

Living Change Destiny, Fate and Transformation

Our Destiny is the Bright Omen that Heaven gives us as we enter this world, the All-Under-Heaven. It is our connection to the process of time and it is our task to discover and realize the ancestral potential it contains.

Destiny/MING 23 x 12in.



The old character for Destiny shows the graphs for Heaven and the One, a person kneeling person and a mouth that gives Heaven a voice. Destiny is nature written into time, an investiture given by Heaven and a long and happy life that enables you to fulfill the mandate that is bestowed upon you when you enter the world. It is the gift of Heaven, innate qualities and circumstances that are written into your being. It is your duty it is to accomplish the task Heaven gives you, to discover, develop and express it through focused effort over time. The character means to proclaim an order, obligations and commands, to inform or warn, to fix, determine, instruct, teach and clarify. As *Tian Ming*, it is the Mandate of Heaven given to a ruling family, which can be withdrawn if the family line fails to live up to its responsibilities to care for the people and nourish the ancestors.

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Character is the yin of our inner being that determines our personal fate.

Character/XING 20 x 15



The old graph for character is made up of the sign for heart and the sign for birth. This is the yin of fate, inner nature and disposition, the nature given by heaven that determines personal fate. It is natural law as it is expressed in an individual: gender, sexuality, passions, behavior patterns, social class, virtues and qualities, the family name or line. Character is written in the being. It is outside of time, hidden behind all exterior manifestations, an enduring inner image like the path of the moon.

Passions is the yang of our inner being, the drives and desires woven deeply into us.

Passions/QING (20in x 13in)



The old graph for passions is made up of the sign for heart and the sign for the deep blue-green color of growing plants, of Wood and the Liver orbit. This is the yang of the inner life, written in the being, outside of time. It is all the intimate emotions, passions, drives and desires, appetites, profound tendencies, sentimental attachments and passionate loves, whatever we prefer through

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innate nature. If these predilections become passions they perturb and corrupt the functioning of the entire system. If they are taken into the heart mind, they can free us from enslavement to outer circumstances and desires, revealing the realities of things and bringing inner peace and harmony.

The Gateways are the dragon holes or openings in the web of life where our destiny can be connected with our fate.

Gateway/MEN (19in x 12in)



The old character for gateway shows a double door, the two-leaved gate of Change that controls the alternation of the two primal powers. It is the gate of an ancestral temple, a way to access originating energy, a door, entrance, access, orifice or opening. It is the ways and means, a school of thought, a portal point. This is the Gate of the Four Directions or Seasons through which the hidden winds blow from the lands outside of human experience. It acts as what we might call a Strange Attractor, enfolding all its contacts and passing it through the process depicted on the old bronze vessels as the Tiger's Mouth.

Once we have stepped through the Gateway, the process of symbolizing begins, turning us from the literal worlds of cause and effect to the magical language of the imaginal world.

Symbolizing/XIANG (20in x 12in)



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The old character for symbol portrays an elephant and the elephant mind where all the great symbols reside. A symbol is an image that has the power to connect things, to connect the visible world of your problems to the invisible world of the spirit. Change works through these symbols, created by the sages and shamans through a kind of imaginative induction that is also called *xiang*. A symbol is a magic spell, a figure or likeness that provides a pattern or model. We make the connection between the invisible world of the spirit and the visible world of our lives by playing with the symbols, by imitating them and acting them out.

These symbols that arise in the heart-mind act as accumulators of the energy called De or the power to actualize the Way in and through our own person. This energy will let link with our destiny and fulfill our ancestral potential, becoming who we are meant to be.

Accumulating/CHU (17in x 11in)



The old character shows interconnected silk bundles and a planted field. It suggests lush deep green pastures and means to nourish, raise, tame, train, amass, accept, tolerate, reunite and retain, to follow, to be in accord with, to love or be pleased with. It is a protective shell and protection in the womb. The top part of the old character is *xuan*, the dark mystery, subtle and all pervading, that embraces the universe.

When we consciously embrace the symbols and the actualizing power that they accumulate, they becomes guides on the voyage of life, letting us endure and renew ourselves and our connection to the Way each day.

