

Azure Dragon Palace *Cang Long Gong*



Celestial Stems of the Azure Dragon Palace Yang Wood: Seedburst Yin Wood: Sprouting

The Azure Dragon Palace 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 the Dragon Gate (Hexagram 1), connecting you with creative force. It is the inner core of the Year Pillar or Generational Mission, your first sense of social bonding and identity. It carries your family histories, the intergenerational conflicts and their burden of inner corruption, reflecting how you reacted to experiences of both family and culture in late childhood and adolescence.

You enter this Palace through the **Eastern Gate**, the gate of the **Groundbreaker** whose core drive is to eliminate old patterns and rouse creative energy.



Imagine you are entering this great temple through the **Groundbreaker's Gate** and look around. Four great pillars, translucent green marble veined with deep turquoise, rise at the four corners of the inner space, supporting the round dome of the dark heavens, filled with the Spring stars that shine down from this quadrant of the sky. This space embodies the **Wood** Process.

Wood/Wind Process

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.



Wood/MU

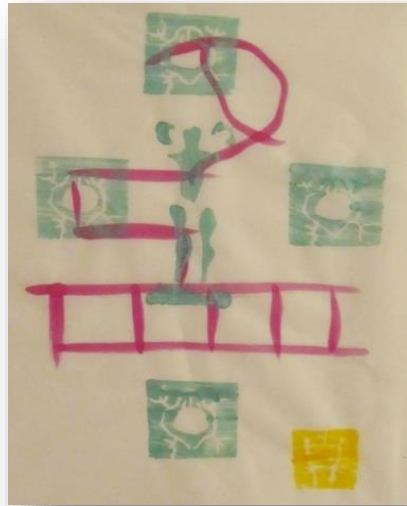
The Wood character shows young sprouts emerging and their roots penetrating the ground. These sprouts are the hidden triggers of change, like the Tree at the Earth Altar, protector of the land, and the World Tree or Bushy Mulberry, They are all things that sprout and grow, sign of the fertile chaos at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

As you begin to circle the space you will see that there are empty niches in the walls, meant to hold icons. Call up images of all the people, living or dead, all the books, images, events and encounters that roused your creative drive and joy in life. Fill the niches with these images. Take time and imagine them carefully.

These images are the sprouts of power and virtue, of your actualizing power. Your attention to them will open the inner Axis of Change and bring them to life in your heart-mind. This space will activate your capacity to eliminate the old patterns that keep people cut off from one another and rouse their creative potential.

The Faces of the Moon **Dreamwork and the Lunar Mansions/ *Xiu***

The four Palaces - Azure Dragon, Vermillion Bird, White Tiger and Black Tortoise - are the heart, the inner temples, of the Four Pillars. Like the Pillars, each is associated with a Season, a process or element and a direction. These Palaces are the four quadrants of Heaven and each of them contains seven Mansions of the Lunar Zodiac, literally star clusters close to the ecliptic that the moon passes through in its 28 day cycle.



The old character shows the moon entering the lunar mansions. It means to spend a night in an inn or way station, to establish a guard, renew defenses, do your duty, and be faithful. It is something that is first, ancient, perpetual, predestined, latent, proving an anterior existence. It is the plants that grow on a grave and the circumstances you encounter, and a bird in its nest. Above all it is an offering of spirits to the unending cycles of the moon.

These lunar mansions are the deep symbols of the moon's journey, transformational symbols in the night sky that link us with the dreaming process of the temple we have entered. These are the agents of the Dreamwork that turns the snares of fate into the bright omens of destiny by deliteralizing our personal suffering and opening it to the imaginal world of the heart-mind.

Walk around the circumference of your temple, call on the images in the niches of those who truly inspired you with a creative love of life and then move to the center of the space where you will see a small, thatched hut with an earthen floor. This is the Mourning Hut, where we go to symbolically die and be reborn into a higher level of awareness and maturity.

