

Black Turtle/Somber Warrior Palace

Xuan Wu Gong



Celestial Stems of the Black Tortoise Palace

Yang Water: Winter/Conception

Yin Water: Winter/Limits

The Black Turtle Palace 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. In the Four Pillars, it is the inner core of the Hour Pillar or Hidden Face, the true sign upon which your deep personality is based. It carries your destiny and expresses itself synchronistically, reflecting mature adulthood, artistic desires and the inner goals of your life.

You enter this Palace through the **Northern Gate**, the gate of the **Ghost Dancer** whose core drive is to give you the courage and insight to face all challenges and take all risks, clearing away the ghosts of the past so the flow of life can go on.



Imagine you are entering this great temple through the **Ghost Dancer's Gate**. Four great pillars, deep black jade shot with flashes of fire, rise at the four corners of the inner space, supporting the round dome of the dark heavens, filled with the Winter stars that shine down from this quadrant of the sky. This space embodies the **Water** Process.

Water Process

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.



Water SHUI

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; a low condition, many worries.

As you begin to circle the space you will see that there are empty niches in the walls, meant to hold icons. Call up the images of all the people, living or dead, all the books, images, events and encounters that have helped you through the difficult passages of your life, the night-sea journeys. Fill the niches with these images. Take time and imagine them carefully. Feel them, sense them, smell them, hear them speaking to you.

These images are your ancestors, the sprouts of your inner power and virtue, your actualizing power. Your attention to them will open the inner Axis of Change and bring them to life in your heart-mind. This is the space that activates the courage, fearlessness, agility and insight that will take you through all dangers and let you face all challenges.

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.



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.

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, 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.

Walk around the circumference of your temple, call on the images in the niches of those who helped you at the critical point, 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 at the critical points in your life that are the root of your fear, panic and belligerence, your sense of lack, need and abandonment. Simply visualize them without attachment or reaction. These experiences of conditional love are what you are suffering from. Hold these experiences in your mind and call on your helpers to give the part of yourself that suffers the lack, need, pain and fear 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 Black Turtle Palace is embodied in Hexagram 29 of the Classic of Change.

 **29 Ghost River/Navigator XI KAN** 



The old character shows the Tree on the Earth Altar and a person kneeling beside it to offer sacrifice, surrounded by the rising vapors of the Ghost River beneath. This energy renews itself repeatedly.

Circle of Meanings

A critical time or test; a dangerous place, a hole, cavity, hollow, snare, trap, grave; midnight, winter, black rushing water; confront your fear, face the danger, collect your forces, take the plunge, rise to the challenge; practice, repeat, rehearse, teaching the Way again and again; the Earth Pit, the Ghost World and the Ghost Dancer, a powerful shaman who is part of the inner Axis of Change. *Heart Theme: 27 the Tiger's Mouth.* This is an Inspiring Figure and an Engine of Change that recharges experience with meaning and energy.

Myths for Change

Kan, Ghost River, is the sacrificial pit at the Earth Altar and the underworld waters that flow beneath it that connect the Sun Tree and the Moon Tree, the axis of the world, and open the Gate of Destinies through which souls enter the world. It alludes to religious rites where the victims were drowned and buried and the Moon Goddesses who sponsored the earliest form of the reading the Changes. Its symbols are rushing water, holes, pits and snares, tombs and graves, prisons and the Yellow Springs, the deep center where the dead live. It evokes the north, midnight, winter and cold dark waters. It represents a critical moment that requires courage and determination in face of the great fear engendered by the presence of the ghost world, a time to confront and dissolve obstacles, venture, fall and move on. It is part of the central Fire-Water Axis of Change, the Burning Water or *prima materia*. As the Ghost Dancer, this figure leads through danger, dances with ghosts, risks all and always comes through.

He exults in work and dissolves all things, a black pig and hidden riches. In the body, Pit works through the Kidneys, conserving life and pushing the organism to actualize potential. This is the site of the essence (*jing*) or individual fate; the power of the Ghost Dancer transforms this essence into available energy, controlling the flow of emotions, particularly courage and fear.