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Persevering/HENG (18in x 11in)



The old character for persevering is made up of the graphs for heart and for the spiral path of the waxing moon. Persevering means to create an enduring form for the gifts of the spirit, to make power and virtue endure in the heart, to endure and constantly renew the Way, to continue in what is right. It is constant, consistent, durable, self-renewing, regular, perpetual and universal, the image of a stable married couple whose relation is renewed each day.

Setting on feet on the enduring Way brings us the capacity to realize things, to effect transformation in the world around us through a synchronistic power.

Ability/Enabling/NENG (19in x 10in)



The old character is the image of a bear and the strength, power and capacity of the bear shaman. It is the name of the stars of the Great Bear asterism and the three legged turtle that points at the power of the trigrams. It represents shamanic power: capable, qualified, competent, enabling, powerful and daring.

Four Sides or Directions/SI FANG 21”x13”



Four/SI (top character)

The old character shows the square field of earth divided into two halves. This is the yin process of doubling and pairing that creates the four territories or regions around the center, the four winds or hidden virtues of earth that make the four directions appear, the four spirit protectors of the life of the land that assist the Great Ancestor, the four seasons and the four pillars. It means all, everything that is connected with the power of Earth and the yin.

Directions/Sides/Powers/FANG (bottom character)

The old character shows an agricultural instrument, a plow or cultivator that opens the earth and establishes lines or furrows in its surface. It establishes the regions and places, the orientations and cardinal points and the sacrifices to the four directions. It is a goal, purpose or intention, a campaign to annex and occupy territory, a medical or therapeutic formula, special abilities, rights, justice, virtues and fixed rules. This is what is stable and dependable, constant, continual, regular, peaceful. It is the expedient means, the right moment to act. It means to examine, judge, compare, to make categories and distinctions. It governs arts and letters, a complete and harmonious song, chant or poem, the first stage in the revelation of the Mystery.

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Winds/FENG 17"x10"



The oldest form of the character portrays a phoenix, the divine bird-spirit that animates and controls the winds and their hidden breath, subtle, mysterious, and enigmatic powers that cause things to vibrate in accord with the hidden power and influence of the ancient sages. A wind is a style, ambiance, attitude and allure, costumes and customs, reputation and renown, rumor, news and gossip. It can also bring sudden folly, madness and derangement and amorous pursuit.

The Five Processes or Elements

These Four Pillars are created by the interaction of several complex systems of ancient images and symbols. The most fundamental system is

Five Processes/WU XING 22"x13"



Wood/Wind, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water

Five/WU (top character)

The old character shows the two principles, yin and yang, begetting the five processes in the space between heaven and earth. Five is an organizer of life. The space/time it creates organizes the succession and permutation of the hidden winds that produce and animate all being, grouping them around the Center and the Earth. This is expressed as the Five Processes, the Five Ancestral Spirits, the Five Ancestral Generations, the Five Royal Spouses, the Five Warrior Clans, the five planets reunited in the asterism of the Ghost Cart. It is an temple and entrance to a cemetery where the dead dwell in peace and harmony.

Process/Element/XING (bottom character)

The character shows a shape or form derived from the graph for the Well, common humanity and the shadow it cast. It represents embodied form, sensory appearance, the perceptible form of the bright spirits and means to give form to or embody something. It is directly connected to the hidden winds and their essence energies. It is the configuration of body that reveals the inner energy it hides and the wind or breath that renews it. It means visage, figure, physiognomy, configuration, terrain or situation, method and means, to appear and take form.

Wood/Wind/ MU 18"x13"
Rousing new growth springs up and opens out.



Wood/Wind signifies growth, budding, outward movement and expansion, springing up and opening out. It is origins, beginnings, the initial burst of energy and the rising sap, impulsive, vital, activating, enlivening and free flowing, keen and fresh. Its action is to push through, like plants as they push up into the light. It governs the capacity to respond and adapt, stimulating mind and emotion.

The Wood character shows young sprouts emerging and their roots penetrating the ground. These sprouts are the hidden triggers of change. They are the Tree at the Earth Altar, protector of the land, and the World Tree or Bushy Mulberry. They are all things that sprout and grow, sign of the fertile chaos at the center of life.