Step into the Hut and sit on the bare earth floor. Call up the experiences, particularly in your childhood and early adolescence that are the root of your sense of fear, lack, need, pain and inner pollution. Simply visualize them without attachment or reaction. These early experiences of conditional love are what you are suffering from. Hold these experiences in your mind and call on those who inspired you to give the part of yourself that suffers the lack, need and pain the unconditional love you never received. Let them show you how to love your creative self in all its manifestations.

The shape and dynamic of your journey through the Lunar Mansions of the Azure Dragon Palace is embodied in Hexagram 51 of the Classic of Change.

 **51 Shake/ Groundbreaker ZHEN** 



The old character shows rain falling from heaven and the sign for shock or cutting through, the waking of the earth in early spring. This energy renews itself ceaselessly.

Circle of Meanings

A disturbing and fertilizing shock; thunder, earthquake, male sexual energy; arouse, inspire, wake up, shake up, stir up, quicken; break through the shell, come out of the bud, the return of life in early spring; a great shaman who drives out the old, arouses the new and gives the capacity to act decisively. *Heart Theme:* 39 the Difficult goings and comings that prepare deliverance.

Myths for Change

Zhen, Shake is rain and the spirit that brings the rains, violent thunder from beneath that rouses all to new growth after the dead time of winter. It is the ritual of opening the fields performed at the ancestral temple and the field altar, where an offering of dark aromatic millet wine perfumed with the sensual fragrance of the *orchis* calls the spirits to return. It is the great exorcism at spring's beginning, a burst of violent noise and chaos that frightens away the spirits grown old, those whose time has passed and wakes the insects sleeping in the earth. This dynamic process is expressed as thunder, the spark of yang born in the breast of yin, the thunder rituals and incantations that inspire both terror and joy. It is the moment when the fetus begins to stir, associated with dawn, the east, the rising sun, green and the wood moment. *Zhen*, Shake is the Arouser and Exorcist. He is flamboyant and sexual, luxuriating, frightening and inspiring, green and full of juice. He is motion and moves all things, an emerging Dragon. Shake stimulates everything that moves or moves in the

body, purifies the blood, links eyes and sexual organs, desire and anger, vision and motivation, giving the capacity to act decisively.

When you accept the journey, the Lunar Mansions governed by the power of the **Groundbreaker** will appear around you in the Mourning Hut. These are the steps or stages in the process of transformation that occurs in the Palace of the **Azure Dragon**. As each image appears, project yourself into the situation it portrays, let the image change the way you perceive yourself and your life and follow the directions it offers.

The Transformations of the Azure Dragon

that eliminate old patterns and generational corruption to rouse individual creative energy.

Foundations: the Inner World

Mansion 1 Great Horn/Da Jue



Element: Wood **Planet:** Jupiter **Animal:** Smooth Dragon **Polarity:** (+Opening)

This is spring's beginning and emerging creative energy that brings rains and floods. Birds and beasts mate, buds burgeon. This Mansion rules over agriculture and gardening. It is a time to begin work, acquire land or marry. It is the sound of military trumpets and means to attack at strategic points. It is also a bronze tripod wine vessel with two heads or beaks that pour the wine in two directions. It connects with the energy of Change hexagram 40:



The old character shows an animal's horn, a knife that cuts it free and an instrument made from horn used to untie knots and loosen nets. Liberation develops from dealing with the difficulties at the birth of a new time (3).

Myths for Change

Jie, Deliverance releases the Rouser who frees us from difficulties, the emergent Dragon released from the river of ghosts. It is a critical moment, an opening in time that combines release and good augury or blessings, an exorcism at the city walls. The root of the word is horn: the horns of a sacrificial victim, a horned instrument to undo knots, the rhinoceros-horn wine cup used at the River Mountain festivals, the one-horned beast that attacks evil-doers, the cornucopia. It represents a juncture, a point of insertion or critical point when the inner work is done, the sacrifice is accepted and the blessings flow. It signifies escape, release, the loosening of the trap, released from the knot or noose of a hostile fate. It is dissipating melancholy, awakening from illusion, fever breaking, satisfying natural needs, opening communication and sexual climax when inhibited forces are set free and the blessings shared. The word was used to describe release from the body, liberation through spiritual practices and becoming an Immortal, a Sage who perceives through the bright spirits and is thus liberated from compulsion and fear.

