

Central Palace
The Playing Field of Earth
Zhong Fu Gong



Celestial Stems of the Central Palace
Yang Earth: Central Palace
Yin Earth: Drives and Passions

The Central Palace defines the playing field where your dialogue with destiny takes place. It interconnects the Four Pillars and their inner palaces and enables their transformations and opens an old sacred cosmos that has acted as a place of close encounter with the spirit world for countless generations.



31:32 Conjoining and Persevering displays the process through which spirit enters and influences the human world, offering omens that, when given an enduring form, help the heart endure on the voyage of life.

This cosmos has the shape of the Numinous Turtle, swimming in the endless seas of the Way or Dao. Heaven is above, Earth and the Ghost River are below, the Sun Tree lies to the East, the Moon Tree is in the far West. The space between, spread to the Four Directions, is the world we live in, full of shrines and temples where we talk with the ghosts and spirits. This is the All-Under-Heaven, where we are born, lead our lives, fulfill our destinies and return to the source of all.

The Central Palace is the voice at the center of all created things.

Center/Zhong



The old character shows a square field with a line going through the middle, drawn as a continuous line. It is a banner at the center of the square field of earth, a ceremony that controls the hidden winds, an ancestral altar and is connected with the night of the autumn equinox. It means the middle, the interior of all things, to interiorize, inner spirit, the depth of the heart, an

individual; to concentrate forces, to catch and hold, touch deeply, connect and join; to make use of, by means of, efficacious; prosperous, luxuriant; equity, justice, a harmonizing influx. The center roots and supports vital force, an inner equilibrium the controls the permutations of the hidden winds. It is a non localized space between Heaven and Earth that allows the myriad beings to appear and the place in space and time that supports them, the central axis of conduct.

Its purpose or activity is manifesting the symbols that give safety and security to the Ten Thousand Things.

Symbolizing/ *Xiang*



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

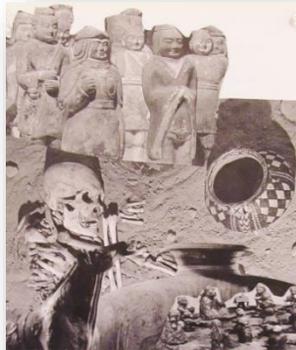
Its central focus is the power to endure.

Enduring/HENG



The character shows the heart and the path of the crescent moon. It means to create an enduring form for the gifts of the spirit, to make power and virtue endure in the heart; to continue in what is right, endure and renew the Way; constant, consistent, durable, self-renewing, regular, perpetual, universal; a stable married couple.

We enter this Palace through the **Earth Gate**, the central pivot of transformation in the alternation of day and night, yin and yang, the point around which the seasons and directions revolve and through which they change.



Imagine you are entering this great temple through the Earth Gate and look around. Four great pillars rise at the four corners of the field of earth to frame the world we live in and hold up the round dome of the central heavens above. These are the Four Sides or Directions.

To the East is the **Groundbreaker's Gate**, a pillar of translucent green jade veined with deep turquoise, surrounded by the **Spring** stars or Lunar Mansions that shine from this quadrant of the sky. It embodies the **Wood** Process that gives you your Generational Mission and carries your family histories, the intergenerational conflicts and their burden of inner corruption. It is associated with the Sensation Function and its task is to help you connect with the inspiring force of the Dragon.

To the South is the **Dark Bird Gate**, a pillar of translucent pink marble veined with indigo, surrounded by the **Summer** stars or Lunar Mansions that shine from this quadrant of the sky. It embodies the **Fire** Process that gives you your Self-Image, your conscious image of who you are and how you do things that is constructed from personal experiences in early childhood. It is associated with the Feeling function and its task is service, bringing everything what it needs to connect and flourish.

