

Vermillion Bird Palace

Zhu Niao Gong



Celestial Stems of the Vermillion Bird Palace

Yang Fire: Summer's Brilliance
Yin Fire: Summer's Force

The Vermillion Bird Palace is connected with Summer, spacious, abundant and multicolored, that ripens the fruits; 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 people together. It is associated with the Feeling function and the Earth Gate, bringing everything what it needs to connect and flourish. In the Four Pillars it is the core of the Day Pillar or Self Image, your conscious image of who you are. It is your ally in the battles of identity. You can see how it is formed by reflecting on your first experiences of your individual identity in early childhood and the forces that threatened it.

You enter this Palace through the **Southern Gate**, the **Dark Bird Gate** whose core drive is to connect the dark flow of the Ghost River and the snares of fate with the Bright Omens of destiny held in the heart.



Imagine you are entering this great temple through the **Dark Bird Gate** and look around. Four great pillars, translucent pink marble veined with indigo, rise at the four corners of the inner space, supporting the round dome of the dark heavens, filled with the Summer stars that shine down from this quadrant of the sky. This space embodies the **Fire Process**.

Fire Process

Brightness and warmth spread beauty and change awareness.

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.



Fire/HO

The Fire character shows flames rising from a ritual base. Meanings of the character 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.

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 inspired and oriented you in your darkest hours and most difficult passages. 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 your visionary capacity to ripen and transform insight into bright omens of change.

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 truly came to your aid in times of danger 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, terror, over-excitement, need for control and sense of abandonment. 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 your spirit helpers 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 Vermillion Bird Palace is embodied in Hexagram 30 of the Classic of Change.



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.

Circle of Meanings

Light, warmth, awareness, brightness; illuminate, discriminate, articulate, see clearly and spread the light; join with, adhere to, meet with, encounter partners by chance; a mandate, omen or sign from above, the Bright Omens that reveals the presence of the spirit in all things; a powerful shaman who is part of the inner Axis of Change. *Heart theme*: 28 the Great Transition and emergence as an individual. This is a Realizing Figure and Engine of Change that recharges experience with meaning and energy.

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.

When you accept the journey, the Lunar Mansions governed by the power of the **Bright Omens** 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 **Vermillion Bird**. 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 Vermillion Bird

that connect the dark flow of the Ghost River and the snares of fate with the Bright Omens of destiny held in the heart.

Foundations: the Inner World

Mansion 22 Eastern Well/Jing



Element: Water **Planet:** Jupiter **Animal:** Tapir **Polarity:** (+/-) Variable

This Mansion presides over cleaning, ablutions, purifications, expurgations, repairs and refurbishments. It cleanses away criminal acts and restores proper order. It is a time to open doors, work in the garden, take examinations, open the water ways and raise silkworms, a time when flocks grow fat and prosper. It connects directly with Change hexagram 48 Well whose meanings include: underlying structure or network, resources held in common, the source of life-water welling up from the depths; communicate, interact, return to common needs, strengths and feelings; life and community in good order, a norm, model, measure. The root of the character is the pair or pairing, the rejoining of the opposites.

As the Eastern Well (Spring and Wood, the parent of the Fire of Summer) it is a place where the Wood process that carries all the memories and traumas of childhood and early adolescence, particularly the sexually charged episodes, emerges and breaks through the screens of repression. This Wood becomes the Well Bucket, reaching down and bringing up the underground water, the grandparent and controller of Fire. The generational stream begins to flow backwards.

- 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 will attract a new fate.

Treading crosswise. Honor the Bright Omen!

This is not a mistake.

This uses casting out faults! These are good omens, a bright presence for beginnings. Be very careful with these first steps. Polish and clarify your motives and feelings. You will not be making a mistake. Treat this with respect.

Call up the experiences that are the root of your fear, lack, need and pain. Visualize each of these experiences in their original setting and project them into an icon do you can look at them and feel into them without fear, need or anger. Carefully look at both aspects of the experiences, the sense of abuse or trauma and the initiatory aspect, how the experience sought to open you to some aspect of your destiny. Carefully separate the sexual and visionary aspects from the screen memory of trauma and pain.