Fire Process/HO 18"x13"
Brightness and warmth spread beauty and change awareness.



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Fire is burning and combustion, warmth and light, joy and luxuriant growth, the glow, climax or zenith. It brings ease and accomplishment, joy, happiness, expansive feeling, upward movement and excitement. It expresses itself in the body as the Heart, seat of the spirit that commands the blood and energy channels, nourishing, invigorating and bringing the spark of life to full growth.

The Fire character shows flames rising from a ritual base. Its meanings include flame, fire, lighting a fire; fire offerings and rituals; to cook, clarify, illuminate, burn, consume or transform by fire; expansion, inflammation; an originating inspiration, motor of the work, the spark of yang, the essence of breath; fever, anger, passions, pressing, urgent; companions, associates; a utensil or instrument.

Earth Process/TU 18"x12"

Yield and serve, common labor produces concrete results.



Earth is the center, the pivot of transformation in the alternation of day and night, yin and yang, and the point around which the seasons and directions revolve and through which they change. Her action is yielding and bringing forth, sowing, sprouting and harvesting. She assimilates, transforms and distributes nourishment to assure a free flow of thought.

The character shows a tree and the ground from which it grows. It is the ancestral protector of the land that controls the four directions with their hidden winds through which spirit energies enter the world we live in. Its meanings include soil, cultivated fields, mounted soldiers and hunting grounds.

Metal Process/JIN 20"x10"
Destroying old forms and creating new relations.



Metal is ore in the earth, gemstones and the melting, casting and working of metals. This is concentration and crystallization, insight and thought that restrains things into forms then strips away the mold. Metal is an interface that draws energy in and distributes it down, regulating the rhythms of life.

The character shows a cast bronze vessel and bronze weapons. Its meanings include all forms of metal; bronze, bronze vessels, making bronze vessels; a standard or flag; valuable, precious; metal instruments, military gongs; solid, durable, resistant; money, gold, riches; transmutation, alchemical processes, alchemical lead; a state of perfection. Metal is long in the earth, unalterable, workable and malleable and does not lose its strength.

Water Process/SHUI 20"x13"
Structures dissolve and you must risk, fall, labor and flow on.



Water dissolves structures. It is streams, floods, rivers and all moving water; the flow of emotion and the underworld river of ghosts, secret, dark, mysterious; hidden depths and secret sources, cold and lonely toiling. It pushes the being to actualize its potential, holds individual fate, stores and maintains the blood and regulates the body fluids.

The character shows rivulets running side by side with the imperceptible yang breath in the center. Meanings include the source of a river; waters, springs, lakes, seas, rain; strong currents, inundation; deep attraction, to receive heavenly favor; liquid metabolism, the vital continuity of the body; a measure of unity, quality, worth; efficacious virtue that expands and vivifies; supple, tender; yield, give way.

Four Pillars

The Four Pillars - Generational Mission (Year), Life Manager (Month), Self Image (Day) and Hidden Face (Hour) - are formed by the interaction of the Ten Heavenly Stems and the Twelve Earthly Branches. They are the basis of the Four Pillars Chart, a way to describe individual character and destiny by linking it with all the energetic processes in the cosmos of Change.

Pillar/ZHU 18"x11"



The character for Pillar shows the sign for wood or vigorous growth and the sign for a lord or master, a lamp with a flame on top. It is something fixed, firm and upright, the place where we live, existence itself. It controls, calms, retains and preserves, managing pain, shock and fatigue through its hidden strength.

Stem/JING 22"x12"



The system of the Ten Heavenly Stems articulates the Five Processes and their families by connecting them with the primal energies of yin and yang form. The Ten Stems were seen as ten heavenly Ancestors or Royal Lineages from which humanity and culture arose. The system portrays these spirit energies

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as contained in Five Star Palaces connected with the sacred cosmos of the overarching Heavens, the Flat Earth spread to the Four Sides below them and the Ghost River running beneath all.