When you accept the journey, the Lunar Mansions governed by the power of the **Ghost Dancer** 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 **Black Turtle**. 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 Black Turtle

who gives you the courage and insight to face all challenges and take all risks, clearing away the ghosts of the past so the flow of life can go on.

Foundations: the Inner World

Mansion 8 Southern Ladle/*Nan Du*



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

This Mansion shows the head of the tortoise used as a measure for liquid, more specifically distilled spirits, and mean recompense, satisfaction, completion and reward. It presides over wine and wine merchants and is a thanksgiving offered to the spirits for their benefactions. It is a wooden vase that holds water used to wash a corpse, something steep, abrupt and sudden, the ability to

discriminate between right and wrong and the littlest thing, the insignificant beginning of profound change. It connects directly to Change hexagram 46:



The old character shows a small measure for alcohol poured out in sacrifice and a head filled with spirit, the illumination that results. This possibility to rise to a higher level is enabled by carefully watching for the manifestations of a new spirit (20).

Myths for Change

Sheng, ascending shows a procession up the Sacred Mountain, specifically a journey through the old Zhou capital, the empty city, up to the Twin-Peaked Mountain that was the ancestral home of the Zhou ancestors. This was the King's temple where the spirit tablets of the Royal Ancestors were housed. A journey up this mountain means becoming part of the founders, one with the Great People. It alludes to the story of a timely intervention by Confucius, who "ascended the three steps" of the ritual platform to save his lord from being killed through treachery at a treaty negotiation. His precise knowledge of the ritual and his moral integrity allowed him to make the crucial intervention. Behind this is a very old tradition of the Wu or Spirit-Intermediaries ascending to the mountain shrine of the Tiger spirit hidden just below the summit to receive the destinies of noble souls and open the fields for the people. The term means to rise up like the sun, to climb the steps and present an offering. It is a series of high divinations that goes on through the night. In meditation, this is the rising of energy from the base of the trunk to the heart center that connects above and below. It is setting out to subdue the Demon Country, freed from care, melancholy and compulsive desire. The root of the term means complete and shows a small measure, a libation cup full of spirit.

- This Mansion frames the overall process and focuses on a breakthrough point. Here Anima Intermediaries, who make the soul connections, and Animus Operators, who clear thinking and feeling, join to clear the inner

channels. This disperses your old identity and lets you articulate the image of a world (59:60) in which the joy of renewal can be circulated to all (55:56).

These are your instructions:

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

Repeating the Pit. Entering the pitfall.

Trap! The Way closes.

This means letting go of the Way and falling into a trap. By responding in the same way again and again you fall into the tomb of depression and melancholy. Do not get caught here or the Way will close.

Call up the experiences, particularly in your childhood and early adolescence, that are the root of your sense of fear, lack and sense of abandonment. Simply visualize them without attachment or reaction. Hold these experiences in your mind and call on your spirit helpers to give the part of yourself that suffers the lack, need and pain the unconditional love you never received.

Guideway (29.1 [60.1 : 56.1] 30.1): Do not leave your inner door and chambers. If you make a move now your journey will end in fragments. You will be split off from your place and grasp disaster. The omens are good for beginnings, so honor them and make a new start. Do not stay in mourning for the past. Take things in. Be open and provide what is needed. Containing your fear and impulse now lets you express the spirit in the human community.

Mansion 9 Draught Ox/ Qian Niu



Element: Metal

Planet: Venus

Animal: Ox

Polarity: (-) Enclosing

This Mansion is part of the story of the Ox Boy and the Weaving Maiden who were married and, because they become so taken up with each other that the Weaving Maiden gave up her work, had to be separated. They now live on opposite shores of the Milky Way and see each other only once a year on the Feast of Women, when flocks of magpies build a bridge the Ox Boy can cross to see his wife. Here the boy is leading his Ox to market, to be slaughtered or sacrificed like the Red Bull carefully raised for the great Spring sacrifice that opens the fields. The Mansion presides over roads, paths, fields and barriers and warns against leaving doors open or tasks unfinished. Incompletion, failure of enclosure or the inability to let go of the past will bring sickness and starvation, discord and separation, broken marriages and disappearing resources.