Guideway (29.1 [60.1 : 56.1] 30.1): If you respond the same way again and again you will be caught in the tomb of depression and melancholy. Do not leave your inner door and chambers now. If you make an impulsive move, you will be split off from your place and grasp disaster. Search outside the norms and re-imagine the situation. Do not be afraid to act alone. You are connected with a creative force. Accepting inner guidance now lets you see the patterns that mark real ends and beginnings.

Mansion 23 Ghost Cart/ Yu Gui



Element: Metal **Planet:** Venus **Animal:** Sheep/Goat **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing

The Ghost Cart collects and transports ghosts and demons and the miasmas they spread that can cut you off and freeze you in fear. It is the sign for the last day of a ritual period when divinations were made to eliminate threatening

forces that might harm the new beginning. It presides over dire fates, departed spirits and places where men have been killed, battlefields, horses, soldiers, death and loss. It is also treasure buried during war, hidden jewels and accumulated wealth. This Mansion connects directly with Change hexagram 38 the Shadow Lands which means: Opposition, discord, arguments, conflict; step outside the norms, cast out, in exile; a journey to the ghost world, meetings with hidden spirits; change conflict to fertile tension through dealing with the shadow; recognizing the other as truly other.

- This Position 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 will lead to harmony with others.

Yellow Radiance. The Bright Omen.

Wise Words! The Way to the Source is open.

You acquire the Way and the center. You have found the connection. Light and power surge up from below. The Way is fundamentally open.

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. Release these embodied memories and project them into the Ghost Cart. Then embrace the sensual and visionary experiences and feelings that are being freed from the Ghost River of past pain and bring them into present time. 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): As you venture into danger you will get what you need by being flexible and adaptable. Gather people around you and do not impose your will. You are at the center of this group, a part of its origin, so do not let this chance slip through your fingers. Use a great chariot, an inspiring idea, to carry your feelings and desires. A blossoming time is approaching. Be resolute and part from the past. You are connected with a creative force. Accepting inner guidance lets you connect action with the spirit.

Mansion 24 Willow/*Liu*



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

This Mansion connects with 18 Pleiades/Closed Door in the Azure Dragon Palace as sacrificial rites and offerings that aid the sun when it is dark, eclipsed or obscured. It wards off poisons, stills pain and is connected to the act of divination, for the original instruments used to consult the Change were probably willow wands. It is also the weeping willow, intense sadness and tears, and further evokes the willow-world of sexuality, the pleasure houses and dissipation. It is imaged as the catafalque covering a coffin on the funeral cart. All these associations link it with Change hexagram 44.



The old character shows a pregnant woman and a woman giving birth, sign for the Royal Bride who arrives at the borders and will give birth to an heir. This moment of creative contact develops from accumulating the small and gathering in your ghosts (9).

Myths for Change

Gou, Coupling is the appearance of the fate announced by an oracular message. It is the procession of the Royal Bride appearing at the borders on her journey to the sacred marriage with the King that will renew the time. It portrays a strong woman, a queen or ruler who distributes the fates. She symbolizes the return of the feminine power, of desire, joy, and beauty, the ability to manifest and take pleasure in life and brings strange encounters in her train. She inaugurates the River-Mountain festivals and sponsors all forms of coupling and mating, particularly the brief encounters when men and women meet, mate and take joy in each other. She presides over the autumn marriages and the omens of fertility, the *bin*-ritual and the “fish in the wrapping,” and suggests the willow-world of sexuality symbolized by melons and creeping vines. This is the Young Ancestress coming back from the mountain after receiving the seed of the spirit. It is the Ox Boy crossing the river of stars on a bridge of magpies, the lover’s bird, to mate with the Weaver Girl on the Feast of Women, the 7th day of the 7th moon. The injunction is not to grasp the woman by force but to help her on her journey to the King and the royal marriage. It will lead to a new order, a containing beauty that tumbles down from Heaven.

- This Position 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 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 will let you make your way in life.

The setting sun’s Radiance.

**If you do not beat the clay drum and sing,
you will lament like a Great old person. Alas!**

Trap! The Way closes.