To the West is the **Tiger Gate**, a pillar of translucent white marble veined with deep crimson, surrounded by the **Autumn** stars or Lunar Mansions that shine down from this quadrant of the sky. It embodies the **Metal** Process that gives you your **Life Manager**, your social personality and your style of ordering life and doing business. It carries your personal fate and inner motivations and affects how you relate to others, formed by your reactions to the parenting you received. It is associated with the Thinking function and its task is to help you cooperate with the ongoing process of change.

To the North is the **Ghost Dancer's Gate**, a pillar of deep black jade shot with flashes of fire, surrounded by the **Winter** stars or Lunar Mansions that shine from this quadrant of the sky. This space embodies the **Water** Process that gives you your **Hidden Face**, the true sign upon which your deep personality is based that reflects mature adulthood, artistic desires and the inner goals of your life. It is associated with the Intuition function and works to prepare the decisive new move to a higher state of awareness.

Hidden Winds arise from each of these Gates that circulate the breath of the Celestial Stems through the inner and outer worlds of your experience.

Winds/*Feng*



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

The space between these Pillars or Directions embodies the **Earth** Process.

Earth Process

Yield and serve, common labor produces concrete results.

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



Earth TU

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

As you begin to circle the inner temple of **Earth** 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 given you the inner strength and symbolic insight to endure in life and serve the ongoing process of the real. 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 deep power to serve and protect and give birth to yourself in the process.

The Star Garden: Bringing Heaven to Earth

There are no Lunar Mansions in the Central Palace. Rather, it focuses on the Celestial Pole Star and the central star group known as the Northern Ladle.



The Northern Ladle, made up of the seven stars in what we call Ursa Major, is the center of the sky. It is surrounded by two chains of stars that form the Zi Wei Guan, the Forbidden Purple Enclosure.

The Ladle is a direction finder and transmitter of heavenly energy. It rotates on the central axis of Heaven-Earth to assign the stories of time to the Ten Thousand Things. By pointing at one of the 28 Lunar Mansions each day, it gives the beings born into that day their Lunar Birth Sign and Hidden Destiny, activating the Fire-Water Axis in the individual through that sign.

The individual stars that make up the Ladle are centers of power that, when reflected into the Earth of the Center, recharge life with meaning and energy. The shape and dynamic of the Central Palace and this process of connecting Heaven and earth is embodied in Change hexagram 11.





The old character links the shape of the Great Person and the Great Mountain with two hands like the woods embracing its flanks and waters running down its slopes to bring new life. This flow is the inner ground that lets you overcome outer obstruction and corruption (12).

Circle of Meanings

Connection, peace, harmony, abundance; flowering, opening, expanding communication; connection and communion; the New King and the high ritual that brings a fertile new connection of Heaven and Earth. *Heart Theme: 54* a radical change of state through forces beyond your control. This is an Inspiring Figure, a site of intense mediating activity that connects the primal powers to personal life and cultural change. It is a Gate to the stage of the Symbolic Life when we confront the problems of individual identity, sexuality and personal destiny or mission.

Myths for Change

Tai, Pervading, is a special form of the character *Da*, Great. It represents the great rituals (*da xeng*) that connect Heaven and Earth, rituals enacted on the first of the sacred mountains, *Taishan*. Only the King could make these sacrifices, for they involved direct communication with the Royal Ancestors and *Di* or Heaven that insures the communication between Heaven and Earth is open and flowing for all. *Tai*, Pervading suggests the time when the spirits walked among us bringing ease, joy and prospering for all. It evokes the first royal sacrifice made by the father of the Zhou, King Wen, which empowered the dynasty. The character *Tai* is phonetically connected to the names of the six stars of the Bin asterism, the Great Bear or Dipper that is the home of High Lord of Heaven who sends the fates to all. Its root is water and crossing the rivers and its old form is *Kan*, the Underworld or Ghost River. *Tai*, Pervading is the fluid metabolism of things, the flow, the streaming of the Way and the rising juices of sexual attraction, joy and ecstasy. It dissolves the spirit and puts it into circulation, a joyous flow and a revivifying spring that means

fishes, hidden wealth and the fertile womb. It shows the symbols of what is going and coming on the river of time, giving you the spirit to spread inner blessings and the fortitude to stand by what is right.