- This Mansion shows how your inner and outer lives can be re-connected. Here Inspiring Force and Earth join to open a new world. This organizes you to take effective action and find a group (7:8) that lets your real power and destiny emerge (13:14).

These are your instructions:

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

A Pit with sheer sides.

Seek and acquire through the Small.

Do not leave the inner center. As you venture into danger you will get what you need by being flexible and adaptable. Have modest goals. Keep your sense of purpose. Do not impose your will and you will succeed.

Go to your inner center and contemplate all the situations that have caused you pain. Call on your helpers and guides. Collect the traumatic elements or screen memories of all those early experiences that keep you frozen in past time, locked in the experience of being a child and a victim. Take the spirit of this Mansion into your heart and let it free you from your inner pain and isolation, completely dissolving the inter-generational corruption and connecting you with the great family of the world. Embrace the sensual and visionary experiences and feelings that emerge and let them help you understand how each of these terrible things has been a gift, a gift that leads to transformation.

Guideway (29.2 [8.2 : 14.2] 30.2): Your connection puts you at the center of this group, a part of its origin. Gather the people. Adapt to what confronts you. Do not let this opportunity slip through your fingers. Use a great chariot, an inspiring idea, to carry your feelings and desires. Light and power will surge up from below, surrounded by the yellow light of the center. Strip

away your old ideas. Be open and provide what is needed. Containing your fear and impulse now brings you a deep faith in the processes of life.

Mansion 10 Serving Maiden/*Xu Nu*



Element: Earth **Planet:** Saturn **Animal:** Bat **Polarity:** (+) Opening

This Mansion suggests the young girls who offer sacrifice and play the flute on the night of the summer solstice festival, asking for a good dowry and a good husband. It presides over weaving, marriages and textiles. Its animal, the Bat, indicates good fortune through dark means, the magic of darkness. It connects directly with Change hexagram 31:

☵ ☶ **31 Conjoining XIAN** 咸



The old character shows an ax cutting into a sacrificial victim and a hidden mouth, the spirit's response to the sacrifice. This is the inner ground that brings the blessing of spirit (42).

Myths for Change

Conjoining is an image of the sacred sites and River-Mountain paradises where the spirits dwell, where the Intermediaries call the Bright Spirits that unite and support the people. It portrays the *Xian chi*, the Pool at the base of the Sun Tree where the new sun is bathed and sets out on its journey. The root of the word is heart, the heart moved and moving, an image of the attraction and union of contraries - man and woman, human and spirit - an influx or inspiration that stirs deep wellsprings of feeling. The term also means “to influence, to join with, to feel an influx,” a physical sensing of spirit moving in the body that doubles the sacred landscape. This is the way of the Wu or Spirit-Intermediaries who call the spirits and set out their omens for others. Another variant of the term refers to cutting or opening the sacrificial body to reveal how Heaven and Earth influence the hearts of the myriad beings. The central injunction is to embrace the woman and the yin, to submit and be moved. This is the contrary to heroic striving.

- This Mansion shows the change necessary to power the process of transition and initiation. Here Anima Intermediaries, who make the soul connections, and Animus Operators, who clear thinking and feeling, join to rouse and express the spirit. This empowers the first images of your deeper self (21:22) to free you from oppressive social structures and return you to the sources of human community (47:48). These are your instructions:

Step 3: Omen for the Threshold. This inner re-balancing lets you make your way in life.

They come into the Pit again and again.

Steep and deep, the victims are drowning.

Do not get trapped in this pitfall!

An end without results. Do not be a victim of the past. Relax and pull back. What is coming is more than you can handle right now. If you simply push on you will be trapped in a fatal diversion. Think carefully about your real values.

This is the time to look deeply into your real motives. Use the insight you have stored to connect with ancestral energies and find out who you are truly meant to be. Leave the weeping tree behind you. Embrace and embody the sense of strange and new possibilities that have been freed from the stream of the past. Let this sense of a new destiny approaching energize you and open you to the wonder and mystery of life.