Why let this last? Instead of spreading the warmth of the bright presence you see everything in the light of the setting sun. If you do not beat your drum and sing your songs now, you will end up lamenting all the terrible things that have happened in your life. Why go on like this?

This is the time to look deeply into your real motives. Fully embrace and embody the sexuality and sense of strange and new possibilities that have been freed from the stream of the past. Leave the weeping tree behind you. Let this sense of a new destiny that is approaching you outside the norms and conventions energize you and open you to the wonder and mystery of life.

Guideway (29.3 [48.3 : 21.3] 30.3): If you push on into your melancholy you will be trapped in a fatal diversion. The well, the source of common value and feeling is disturbed and turbid. You feel the sorrow of someone who is connected to the source of life but has no one with whom to share it. As you bite through the obstacles to union you will encounter something poisonous. You must bring it out or become the victim of your own past. Proceed step by step. Accepting inner guidance now lets you find a place where you can influence the world you live in.

Transition

Mansion 25 Bird/Seven Stars/*Niao*



Element: Variable **Planet:** Sun **Animal:** Horse **Agency:** (+/-) Variable

This Mansion contains the Bird Star, the determinative star that gives its name to the Vermillion Palace. It marks the summer solstice, the bridge between the two halves of the year and presides over bridges, fords, passages and the dangers on journeys. It connects you with Change hexagram 28 Great Traverses.



28 Great Transition DA GUO





The old characters show the Great People and three footsteps at a crossroads, a decisive moment expressed as a mountain ridge or boundary and a closed mouth. This is the ground that lets you connect your inner and outer lives (61).

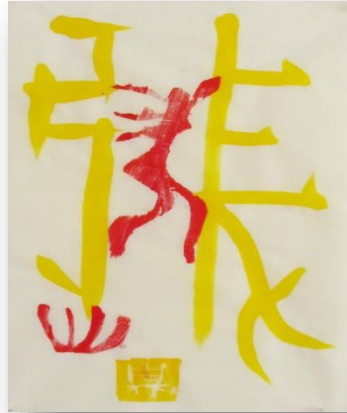
Myths for Change

Da Guo, Great Traverses or the Great Transition is a dialogue between structure, the house and the ridgepole as the social structures that support and constrain us, and the process of becoming a true individual, a great being with an individual identity free of social conventions. It represents the initiation of a noble child through which he becomes a warrior and acquires a ritual presence, the transition of marriage, the transition to a higher class or becoming a high ranking lord. It is the transition time in a ritual, a passage through liminal space where structures dissolve, a re-ordering of fundamental principles. It is a matter of life and death, of letting go of the past and crossing the threshold, a crisis in life when you must stand by what you know to be true and find the power to exist independent of collective norms.

This is a critical situation, a moment of truth. Push your principles beyond ordinary limits and accept the movement it brings. Have a noble purpose. The structure of your life is in danger but there is a creative force at work in this breakdown. Impose a real direction on things. Do not listen to conventional thinking. This will bring success and the capacity to bring things to maturity.

Encountering Troubles: the Outer World

Mansion 26 Spreading/Drawn Bow/Chang



Element: Variable **Planet:** Moon **Animal:** Deer **Polarity:** (+) Opening

This Mansion is a spreading net, the string of a bow and the string of a musical instrument. It is game collected for a feast, festivities, gifts and music, cooking and preparing food. It is a sign of right conduct rewarded, flourishing like the industrious silkworm, harmonious relations and the acquisition of new properties. It means to extend, deploy, fix in place; to escape or separate from noxious influences; to arrange and prepare something great, vast and prosperous.

- This Position 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 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 will lead to what is greater.

It comes suddenly, flares up and dies out.

This is an image of what can be abandoned.

This has no place in your life. This is an omen of what must be cast out so that your life can proceed. It comes suddenly, burns up and dies out. You can simply throw it away. Be assured it has no place in your life.

As you approach the threshold to the outer world, Let the deep feminine power of the Matchmaker show you how to act through the receptive and the feminine,

Stand in the new space this process has opened in your heart and feel your embodied sexuality and awareness. Now 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 new peace and embodied truth.