- This Mansion frames the overall process and focuses on a breakthrough point. Here Earth is working with Fire to clarify your inner world. This conjunction activates the animal powers of the psyche (15:16) and focuses them on the need to bite through obstacles to a higher awareness of your real beauty (21:22).

These are your instructions:

Step 1: Omen of Beginnings. This return of the spirit attracts a new fate.

The Shake comes, frightening! frightening!

Then laughing words, shouting! shouting!

Wise Words! The Way is open.

Anxiety over blessing, it will soon be there. This is a profound shock. Though everything is turned upside down the anxiety will soon turn to joy in a burst of creative energy. Let it move you. The Way is open.

Call up the experiences that are the root of your fear, lack, need and pain and let this burst of invigorating energy cut your feeling connections to them. Reconnect your words and thoughts to fundamental things and think of yourself in a modest way. Get out of struggles for power and the feeling of being victimized by voluntarily taking the lower position. By yielding and letting this process re-balance your inner male-female energies, you can acquire the power to realize the Way in your life.

Guideway (51.1 [**16.1 : 15.6**] 52.6): Do not call out for help now. Cut through pride and complication. Set the armies marching and take the capital city. If you meet people with generosity, honesty and care now you can signal to your true kin. Step outside the norms and re-imagine the situation. These goings and comings will release the energy now bound up in the past. Gather it for a decisive new move. Accepting the shock of inner enlightenment now will bring you a deep faith in the processes of life.

Mansion 2 Dragon's Neck/*Kang*



Element: Water **Planet:** Mercury **Animal:** Dragon **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing

This Mansion portrays a person's neck, the throat of a bird and a solar eclipse. It presides over both judgments and punishments and the release of prisoners or the freeing of animals. When it is clouded or adversarial it brings illness, inflexibility, hyperactivity, excess and pride, along with drought and dust storms. When clear it means partners, loyal ministers and peace in the country. It is the patron of alchemy; its root is to enter into, to go within, a symbolic death.

- This Mansion shows how your inner and outer lives can be re-connected. Here the Anima Operators that create soul connections work to find the hidden sickness, clearing the pain around your inner parental images (17:18) and linking you to the preparation of a radical shift in culture (53:54).

These are your instructions:

Step 2: Omen for the Inner Center. This inner re-organization leads to harmony with others.

The Shake comes bringing adversity, hungry souls and angry ghosts.

A hundred thousand cowries lost.

Climb the Nine Mounds. Do not pursue what has been lost.

On the seventh day you will acquire it.

This is riding a strong power. The fertilizing shock comes. You think you have lost something precious and are plagued by the remorse of the past. Do not grieve. Hide on the frontiers. Climb the mounds of transformation. Everything you lost will soon return of itself.

Go to your inner center and contemplate all those the situations that have caused you pain. Call on your helpers and guides. Advance step by step through subtle penetration. Try to understand how each of these terrible things

has been a gift, a gift that pushes you into transformation. Act through the receptive and the feminine. Do not try to dominate the situation. If you can truly understand, you will achieve mastery and find the place where you belong.

Guideway (51.2 [54.2 : 53.5] 52.5): Look at things from an independent perspective. Your creative energy will make contact with the ancestors. When this is complete, nothing can stop you. What you say will have order and elegance. If you communicate this way your sorrows will vanish. Let yourself be led and you can realize the hidden potential. Cooperate with the ongoing process of change. Accepting the shock of inner enlightenment now lets you express the spirit in the human community.

Mansion 3 Base/Roots/*Di*



Element: Earth **Planet:** Saturn **Animal:** Marten **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing

This Mansion presides over the calamities that are due to the failure to perform proper rituals to ancestors or lack of respect for elders. It brings the sweet rains of spring as well as spring illnesses, tempests, gales and forced labor and its hidden spirit has the power to search out the secrets of magic remedies. It means to get to the root of something, to eliminate family and clan corruption, to terminate, finish, set limits or find a destination.