Guideway (29.3 [48.3 : 21.3] 30.3): The source of common value and feeling is disturbed and turbid. You feel the sorrow of someone who is connected to the sources of life but has no one with whom to share. As you bite through the obstacles to union you will encounter something poisonous. Bring it out! If you do not beat your drum and you sing your songs now you will end

up an old person lamenting all the terrible things that have happened in your life. If you let yourself be led you can realize the hidden potential. Cooperate with the ongoing process of change. Containing your fear and impulse now lets you find a place where you can influence the world you live in.

Transition

11 Void/*Xu*



Element: Variable **Planet:** Sun **Animal:** Rat **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing

This is the determinative star of the Northern Palace. Its graph is made up of the signs for North and for Tiger. It is the source of rains, snows and storms and its images are a tomb, sepulcher, wild place or wasteland. It means empty, nothing, virtual reality, original chaos, an infinite space-time with no origin purified of all passions, desires and cognitive thought and animated only by vital spirits. This is the empty center that carries and penetrates all phenomena, the true nature of things that has no appearance. It welcomes all the hidden winds or breaths and the imaginal beings that ride them. It connects with the sacrifice to emptiness in Change hexagram 41, a Zone of Radical Transformation where we pass through the Tiger's Mouth to Open the Heart anew.



41 *Diminishing* SUN





The old character shows two open hands, a reverential bow and a sacred vessel with a circle above it that indicates empty, hollow, nothing, zero. It is an offering to emptiness. This offering lets you bring together what belongs together (31).

Myths for Change

Sun, Diminishing and *Yi*, Augmenting offer a paradigm of sacrifice and its results. Diminishing is the offering: What is below gives to what is above. The root of the term is a hand and a sacrificial vessel, the act of pouring out the libation. It is the food and wine, the cooked grains in the vessel, the objects and victims offered in sacrifice or put into the tomb, the waning moon, the victim, the old king, all that is offered. It suggests making a reverence, a full ritual prostration and includes the meanings to lessen, harm, destroy, lose or weaken, for the things offered are truly destroyed. It is biting or mordant speech, criticism and self-reproach, a gift that costs much effort. Philosophically, this is the cultivation of power and virtue (*de*), what keeps harm away by reducing things to the essential, eliminating the useless or outmoded and thus revealing the Way.

Concentrate on real inner ideals. Decrease your personal involvements and emotional entanglements. Let go of your compulsions and curb your anger. Inquire into your motivations. Ask yourself why you do things. Augment the receptive and diminish the aggressive. Act this way with confidence, for it is the origin of great good fortune and meaningful events.

Encountering Troubles: the Outer World

12 Danger/Wilderness/*Wei*



Element: Earth **Planet:** Moon **Animal:** Swallow **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing

This Mansion shows the three day market held at the Winter Solstice and also suggests temples and places of worship. It is a building whose roof is too high and a person who is exposed to danger on the high roof, a specific injunction not to travel by land or water or you will face attack or shipwreck. The character means dangerous, peril, a high, elevated cliff and danger from authorities; hard labor and suffering, wounds and pernicious influences. At the same time it contains the subtle beginnings of what is correct, right, just and powerful. It connects with Change hexagram 23.

 **23 Stripping Bo** 剝



The old character shows an inscribed oracle bone, the knife used to carve the characters that express the words of the spirits and a winch used to draw water for irrigation. This ability to strip away the old grows out of an inner balancing that activates hidden creative powers (15).