Guideway (29.4 [47.4 : 22.4] 30.4): You may feel trapped and cut off but do not fight the situation. Lay out an offering to the hidden spirits. You are right on the border, the place where events emerge. The host of oppressive duties that confine you will slowly loosen. The people approaching you now are not outlaws. Attribute great wisdom and worth to them. Seek the marriage alliance and make them kin, for they can carry you like the soaring white horse of inspiration. These goings and comings will release the energy now bound up in the past. Step outside the norms and re-imagine the situation. Accepting inner guidance now lets you see the patterns that mark real ends and beginnings.

Mansion 27 Wings/ Yi



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

This Mansion portrays the Grand Assembly, the Emperor's speech of praise and admonishment that culminates in a Grand Concert and the music of the season. It is the wing of a bird, the wing you will rise and fall on, that aids and protects, bringing things to completion and perfection and repulsing negative influences. It is also the handles of the great ritual vessel called the Ding in which a sacred meal was prepared that reunites, spirits, ancestors and noble humans, signifying a new relation between the visible and the invisible.

- 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 re-grouping will let your real purpose shine.

Tears flowing like rivers, lamenting like mourners at a funeral.

Wise Words! The Way opens.

The king and the minister are brightened and shine. It feels as if you have lost a connection with someone important to you. Let your sadness be seen, like mourners at a funeral rite who earth the ghost and release the spirit.

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 that has inspired you, the images of your early traumatic experiences and what has emerged from them. Think of all the juncture points in your life, your friends and your oppressors, and imagine them. Think over your hopes and goals for the future and the new way that is unfolding for you. Imagine all this as the people and stars gathered at the great assembly and put them into the Ding, the great Vessel.



50 Vessel

The old character shows the vessel used for the sacred meal that joins spirits and humans and a head filled with spirit. This new paradigm develops from establishing and stabilizing the dwelling (37).

Circle of Meanings

A major paradigm shift symbolized as a cast bronze cauldron used for the sacred meal that unites spirits, ancestors and noble people; hold, contain, transform, transmute through symbolic imagination; high divinations, new spiritual paradigm and sign of blessing; establish, found, consecrate, found a noble house and line; secure, precious, well-grounded. *Heart Theme*: 43 Decide and part from the past.

See the whole interconnected network of things contained and cooking in this Vessel. Let this great vision embrace you. Let its transformative energy turn everything that has touched you, past, present and future, into Bright Omens of Change.

Guideway (29.5 [7.5 : 13.5] 30.5): The sacrifice to the Earth Spirit is over. The danger is passed and the spirits are appeased. Have no fear. The decisive encounter approaches and you are assured of victory. Come out of mourning for the past. Get rid of old ideas, irrelevant images and bad memories. People are coming together now after a time of loneliness and separation. The Great Leaders are meeting to mutualize their power for the good of all. Have no fear. You will soon find supportive friends. You are coupled with a creative force. Accepting inner guidance now lets you connect your actions with the spirit.

Mansion 28 Celestial Carriage/Mounting Board/*Chen*



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

This Mansion is the image of a car or chariot on a path that continually turns and returns. It controls the winds, master of swiftness, and presides over travel and vehicles. Its influence spreads like the master tone that emanates from the plucked string of a lute, gathering tribute from foreign lands. It signifies the

advent of wealth from numerous and abundant sources and blesses those married on its day with a dragon child of extreme talent who brings glory and riches to his family.

- This Position 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 Culmination. This inner stripping leads to a breakthrough.

The King sets out on campaign. There will be excellent results.

Sever the heads, offer the rebel chiefs in sacrifice.

Put them to the question. This is not a mistake.

Use this to correct the balance of power. This is a time to take aggressive measures. Something harmful has occurred and you must deal with it. Be determined. Seize what is truly important. Offer the old in sacrifice. This is not a mistake.

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. You are confronting the flood of poisonous ideas, prejudices, hatreds and vilification that plagues the body politic, the stereotypes and introjects that keep us cut off from our bodies and from each other, continually at war with our own projected shadow. Dissolve these old structures and let your sensual and creative the energy flow. Clear up misunderstandings, illusions and obstacles, melt the ice, dispel the fear and eliminate the suspicion. Clear away what is blocking clarity. Let the sun shine through. This is the right time to embark on a significant enterprise. Put your ideas to the trial. 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): If you go on in the old ways now you will be bound, judged and imprisoned. Disperse the bad blood. Send it away and then you can come forth. Fix this omen and you will receive the blessing. Do not stay in mourning for the past. Your melancholy and pain will trap and cut you off. A time of abundance is coming. You are coupled with a creative force.