- This Mansion shows the change necessary to power the process of transition and initiation. Here Earth works with Fire to clarify your relations to the outer world. This lets you see the necessity to strip away your old patterns and habits (23:24) as part of the greater effort to spread the abundance of cultural renewal to all (55:56).

These are your instructions:

Step 3: Omen at the Threshold. This inner re-balancing will let you make your way in life.

Shake reviving, Oh! Oh!

Shake moves without a mistake.

The force does not match the position. A fertilizing shock rouses your dormant creative energy. Everything is renewed and inspired. Move with it. It is not a mistake.

This is the time to look deeply into your motives. Look outside your usual networks and patterns of thought and listen carefully to the still, small voice of your heart; see it as an emissary bringing news from a distant center. Be willing to travel and search. Adapt to whatever you hear, whatever crosses your path. You are on a mission of real importance.

Guideway (51.3 [**55.3 : 56.4**] 52.4): In this time of abundance you can see only dimly. Though you have found a place to abide with goods and a position, your heart is not glad for you know a greater mission awaits. Still your compulsive desires. This frees you from mistakes and lets you see where the real motivating power lies. Do not be afraid to act alone. You are connected to a creative force. Accepting the shock of inner enlightenment now lets you find real directions in life.

Transition

Mansion 4 Room/Chamber/*Fang*



Element: Fire/Wood **Planet:** Sun **Animal:** Hare **Polarity:** (+Opening)

This Mansion is the Dragon's stomach. It is the opener of what is closed, the chariot of the sun and commander of the armies. It presides over building, increasing holdings and land, happiness and longevity, health and the help of the ancestors. The character portrays a low altar in the shape of a building through which offerings were made to the generations of the ancestors. It is a chamber, an alcove, a chapel or monastic cell, the branch of a family, a cell in an organism and a door or window. You can see its power in Change hexagram 57:



57 Subtle Penetration/Matchmaker SUN



The old character shows an altar with wrapped meat offerings on it representing the myriad creatures. This energy renews itself repeatedly.

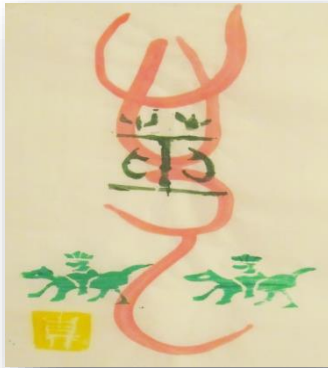
Myths for Change

Sun, Subtle Penetration, is the Lady of Fates who lays out the offerings on the low altar and binds the Myriad Beings to their fates. She crosses thresholds and transmits orders from Heaven. Her wrapped food offerings are an image of the Myriad Creatures toiling and laboring on the field of earth, for life is brought and carried by her winds. She is connected to the Central Palace where fates are consigned and represents a profound penetration of the above into the below which can lead to the awakening of wisdom. She prepares the food and drink for the great meal shared by humans and spirits and nourishes the people on ancient virtue. A spirit-worker and healer, she offers the virtue or *de* that actualizes an individual being. She finds the hidden sickness through hidden influences, the silent power of wind and wood. She controls the omens that regulate power and virtue, plans from hiding and knows the right moment to act. She matches and couples the beings, leading each thing to its destiny. She is imaged as a bright strutting cock, strong scented, that stimulates everything that moves or moves in the body, purifies the blood, links eyes and sexual organs, controls desire and anger. She gives vision, motivation and the capacity to act decisively at the key moment.

As you approach the threshold to the outer world, look at the patterns of need and fear that make you try to dominate situations and relationships. Let the deep feminine power of the Matchmaker show you how to act through the receptive and the feminine, giving you the patience to wait on events and the ability to let yourself be led at the critical moment. Reside in this power. Advance step by step through subtle penetration. Use your creative spirit in the right way. You will achieve mastery and find the place where you belong.

