the class on that one.



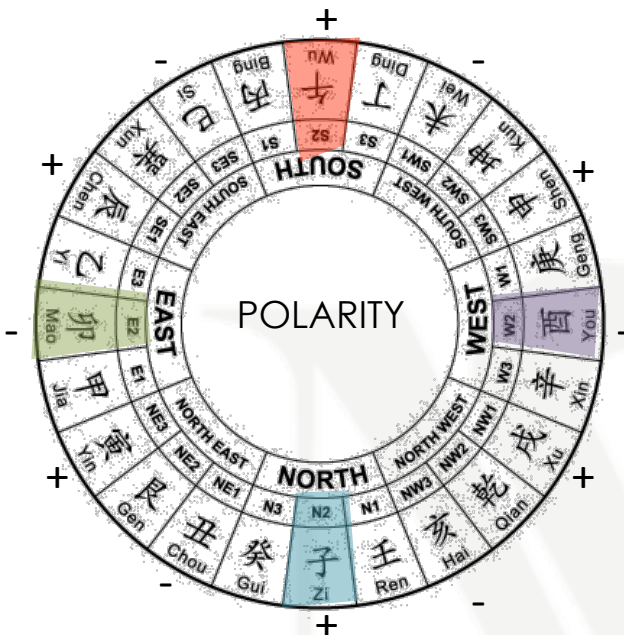
Understanding the basics – yin & Yang of 12 Earthly Branches.

Branch	Animal Sign	Chinese	Polarity	Element	Season	Month
Yin	Tiger	寅	Yang	Wood	Spring	February
Mao	Rabbit	卯	Yin	Wood		March
Chen	Dragon	辰	Yang	Earth		April
Si	Snake	巳	Yin	Fire	Summer	May
Wu	Horse	午	Yang	Fire		June
Wei	Goat	未	Yin	Earth		July
Shen	Monkey	申	Yang	Metal	Autumn	August
You	Rooster	酉	Yin	Metal		September
Xu	Dog	戌	Yang	Earth		October
Hai	Pig	亥	Yin	Water	Winter	November
Zi	Rat	子	Yang	Water		December
Chou	Ox	丑	Yin	Water		January



## Cardinals – Skyhorses - Graveyards

Now that you are familiar with the 12 Earthly branches, let's find out what stems come under each branch. Picture each branch as a container, with no Qi of its own. Its Qi (quality) comes from its contents. All branches contain Qi based on a specific pattern. In class I will show you the pattern, for the moment just try to memorize this pattern. Get these concepts clear from the start so eventually it all falls into place.



• **All branches have a polarity**, they can be either Yin or Yang. They alternate in sequence, Yin-Yang-Yin-Yang and so on.

Starting with the Tiger who is Yang polarity, go clockwise and put the + sign against the tiger, then - sign against the rabbit and so on. Now you know which branches are yin and which branches are Yang.

• **Each branch belongs to a group**: a branch can be one of many groupings and it is important to remember all these groupings. The hidden stems are based on these groupings. Once you know the pattern, you can always calculate the hidden stems of each branch. The groups are as follows:

1. Cardinal, Sky Horse, Graveyard
2. Seasons
3. Frames
4. Element

The first basic division is the **CARDINALS**, not to be mistaken for the aspirer for the Popes position!

The cardinals are the 4 determinants of each quadrant of the 24 mountain ring.

They are also where the pure north, south, east and west reside.

They are the dominant element of each quadrant. Each quadrant can also be identified by its season, the branches on either side along with the cardinal makes up a **season**.

## Cardinals – Skyhorses - Graveyards



They are also where the pure north, south, east and west reside.

They are the dominant element of each quadrant. Each quadrant can also be identified by its season, the branches on either side along with the cardinal makes up a **season**.