The Lunar Mansions of the Vermillion Bird Palace

Mansion 22 Eastern Well/*Jing*



Element: Water **Planet:** Jupiter **Animal:** Tapir **Polarity:** (+/-) Variable
This Mansion presides over cleaning, ablutions, purifications, expurgations, repairs and refurbishments. It cleanses away criminal acts and restores proper order. It is a time to open doors, work in the garden, take examinations, open the water ways and raise silkworms, a time when flocks grow fat and prosper. It suggests the underlying structure or network, resources held in common, the source of life-water welling up from the depths; return to common needs, strengths and feelings; life and community in good order. The root of the character is the pair or pairing, the rejoining of the opposites.

Mansion 23 Ghost Cart/*Yu Gui*



Element: Metal **Planet:** Venus **Animal:** Sheep/Goat **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing

The Ghost Cart collects and transports ghosts and demons and the miasmas they spread that can cut you off and freeze you in fear. It is the sign for the last day of a ritual period when divinations were made to eliminate threatening forces that might harm the new beginning. It presides over dire fates, departed spirits and places where men have been killed, battlefields, horses, soldiers,

death and loss. It is also treasure buried during war, hidden jewels and accumulated wealth and a journey to the ghost world.

Mansion 24 Willow/*Liu*



Element: Earth **Planet:** Saturn **Animal:** Buck **Polarity:** (-) Enclosing
This Mansion connects with 18 Pleiades/Closed Door in the Azure Dragon Palace as sacrificial rites and offerings that aid the sun when it is dark, eclipsed or obscured. It wards off poisons, stills pain and is connected to the act of divination, for the original instruments used to consult the Change were probably willow wands. It is also the weeping willow, intense sadness and tears, and further evokes the willow-world of sexuality, the pleasure houses and dissipation. It is imaged as the catafalque covering a coffin on the funeral cart.

Mansion 25 Bird/*Seven Stars/Niao*



Element: Variable **Planet:** Sun **Animal:** Horse **Agency:** (+/-) Variable
This Mansion contains the Bird Star, the determinative star that gives its name to the Vermillion Palace. It marks the summer solstice, the bridge between the

two halves of the year and presides over bridges, fords, passages and the dangers on journeys.

Mansion 26 Spreading/Drawn Bow/Chang



Element: Variable **Planet:** Moon **Animal:** Deer **Polarity:** (+) Opening
This Mansion is a spreading net, the string of a bow and the string of a musical instrument. It is game collected for a feast, festivities, gifts and music, cooking and preparing food. It is a sign of right conduct rewarded, flourishing like the industrious silkworm, harmonious relations and the acquisition of new properties. It means to extend, deploy, fix in place; to escape or separate from noxious influences; to arrange and prepare something great, vast and prosperous.

Mansion 27 Wings/Yi



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

This Mansion portrays the Grand Assembly, the Emperor's speech of praise and admonishment that culminates in a Grand Concert and the music of the season. It is the wing of a bird, the wing you will rise and fall on, that aids and protects, bringing things to completion and perfection and repulsing negative influences. It is also the handles of the great ritual vessel called the Ding in which a sacred meal was prepared that reunites, spirits, ancestors and noble humans, signifying a new relation between the visible and the invisible.

Mansion 28 Celestial Carriage/Mounting Board/*Chen*



Element: Water **Planet:** Mercury **Animal:** Worm **Polarity:** (+) Opening
This Mansion is the image of a car or chariot on a path that continually turns and returns. It controls the winds, master of swiftness, and presides over travel and vehicles. Its influence spreads like the master tone that emanates from the plucked string of a lute, gathering tribute from foreign lands. It signifies the advent of wealth from numerous and abundant sources and blesses those married on its day with a dragon child of extreme talent who brings glory and riches to his family.