Encountering Trouble: the Outer World

Mansion 5 Heart/*Xin*



Element: Fire/Earth **Planet:** Moon **Animal:** Fox **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing

This Mansion is the sign of the Dream Fox, the shape-shifter who navigates through liminal boundaries. It deals with the correct expression of inner feelings, motives, resolutions, passions and intelligence and is the seat of the feeling and thought that animates a being. It also means “me”, imaged as a spine or sharp thorn, for the heart seen here is doubled, good and bad. The Dream Fox or inner genius of the heart seen here can conduct us through the hazards of life on the narrow path between our inner nature and our particular destiny. Its name is seen as a synonym of the Dao or Way.

- This Mansion shows the change necessary to power the process of transition and initiation. Here Earth works with Fire to clarify your relations to the outer world. This lets you see the necessity to strip away your old patterns and habits (23:24) as part of the greater effort to spread the abundance of cultural renewal to all (55:56).

These are your instructions:

Step 4: Omen for Arrival. This inner preparation will lead to what is greater.

Shake released from a bog.

This is not shining yet. Everything is bogged down. Release the fertile energy from this cloud of confusion. Try to understand where the new impulse comes from and move with it.

Look deeply at your ideas of your place in the world around you and eliminate all the ideas and patterns that are connected with the old stories of pain, need and rejection. Cut into the problems and strip away the unessential without thought of immediate gain or purpose. This will bring renewal. When this is complete, you will see your real direction.

Guideway (51.4 [24.4 : 23.3] 52.3): The center of life is moving. Return to yourself and strip away your old ideas. Do not cut yourself in two, separating yourself from real and legitimate desires. The acrid smoke from this repression is smothering your heart. Something important is returning now. Be open and provide what is needed. Accepting the shock of inner enlightenment now brings you a deep faith in the processes of life.

Mansion 6 Tail/Wei



Element: Fire **Planet:** Mars **Animal:** Tiger **Polarity:** (+) Opening

This Mansion shows the sign for the heir apparent, the new king, and the women's quarters where he is brought up. It is a dam, a dyke or a wooden boat, whatever what separates wood from water. It represents the succession of power and inheritance as a passage through the feminine and means downstream, a gulf that dumps water into the sea, the end of pursuit, to arrive at a goal, a relic or remains. Its action is to yoke or link animals together in a team or chain.

- The Mansion shows show how your inner and outer lives can be re-connected. Here the Anima Operators that create soul connections work to find the hidden sickness, clearing the pain around your inner parental images (17:18) and linking you to the preparation of a radical shift in culture (53:54).

These are your instructions:

Step 5: Omen for the Outer Center. This re-grouping will let your real purpose shine.

Shake comes and goes. Adversity, the hungry souls and angry ghosts. Stay intent on your desire. Do not lose your purpose.

There will be service.

Moving in an exposed position without losing the Great. As the fertilizing shock comes and goes it brings up old memories and quarrels and you must deal with them. Keep your mind on what you truly want to do and all will be well. You will be involved in the service of greater things.

Here you confront the insidious corruption that flows from the Mothers. This is the source of the conditional love that plagues you and the key to the sacred sickness pathway that connects personal suffering to cultural change. Look deeply into your inner lack and sense of emptiness and clear out the sources of this corruption. This is the time for a real change, the time when you can give birth to yourself. Prepare the moment to announce the changes then carefully watch over their growth.

Guideway (51.5 [17.5 : 18.2] 52.2): You have made a connection that will lead to real excellence. Now you must deal with the inner corruption of nourishment and care. Stop running after impossible desires. You cannot rescue your followers now though your heart may ache for them. Put yourself in the middle of the situation and you will find the Way. Step out to meet the new destiny. Accepting the shock of inner enlightenment now lets you express the spirit in the human community.

Mansion 7 Wincrowing Basket/Ji



Element: Water/Wood **Planet:** Mercury **Animal:** Leopard **Polarity:** (+) Opening

This Mansion is both the Wincrowing Basket in which grain is separated from chaff and the Dung Basket in which fertilizer is gathered and spread. It is a time of good fortune, excellent for beginnings, a time in which herds multiply,

granaries are gorged and industry is rewarded. Its root is bamboo, the magic wood on which the oracle books were written, and the source of ancient wisdom. It also points at eliminating the evil wind that comes from the mouths and tongues that spread vicious gossip, rumors and slander. It connects with Change hexagram 42:



The old character shows a container like a cornucopia and the sign for river or water, a stream of blessings. This expansion develops from fixing the omens given by the spirit (32).