Myths for Change

The root of “*bo*, stripping” is knife. It represents stripping off rotting skin and flesh, slicing into the body to reveal the bones, uncovering the meats offered in sacrifice, eliminating the outmoded and decadent in preparation for the return of the new. There is deprivation and loss of direction involved in this, imaged as a period of time spent in the grave or the ritual of death and re-birth in the Mourning Hut. Literally, stripping represents the first burial or exposure of the corpse to animals and elements, when the flesh is rotted or stripped away. During this liminal period the soul must be fed and guided in the underworld, a job for the *Wu* or Spirit-Intermediaries who would talk to the ghost of the newly deceased, persuading it to return to the tomb rather than exorcising it as a bad influence. After the exposure or burial, the bones were gathered or disinterred, rubbed with red ocher and put into a vase or urn that served as the spirit-home. The liberated spirit-soul would then re-enter the human community and act as a guide and benefactor to the community of the living. Its name could be used again. The palace women in this figure are attendants on the Queen Mother of the West, the Queen of the Dead. The character shows the knife used to carve the oracle bones that record the words of the departed spirit once it is enshrined as an ancestor. This is a Zone of Radical Transformation when we pass through the Tiger’s Mouth to connect with the Realizing Power of Earth.

- This Mansion shows the change necessary to power the process of transition and initiation. Here Anima Intermediaries, who make the soul connections, and Animus Operators, who clear thinking and feeling, join

to rouse and express the spirit. This empowers the first images of your deeper self (21:22) to free you from oppressive social structures and return you to the sources of human community (47:48).

These are your instructions:

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

Set out wine in a flask and two sacrificial bowls. Use the earthen vessels.

Let in the bonds that come through the window.

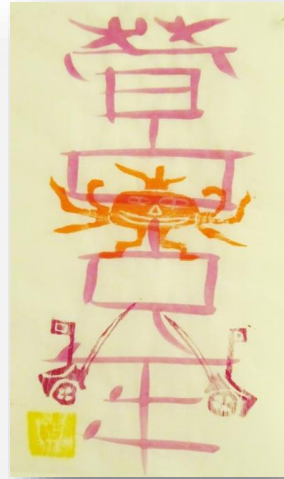
Complete this! It is not a mistake.

This is the border between the strong and the supple. You are trapped or cut off, but do not fight the situation. Your rescuers are coming. Open the window and let them in. Lay out an offering and give of yourself. You are right on the border, the place where events emerge, so go through with this. It is not a mistake.

Embrace the emptiness at the center of all things. Stand in the new space this process has opened in your heart and look at the old patterns of need and fear that make you try to dominate situations and relationships. See these as a flock of mind demons, thought patterns that have been cut off from the old traumas that fed and powered that, that arise around you like a flock of gnats or stinging insects. Simply wipe them away and free your mind into its joyous sense of new identity.

Guideway (29.4 [47.4 : 22.4] 30.4): You are confined by a host of oppressive duties but slowly they will loosen. See this as an omen of what must be cast out and make a sacrifice to your real ideals. The people approaching you now are not outlaws. Attribute great wisdom and worth to the connection. Seek the marriage alliance and make them kin, for they can carry you like the soaring white horse of inspiration. Any distress you might feel will flare up, burn out and be thrown away. Have no fear, you will find supportive friends. Containing your fear and impulse now lets you express the spirit in the human community.

Mansion 13 Palace Fire Ritual/*Ying Shi*



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

This Mansion is the Arsenal and the Regulator, a house full of riches. Within it is a ceremonial pyre where fire offerings are made, the Paper Horses that carry our needs and prayers to the ancestors who live in the Sacred Mountain. This is a time to instigate new ventures, a time when the Emperor bestows his favor and Heaven showers blessings on the fortunate person. It connects with Change hexagram 30 to set up the inner Fire Water Axis:



30 Radiance/Visionary Li



The old character shows the bright bird of omen and a net, a pattern of words and symbols through which we reflect on what it represents and spread the awareness to all. This energy renews itself constantly.