The next category is the **sky horse**. These 4 appear in the first month of each season. They are also known as the STABLES (storage space of horses)

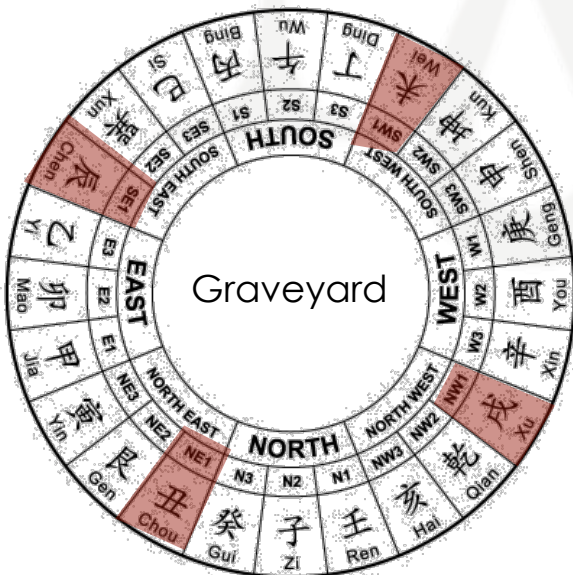
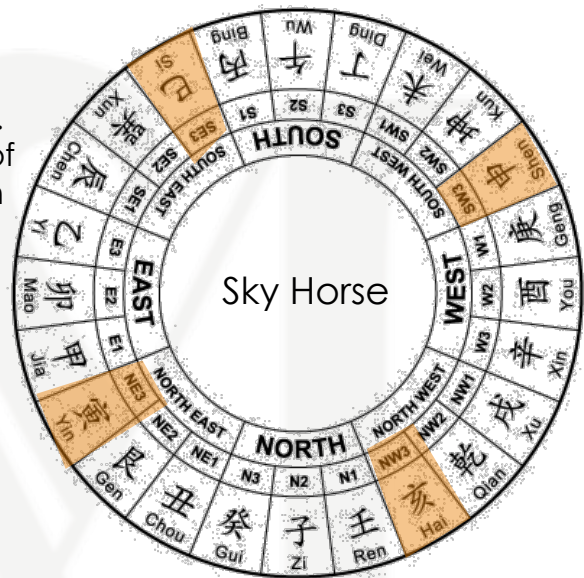
These months are:

Yin 寅(Tiger) February

Si 巳(Snake) May

Shen 申(Monkey) August

Hai 亥(Pig) November



The next category is the **Graveyard**. These 4 appear in the last month of each season. They are also known as the Storages. **These months are:**