Foundations: the Inner World

1 Heaven's Ax/Tian Shu



This Star Cluster channels the power of **Heaven** and the Emperor. It is a war ax with a bronze head and cutting edge on a bundled wood or bamboo handle. Two of these go in front of a war chariot to open its way by cutting through all obstacles. It is also seen as the morning star.

- This Star 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 connects your struggle to free yourself from conventional habits and memories (25:26) with a great cultural project in the making (45:46).

These are your instructions to connect with and embody the spirit of this star:

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

Pull up and weave the twisted thatch-grass, each with its kind.

Wise Words! Chastising opens the Way.

Locate your purpose outside yourself. Take vigorous action to get out of your lowly place and find the people you really belong with. Put things in order and set out. The Way is open. You are preparing something great.

Assemble the resources for a great project. Unite the people involved through common feeling. Turn them into an organized whole. Be like the king who imagines a temple full of images that connect the people with greater forces. Visit those who can help and advise you. Look at your own central idea and how you organize your thoughts. Make a great offering and you will reap a great reward.

Guideway (11.1 [46.1 : 45.6] 12.6): The old time is ending. Climb the sacred mountain, for the Way to the great begins here. Expressing your feelings now topples obstructions to communication and subverts corrupt authority. Step outside the norms. Re-imagine the situation. Cooperate with the ongoing process of change. Inner perseverance now lets you find a place where you can influence the world you live in.

2 Heaven's Jade Pivot/*Tian Xuan*



This Star Cluster channels the power and receptive strength of the **Earth** and the Empress. It is like something held in the hand and turned to all sides, a path or way that constantly turns and returns.

- This Star shows show how your inner and outer lives can be re-connected. Here Fire and Water join to establish the inner Axis of Change. This energizes your first experiences of spiritual and social

institutions (5:6) to free you from your need for recognition and your fears of being rejected (35:36).

These are your instructions to connect with and embody the spirit of this star:

Step 2 Inner Center: This inner re-organization leads to harmony with others.
Put on the hollow gourds and cross the River. Do not put off leaving.
Your partners disappear. You acquire honor by moving to the center.

Moving toward the center using the shining Great. You are surrounded by a wasteland. Gather your determination and cross the river to the vibrant center of life. The people you identify with will disappear. Have no fear. Your integrity will be honored and your desires fulfilled.

This is a time when you will emerge slowly and surely into the full light of day and be recognized. Be calm in your strength and poise. Give gifts of strength and spirit to enhance those connected with you. Delight in things. You will be received by the higher powers three times in a single day.

Guideway (11.2 [36.2 : 35.5] 12.5): You are unrecognized and feel wounded, but you can rescue the situation with a burst of invigorating strength. Losing or acquiring, have no cares. Attach yourself to the quiet at the center of the heart and you will soon flourish. These goings and comings release energy now bound up in the past. Cooperate with the ongoing process of change. Inner perseverance now lets you find real directions in life.

3 Heaven's Trigger/ *Tian Ji*



This Star Cluster channels the power of **Fire** as it is born from Wood. It governs internal chaos by activating the hidden triggers, motives, motors and strategies that enable our profound nature to respond to spiritual impulses. It is the inner working of the world, the threshold and the favorable moment.

- This Star 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 lets you see the necessary withdrawal you are faced with (33:34) as a time when you can become a true adult (19:20).

These are your instructions to connect with and embody the spirit of this star:

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

No level that does not slope. No going without a return.

Trial: this hardship and drudgery is not a mistake.

Have no cares. You are connected to the spirits.

You will share the great meal and find Heaven's blessing.

This is the border of Heaven and Earth. After a level road there always is a difficult climb. But if you do not let go of your present connections, the spirit cannot return. The difficulties you face have real spiritual meaning. Going through the hardship draws the blessings down. You can join with others in this new and loving spirit.