Myths for Change

Li, Radiance is the Bright Presence of things, a numen that surges from the depths and turns them into omens that reveal the spirits. It is associated with birds, nets and victims taken for sacrifice, the rituals of the bird dancers who call the spirits down and the creation of an oracular language, the symbolic openings through which they can speak. It is the yellow *lia*-bird whose song makes the silkworms appear and who sponsors lovers and the dance of the pheasant drumming the earth to call to her mate, a dance that awakens the thunder in spring. *Li*, Radiance and the Bright Omens makes people go in pairs. She suggests extraordinary happenings that separate people from the conventional and evokes stringed instruments, a bride's veil and a woman's decorated girdle. She is associated with brightness, fire and the light of the heavenly bodies, midday sun, summer, the south and the beauty and splendor of things. Radiance or Bright Omens is part of the Axis of Change, the Burning Water or prima materia. She leads through her warm clear light, the radiance of living beings holding together. She is nets and soft things with shells, a bright pheasant, a bird of omen. Radiance works in the Heart, master of the organs, commanding the pathways and the blood, bringing the spark of life and offering a quiet center in which the spirits find a voice.

- This Mansion shows how your inner and outer lives can be re-connected. Here Inspiring Force and Earth join to open a new world. This organizes you to take effective action and find a group (7:8) that lets your real power and destiny emerge (13:14).

These are your instructions:

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

**The Pit is not full. The Earth Spirit is already appeased.
This is not a mistake.**

This is centered but not yet Great. The sacrifice to the Earth Spirit is over. The spirits are appeased. Go on with your life. Be happy with your release. This inner re-grouping lets your real purpose shine.

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. Call up the images of your mentors and initiators, all those who have helped you through the difficult passages of your life, the images of your early traumatic experiences and the gifts that have emerged from them. Think of all the juncture points in your life, your hopes and goals for the future and the new way that is unfolding for you. Let this process convince you of the

absolute necessity to leave the past behind and live in accord with the Way, fulfilling your ancestral potential and becoming who you are meant to be.

Guideway (29.5 [7.5 : 13.5] 30.5): The decisive encounter approaches and you are assured of victory so come out of mourning for the past. Get rid of old ideas, irrelevant images and bad memories. Enter the battle and seize the enemy. People are coming together now after a time of loneliness and separation. Great Leaders meet to mutualize their power for the good of all. Let your tears flow like rivers, for this will release you from the past and open the Way. Something important is returning. Be open and provide what is needed. Containing your fear and impulse now brings you a deep faith in the processes of life.

Mansion 14 Eastern Rampart/*Dong Bi*



Element: Water **Planet:** Mercury **Animal:** Porcupine **Polarity:** (+) Opening

This Mansion is the residence of the God of Wealth and Literature, the treasury of ancient virtue and power. It is a wall, a sheer precipice, a rampart or fortress that protects the archives, libraries and literary works. It brings riches and recognition through respectful offerings to elders and ancestors. It is also the bi-disc, a symbol of the gate to Heaven that has been placed in tombs since the early Neolithic.

- This Mansion frames the overall process and focuses on a breakthrough point. Here Anima Intermediaries, who make the soul connections, and Animus Operators, who clear thinking and feeling, join to clear the inner channels. This disperses your old identity and lets you articulate the image of a world (59:60) in which the joy of renewal can be circulated to all (55:56).

These are your instructions:

Step 6: Omen for the Culmination. This inner stripping leads to a breakthrough.

Tied with stranded ropes, sent away to the dense thorn hedges.

For three years you will see nothing. Trap! The Way closes.

This means losing the Way and being trapped for three years. If you go on as you are you will commit a serious transgression and be bound, judged and imprisoned. Change now!

Turn your new vision back onto the literal events of your life outside the temple. Look carefully at the situations you are involved with that are tangled up with negative emotions and past sorrows, the stereotypes and introjects that keep us cut off from our bodies and from each other, continually at war with our own projected shadow. Confront these difficulties resolutely. Clarify what you must do and then act on it. Move quickly to part from the past. Have confidence. You are connected to the spirits and they will carry you through. Make a vow to bring the outer things you are involved with into line with the Bright Omens that you have been given.

Guideway (29.6 [**59.6 : 55.6**] 30.6): Disperse the bad blood. Deal with it, send it away then you can come forth. Do not stay in mourning for the past. Your melancholy and pain will trap and cut you off. It is time to discipline the Demon Country within you. Sever the heads, offer the old in sacrifice and there will be excellent results. Be open and provide what is needed. Containing your fear and impulse now lets you find a place where you can influence the world you live in.