Chen (Dragon) April

Wei (Goat) July

Xu (Dog) October

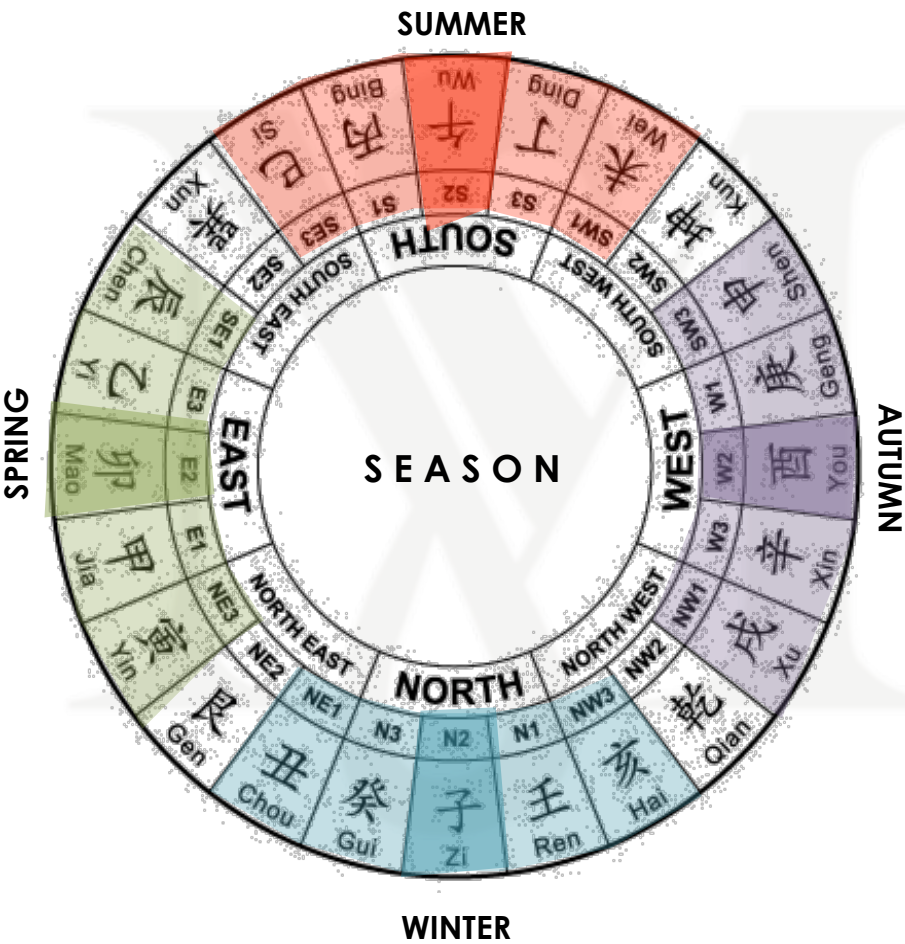
Chou (Ox) January

# Understanding the basics - The Seasons.

The seasons are formed as per the directions so, all 3 branches (Yin, Mao, Chen) in the East are SPRING, all 3 branches (Si, Wu, Wei) in the south are SUMMER, all 3 branches (Shen, You, Xu) in the west are AUTUMN all 3 branches (Hai, Zi, Chou) in the north are WINTER.

HERE WE DISREGARD THE SUB-CARDINAL DIRECTIONS AND ONLY LOOK AT 4 QUADRANTS, NAMELY North, South, East & West.

We have now accounted for all the 12 branches, and here we can see clearly color coded, the 4 seasons as they appear in the chart.





# Understanding the basics - The Seasons.

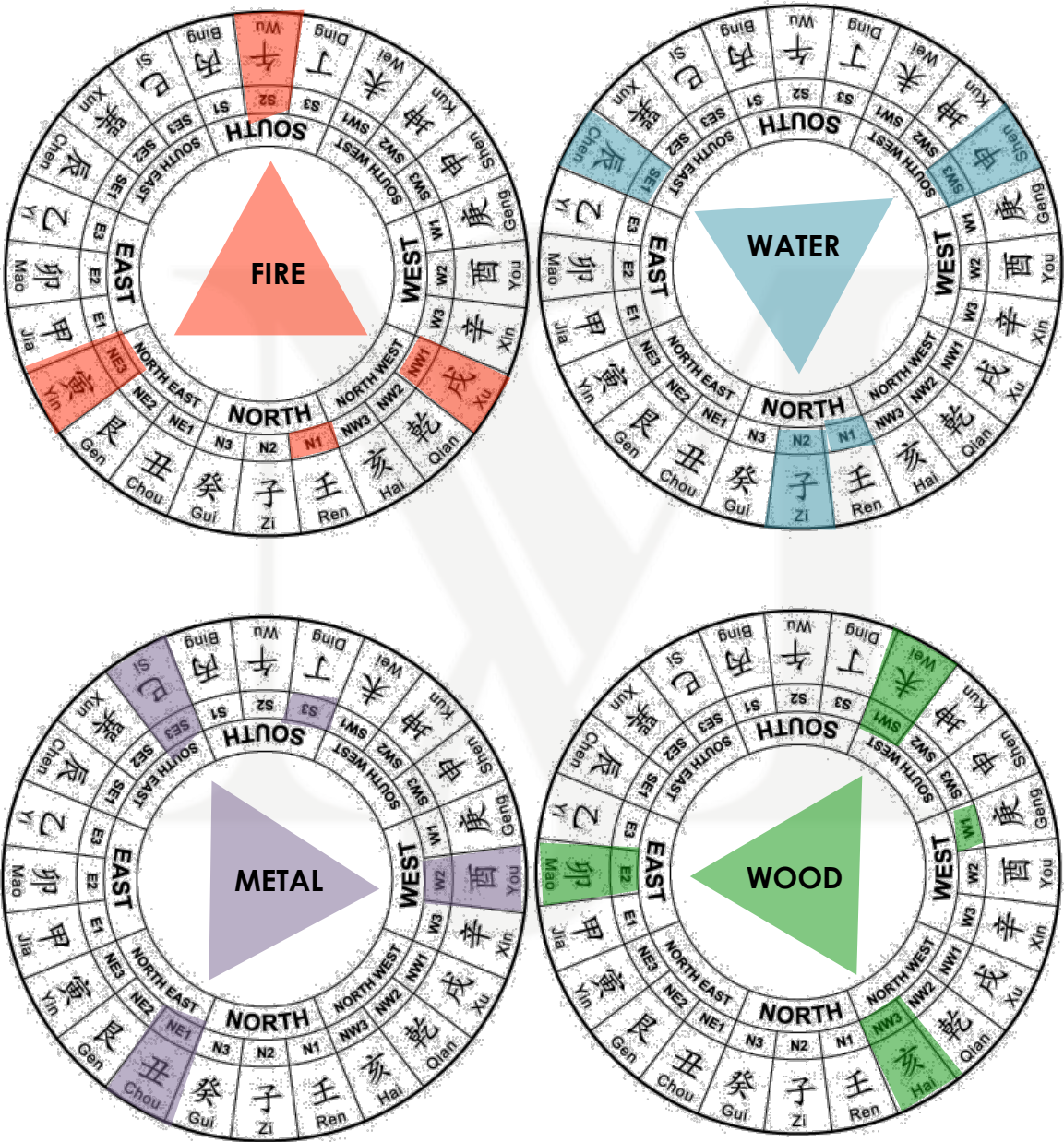
## Grouping by the Four Frames:

A branch can also be part of a *frame*.

There are four frames, each determined by the element of the cardinal present in that frame.

Each frame is a set containing one each of the cardinal, the sky horse and the graveyard.

I have color coded and pictorially represented each of these frames for you.



## Understanding the basics - The Seasons.

Season	Pinyin	Chinese	English Name	Main Qi	Secondary Qi	Tertiary Qi
Spring	Yin	寅	Tiger	甲	丙	戊
	Mao	卯	Rabbit	乙		
	Chen	辰	Dragon	戊	乙	癸
Summer	Si	巳	Snake	丙	戊	
	Wu	午	Horse	丁	己	
	Wei	未	Goat	己	丁	
Autumn	Shen	申	Monkey	庚	乙	
	You	酉	Rooster	辛		
	Xu	戌	Dog	戊	辛	丁
Winter	Hai	亥	Pig	壬	甲	
	Zi	子	Rat	子		
	Chou	丑	Ox	己	癸	辛

### Element:

Each branch is dominated by an element.

Only 3 branches contain a pure element, all the others contain two or more elements that which are derived from their HIDDEN STEMS.

Each stem is derived in a different manner depending on whether the branch is a cardinal, a graveyard or a sky horse.

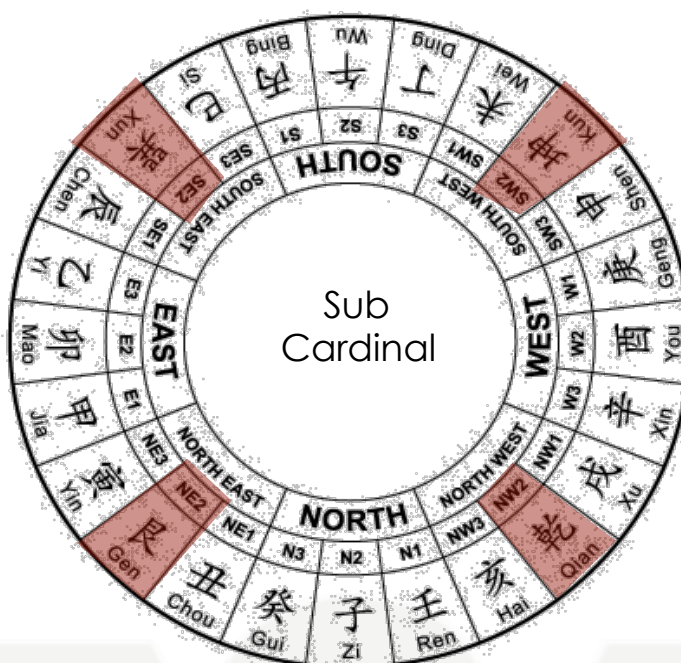
For now, just remember the hidden stems and if you feel up to it, look for a pattern yourself. If you can't find it, then just remember them by heart. Understand each kind of grouping and make sure that you remember all of them.