The character is made of the graph for grass and the graph for a model or norm put in practice, seen as an underground current or wind waves on water. It means a direct route, expedient means, direct, simple. It is traveling or voyaging on a north-south path through a defile, gorge or mountain pass.

Branch/ZHI 14"x20"



The Twelve Earthly Branches or Animals show how the Heavenly Influences and the Hidden Winds are embodied in the flow of time and space. The old character shows a hand holding a branch. It is part of the circulation of vital energy and refers to the 12 double hours, each described as an animal, that make up the Chinese clock. It means to support, carry, maintain, measure, furnish, endure, dispense, count or separate from. It is the branch of a tree or a river and the branch of a family, its descendents.

Year Pillar: Generational Mission/NIAN 22”x13”

The Generational Mission is your primary sense of “us”, your first social bonding. It is how you see yourself and others see you. You can see how it is formed by looking at your reactions to experiences in late childhood, adolescence and early adulthood.

The Year Stem is connected with Spring, the moment when vegetation revives and things are put in motion; with Wood that governs the capacity to respond and adapt; and with the East Wind that disseminates the new and dissipates the old. It is associated with the Sensation Function and enters the world through Hexagram 1 the Dragon Gate, connecting you with creative force.



The old character shows the graph for grain over the graph for person or people, the thousand grains and the ten thousand or myriad beings. It is a year, an age, a period in one’s life, a period in history. Its basic meanings are harvest, the annual crop and the years of your life. Its hidden root shows a pestle, suggesting both grinding grain and the grinding force of collective destiny.

Month Pillar: Life Manager/YUE 19”x12”

The Life Manager is your “I”, your sense of ordering life and doing business. It is your main ally in the battles of life. You can see how it is formed by looking at your reactions to the parenting you received.

The Month Stem is connected with Fall, harvest, labor and agility at the critical moment; with Metal, the insight and thought that creates inner space and regulates the life rhythms; and with the West Wind that brings decline,

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descent and return. It is associated with the Thinking function and controls the flow of the river of life and death through Hexagram 63 Already Fording, letting you cooperate with the ongoing process of change.



The old character shows the graph for moon, which also suggests a boat and a journey by water. It is the moon, a lunar month, the spiraling path of the moon and the menstrual cycle. It is the process of yin, the realizing power, as it waxes and wanes.

Day Pillar: Self Image/TIAN 22”x14”

The Self Image is your “Me”, your conscious image of who you are and how you do things. It is your ally in the battles of identity. You can see how it is formed by reflecting on your experiences in early childhood. The strength or weakness of your Self Image is a key to your conscious development.

The Day Stem is connected with Summer that ripens the fruits, spacious, abundant and multicolored; with Fire that nourishes, invigorates and brings the spark of life to full growth; and with the South Wind, that spreads the heat and abundance of life and gathers the people. It is associated with the Feeling function and enters the world through the Hexagram 2 the Earth Gate, bringing everything what it needs to flourish.

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The old character shows a person with a head filled with spirit, the spirit of Heaven and the Dragon. It means day, sky and heaven, the power that regulates the seasons, the times and the climate of things. It bestows the innate nature and power of each thing, what is great, celestial, divine and spontaneous, perfect yang power.

Hour Pillar: Hidden Face/SHI 19"x14"

Your Hidden Face is a concealed energy that influences all your other stems through their hidden elements. It carries your destiny and expresses itself synchronistically, reflecting mature adulthood, artistic desires and love-life.

The Hour Stem is connected with Winter, finding the seed of the new by grinding away the old; with Water, the flow of emotion and the underworld river of souls; and with the North Wind and profound yin, the great reserves hidden in the ferment of life. It is association with the Intuition function and works with the river of life and death through Hexagram 64 Not Yet Crossing, carefully preparing the decisive new move.



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The old character shows the graph for day (a hand and a mouth) and the graph for temple, a seat of inner power that guards and conserves. It represents a double hour in the Chinese clock, each of which is identified with one of the Twelve Branch Animals. It is a hidden trigger, a chance or opportunity, a favorable moment when things transform and the efficacious strategy that comes from watching the spirit of the time and adapting to circumstances.