These are the rituals of mourning that turn a deceased parent into a true ancestor. Something great is approaching you now. Welcome it without expectations. Do not try to take immediate advantage. This is the point of contact with the new after a time of dissolution. Look at everything with care and sympathy. It will open a whole new cycle of time. This is particularly favorable for what is growing. Rushing to completion now will cut you off from the process and leave you open to danger.

Guideway (11.3 [**19.3 :20.4**] 12.4): Your present connections may look sweet, but no good can come of them. Your grief at their failure will release you. Make the crossing to the new time. You will be a guest at the feast when the king hosts the ancestors and see the city shining. Cultivate this radiant omen in your solitude as you retreat from the past. Something significant is returning. Be open and provide what is needed. Inner perseverance now lets you express the spirit in the human community.

Transition

Heaven's Balance/ *Tian Quan*



This Star Cluster channels the power of **Water** and the Ghost River. It is an image of the weights on a balance and is the rising force behind power, authority, depth of judgment and punishments. It means to evaluate, compare, examine in view of the actual circumstances and find what is equal, just and right.

This Star Cluster embodies is the heart of the world of the Four Pillars, helping us acquire the inner power and virtue to become who we are meant to be. Jung called this individuation, becoming whole, no longer the victim of cultural stereotypes or inner corruption, the histories of rage, pain, need and betrayal passed on to us in our family histories. This focus and goal is expressed in a key hexagram from the Classic of Change:



28 Great Transition

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 crisis is the inner ground that lets us connect our inner and outer lives in the truth of the Opened Heart (61).

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 and the transition to a higher class or becoming a high ranking lord. It is a passage through liminal space where structures dissolve, a re-ordering of fundamental principles. This 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 an Engine and Heart Theme of Change that recharges experience with meaning and energy. It is a key site on the Sacred Sickness Pathways that connect personal disorders with cultural change and the Mission of the stage of the Symbolic Life that centers on initiation and the search for an image of the deeper self.

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

5 Jade Yoke / Yu Heng



This Star Cluster channels the power of **Earth**, offering support from the center to the four quarters. It is government in harmony, gems of all kinds that come from earth and the sign of beautiful women, the Palace Jewels or Jade Maidens. Its image is a yoke or horn board, like the horn board for the Red Bull raised for the Spring Sacrifice. It represents inner equilibrium, balanced and mobile energy, the just choice, right and correct. It is also a support for the urns that offer sustenance to the departed ones.

- This Star 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 lets you see the necessary withdrawal you are faced with (33:34) as a time when you can become a true adult (19:20).

These are your instructions to connect with and embody the spirit of this star:

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

Fluttering, fluttering, like a young bird leaving the nest.

Have no fear. This is not a warning.

If you are not affluent, use your neighbor's wealth.

Your connection to the spirits will carry you through.

Let go of possessions and center the heart's desire. You are afraid to leave the nest. Have no fear. Come out and live in the great world. If you need help, use your connection to people who are your spiritual kin and act on your heart's desire. You have something important to give.

Focus your strength through a central creative idea and drive forward. Step outside the rules. Putting your ideas to the trial will bring profit and insight. Beware of hurting others needlessly through excessive use of force.

Guideway (11.4 [34.4 : 33.3] 12.3):. This is a time for resolute action. Break through the entanglements and the cause for sorrow will disappear. Retreat from the past and the angry ghosts that plague you. Make an offering to the spirit. Use friends and helpers. Be resolute. You are connected to a creative force. Inner devotion now brings you a liberating awareness of the whole.

6 Opening Gates/Kai Yang



This Star Cluster channels the power of **Wood** and bright yang energy as it is born from Water. It is the gates of the granaries. It opens the imagination to the spirit and clarifies communication between inside and outside, beginning, founding, liberating and reclaiming.

- This Star shows how your inner and outer lives can be re-connected. Here Fire and Water join to establish the inner Axis of Change. This energizes your first experiences of spiritual and social institutions (5:6) to free you from your need for recognition and your fears of being rejected (35:36).