### AND WHAT IS LEFT OUT?

We have accounted for the 10 stems and the 12 branches, we have 24 mountains. So how do we tie it all up?

We have 12 branches, 8 stems (remember the two earth ones don't actually appear in the 24 mountain ring) so the 4 remaining ones are the **sub cardinals**.

They have no hidden element, don't carry time factor like the branches or any particular characteristic apart from being the anchor of the 4 Sub Cardinal trigrams.



In fact they don't enter any BaZi chart at all. I have specified this so you don't get confused while looking at the 24 mountain ring and start wondering who these imposters are.

For practice, try printing out the following page, make several copies, and use your color pens to highlight the sets as marked so you get really smart at this.

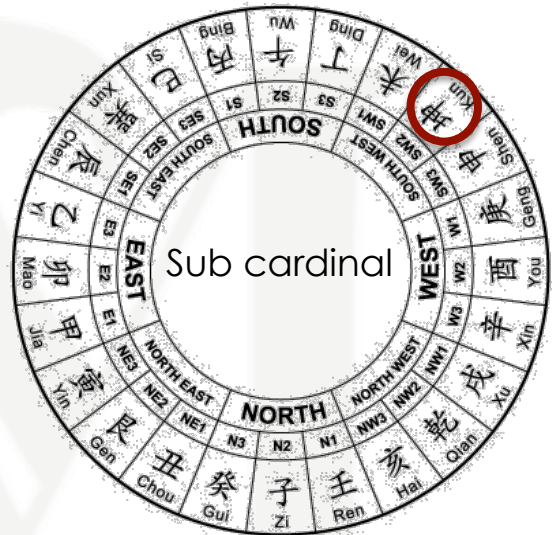
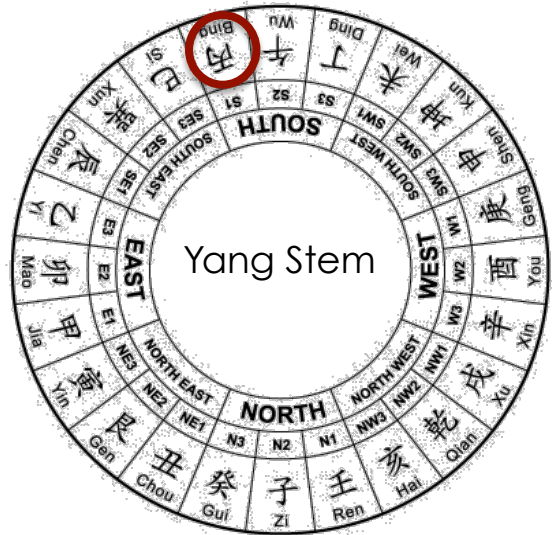
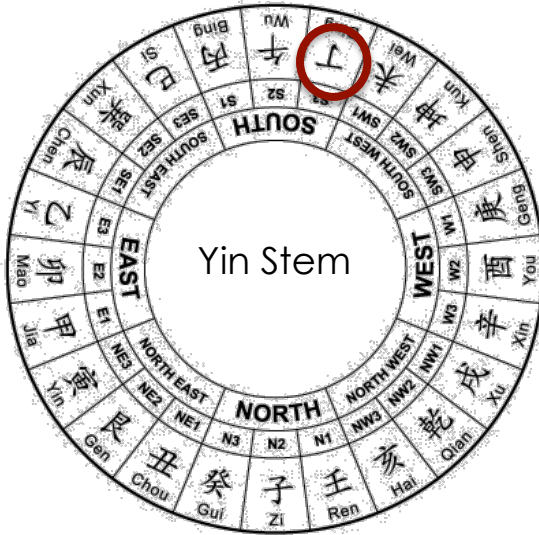
Dwell on where the hidden stems come from. Patterns are what make you see the connections, which make for better assessments quality later on.

In the next lesson, we will go a bit more in detail on the hidden stems.



## Practice Page

Make yourself familiar by highlighting the stems & branches based on the central aspect mentioned, I have done one for you.





SM

www.sherrymerchant.com