The Lunar Mansions of the Black Turtle Palace

Mansion 8 Southern Ladle/*Nan Du*



Element: Wood **Planet:** Jupiter **Animal:** Unicorn **Polarity:** (+) Opening
This Mansion shows the head of the tortoise used as a measure for liquid, more specifically distilled spirits, and mean recompense, satisfaction, completion and reward. It presides over wine and wine merchants and is a thanksgiving offered to the spirits for their benefactions. It is a wooden vase that holds water used to wash a corpse, something steep, abrupt and sudden, the ability to discriminate between right and wrong and the littlest thing, the insignificant beginning of profound change.

Mansion 9 Draught Ox/*Qian Niu*



Element: Metal **Planet:** Venus **Animal:** Ox **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing

This Mansion is part of the story of the Ox Boy and the Weaving Maiden who were married and, because they become so taken up with each other, had to be separated and live on opposite shores of the Milky Way and see each other only once a year. The Mansion presides over roads, paths, fields and barriers and warns against the inability to let go of the past that brings sickness and starvation, discord and separation, broken marriages and disappearing resources.

Mansion 10 Serving Maiden/*Xu Nu*



Element: Earth **Planet:** Saturn **Animal:** Bat **Polarity:** (+) Opening
 This Mansion shows the young girls who offer sacrifice and play the flute on the night of the summer solstice festival, asking for a good dowry and a good husband. It presides over weaving, marriages and textiles. Its animal, the Bat, indicates good fortune through dark means, the magic of darkness.

Mansion 11 Void/*Xu*



Element: Variable **Planet:** Sun **Animal:** Rat **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing

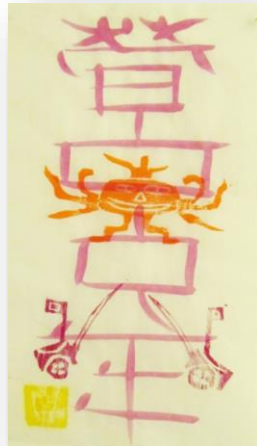
This is the determinative star of the Northern Palace. Its graph is made up of the signs for North and for Tiger. It is the source of rains, snows and storms and its images are a tomb, sepulcher, wild place or wasteland. It means empty, nothing, virtual reality, original chaos, an infinite space-time with no origin purified of all passions, desires and cognitive thought and animated only by vital spirits. This is the empty center that carries and penetrates all phenomena, the true nature of things that has no appearance. It welcomes all the hidden winds or breaths and the imaginal beings that ride them.

Mansion 12 Danger/Wilderness/Wei



Element: Earth **Planet:** Moon **Animal:** Swallow **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing
This Mansion shows the three day market held at the Winter Solstice and also suggests temples and places of worship. It is a building whose roof is too high and a person who is exposed to danger on the high roof, a specific injunction not to travel by land or water or you will face attack or shipwreck. The character means dangerous, peril, a high, elevated cliff and danger from authorities; hard labor and suffering, wounds and pernicious influences. At the same time it contains the subtle beginnings of what is correct, right, just and powerful.

Mansion 13 Palace Fire/Ying Shi



Element: Fire **Planet:** Mars **Animal:** Pig **Polarity:** (+) Opening
This Mansion is the Arsenal and the Regulator, a house full of riches. Within it is a ceremonial pyre where fire offerings are made, the Paper Horses that carry our needs and prayers to the ancestors who live in the Sacred Mountain. This is a time to instigate new ventures, a time when the Emperor bestows his favor and Heaven showers blessings on the fortunate person.

Mansion 14 Eastern Rampart/ *Dong Bi*



Element: Water **Planet:** Mercury **Animal:** Porcupine **Polarity:** (+) Opening
This Mansion is the residence of the God of Wealth and Literature, the treasury of ancient virtue and power. It is a wall, a sheer precipice, a rampart or fortress that protects the archives, libraries and literary works. It brings riches and recognition through respectful offerings to elders and ancestors. It is also the bi-disc, a symbol of the gate to Heaven that has been placed in tombs since the early Neolithic.