These are your instructions to connect with and embody the spirit of this star:

Step 5 Outer Center: This inner re-grouping lets your real purpose shine.
The great ancestor offers the maidens in marriage.
Use this happiness and satisfaction. It is the footstep of the spirit.

Wise Words! The Way to the Source is open.

The center moves by using desire. This is a ritual union that will have repercussions through the generations, an omen of future happiness that will gratify your desires and realize all your aims. The footsteps of the spirits are here. The Way to the Source is open.

You are not in control of things now, so do not try to make predictions or advance yourself. Think about what is necessary and wait for the right moment to provide it. Illuminate things through repeated efforts. Act this way with confidence. This is the right time to enter the stream of life with a goal or embark on a new enterprise.

Guideway (11.5 [5.5 : 6.2] 12.2): Gather with others and share what you have and you will share in the sacred meal that unites spirits, ancestors and nobles. Flee from old disputes. Stay true to yourself. Quarrels will disappear and new friends will seek you out. Step outside the norms and re-imagine the situation. Cooperate with the ongoing process of change. Inner devotion now brings you the ability to manage the flow and flux of life.

Jade's Brilliance/ Yao Guang



This Star Cluster channels the power of **Metal** as it is born in the Earth, ores, gems and precious stones. The image is a person kneeling in front of a low altar made of lustrous jade with their head filled with light and spirit, a celestial brilliance that illuminates all existence.

- This Star 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 connects your struggle to free yourself from conventional

habits and memories (25:26) with a great cultural project in the making (45:46).

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

The city walls dissolve and return to the moat.

Do not use the legions. This originates from the capital. Trial: Distress.

Your fate is in disarray. The structure of things is collapsing. Do not try to force things by acting aggressively, for this dissolution has fate behind it. Though you may feel confused you are in the right position to change your thinking. Take your time. Collect the energy and insight to try again.

Disentangle yourself from compulsions and negative patterns. If you can clarify your awareness you will acquire the capacity to act spontaneously and confidently. If you do not correct yourself, you will consistently make mistakes through faulty perception. Nothing will bring you advantage.

Guideway (11.6 [26.6 : 25.1] 12.1): Disentangle yourself from the ghosts that haunt you. Have no doubts. An unexpected encounter will soon correct your situation and let the blessings flow. This unfortunate incident can turn out to be Heaven's highway. Take vigorous action to find the people you really belong with. Step outside the norms and re-imagine the situation. Cooperate with the ongoing process of change. Inner devotion now lets you see the patterns that mark real ends and beginnings.

The Stars of the Central Palace

There are no Lunar Mansions in the Central Palace. Rather, it focuses on the Celestial Pole Star and the central star group known as the Northern Ladle.



The Northern Ladle, made up of the seven stars in what we call Ursa Major, is the center of the sky, surrounded by two star clusters that form the Zi Wei Guan, the Forbidden Purple Enclosure. The Ladle is a direction finder and transmitter of heavenly energy. It rotates on the central axis of Heaven-Earth to assign the stories of time to the Ten Thousand Things by pointing at one of the 28 Lunar Mansions each day, thus giving the beings born into that day their Lunar Birth Sign and Hidden Destiny. The individual stars that make up the Ladle are centers of power that, when reflected into the Earth of the Center, recharge life with meaning and energy.

1 Heaven's Ax/ *Tian Shu*



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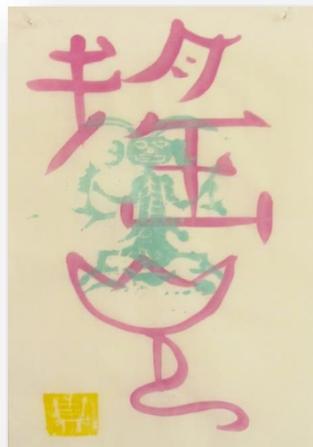
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