Myths for Change

Sun, Diminishing and *Yi*, Augmenting offer a paradigm of sacrifice and its results. Augmenting is the blessing: What is above gives to what is below. The root of the term is a recipient for food. It is the meats eaten at the feast, a vessel overflowing with blessing, the sun that appears through the grace of the ancestor after a dark time, gladdening and enriching everything. This is the feast in which all partake and the blessings (*fu*) showered on us through the Ancestors after they have received and accepted our sacrifice and presented our needs to the High Lord. *Yi*, augmenting is a synonym of *yi*, change, as a gift or blessing, a transformation that is effected by a crossing like the transforming lines in the Change. Philosophically, it is what enriches power and virtue (*de*), rising and opening from the seeds. It is the waxing moon, the celebrant, the new king, the blessing, a connection of Heaven and Earth brought about by ritual, sacrifice and inner work.

- This Mansion frames the overall process and focuses on a breakthrough point. Here Earth is working with Fire to clarify your inner world. This conjunction activates the animal powers of the psyche (15:16) and

focuses them on the need to bite through obstacles to a higher awareness of your real beauty (21:22).

These are your instructions:

Step 6: Omen for Culmination. This stripping will lead to a breakthrough.

Shake twisting and turning! Observing, you are terrified Oh! Oh!

Trap! Chastising closes the Way.

Shake is not in your body, but in your neighbor's body.

Be calm. This is not a mistake.

There will be words about a marriage.

Not the center yet. Warning: beware your neighbor! The fertilizing shock twists and turns, driving people around you into a frenzy. Do not try to put this all in order. Stay aloof. Do not get caught in the trap. This is not the right time to begin anything. Be cautious about entering a new relationship.

You are confronting the flood of poisonous ideas, prejudices, hatreds and vilification that plagues the body politic, expressed in us as stereotypes and introjects that keep us cut off from others and continually at war with our own projected shadow. This is a very tenacious obstacle and you must take decisive action. Focus on your true goals in life. Be determined. Gnaw away what is unnecessary and bite through to the core of the problem.

Guideway (51.6 [**21.6 : 22.1**] 52.1): Do not lock your understanding away in these old patterns. Adorn yourself with courage and independence. Leave your carriage and go on foot. When an impulse to action comes, try to hold back before it leads you into compulsive entanglements. This could become an ever-flowing source of profit and insight. Step outside the norms and re-imagine the situation. These goings and comings will release the energy now bound up in the past. Accepting the shock of inner enlightenment now lets you find real directions in life.

The Lunar Mansions of the Azure Dragon Palace

Mansion 1 Great Horn/*Da Jue*



Element: Wood **Planet:** Jupiter **Animal:** Smooth Dragon **Polarity:** (+Opening)
This is spring's beginning and emerging creative energy that brings rains and floods. Birds and beasts mate, buds burgeon. This Mansion rules over agriculture and gardening. It is a time to begin work, acquire land or marry. It is the sound of military trumpets and means to attack at strategic points. It is also a bronze tripod wine vessel with two heads or beaks that pour the wine in two directions.

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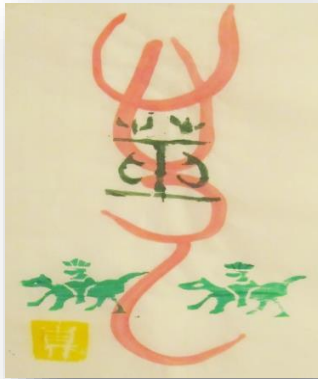
Mansion 4 Room/Chamber/*Fang*



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through which offerings were made to the generations of the ancestors. It is a chamber, an alcove, a chapel or monastic cell, the branch of a family, a cell in an organism and a door or window.

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