

Wu Xing: The Five Agents

木

Wood

火

fire

土

Earth

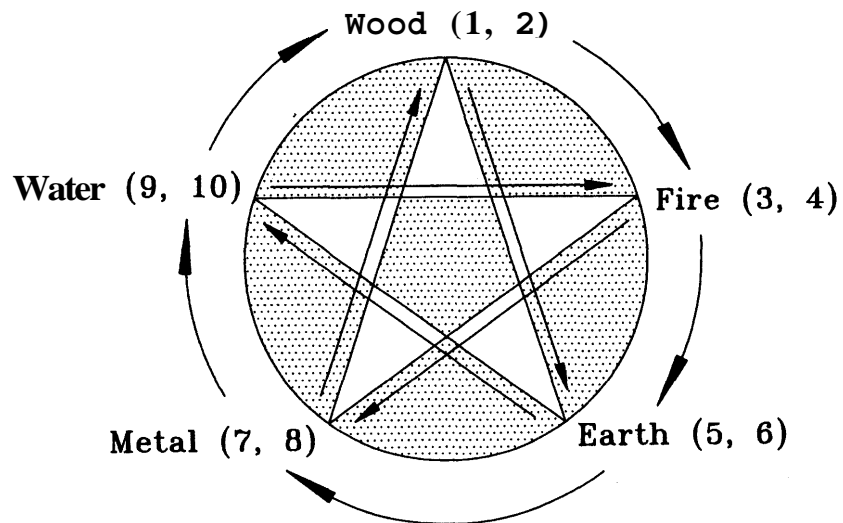
金

Metal

水

Water

Similar to the concept of the four elements in Greek philosophy with a fifth element being aether or space, the Chinese have the idea of the five agents (*wu xing*). The *kanji* for “agent” literally means “to go.” To the Greeks, the elements were building blocks of substance, but to the Chinese, the five agents are dynamic processes or energies of nature. The *wu xing* are: wood, fire, earth, metal and water. They occur in several patterns. One is the order of mutual promotion or mutual arising. In the diagram below, follow the agents in a clockwise direction. Another pattern is the order of mutual control or mutual destruction. In the diagram, follow the internal arrows in the star in a clockwise direction.



Each of the *wu xing* agents corresponds to many phenomena as do each of the eight trigrams of the *I Ching*. For instance, because spring is associated with wood, when it is **spring**, wood is prominent and active. Correspondences include seasons, times of day, directions, colors, body organs, acupuncture meridians, types of tastes, planets, days of the week, shapes, etc. When you observe one of more of the correspondences in a property, house, office or room, indirectly you are perceiving the reflection of that energy there. Diagnoses and cures *infeng shui*, as much as in acupuncture and herbal medicine, rely on accurately assessing the strength and balance of *wu Xing*. A table of correspondences appears on the next page.

Correspondences of the Five Agents (*Wu Xing*)

Category	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
<i>Zang</i> organ	Liver	Heart	Spleen	Lung	Kidney
<i>Fu</i>		Small		Large	
Sense organ	Eye	Tongue	Mouth	Nose	Ear
Body tissue	Tendon	Vessel	Muscle	Skin and Hair	Bone
Emotions	Kindness and Anger	Joy and Hate	Calm and Worry	Courage and Grief	Gentility and Fear
Season	Spring	Summer	Indian summer	Autumn	Winter
Environment	Wind	Heat	Damp	Dryness	Cold
Growth stage	Germination	Growth	Transformation	Reaping	Storing
Color	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black or Blue
Taste	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Spicy hot	Salty
Direction	East	South	Middle	West	North
Room	Kitchen	Living	Dining	Bedroom	Bath
Planet	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury
Chinese Character (<i>Kanji</i>)	木	火	土	金	水