The Eight Houses
A preliminary survey
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Introduction

At the end of Wilhelm's Yi Jing there is an appendix with the name ‘The hexagrams arranged by Houses’. Ever since I was introduced to the Yi Jing this system had my interest. Where did it come from, what was its purpose, who designed it? For years I could not find any information about it. But in 1996 I ran into the dissertation of Paul George Fendos, *Fei Chih’s place in the development of “I Ching” studies*, and there it was: a basic introduction to the Eight Houses. To him I owe great debt. In the years that followed I collected more information about the Eight Houses, part which can be found in this article, part which will be added later. Consider this article as an intro to the system of the Eight Houses. This system, known as 八宫 八宫, which translates better as ‘Eight Palaces’, consists of eight groups of each eight hexagrams. The system itself contains several sub-systems, which provide material for use in divination. This article deals with the technical contents of the Eight Palaces system; it mentions the system and its sub-systems, but doesn’t give information on how to use these systems, because that is beyond my knowledge at this time.

The designer: Jing Fang 京房

The Eight Palaces are designed during the Han dynasty by a man called Jing Fang 京房. However, in history there have been two Jing Fangs, and which one is the designer of the Eight Palaces, is not known for sure. The first Jing Fang lived around 80 BC, the second from 77 to 37 BC. Both Jing Fangs were Yi Jing experts, and the Younger wrote several books about the Yi Jing. The Jing-shi Yi Chuán 京氏易傳, *Explanation of the Yi by the Jing family*, deals with the Eight Palaces system, as well as the Jing Fang Yi Chuán 京房易傳, *explanation of the Yi by Jing Fang*. The latter did not survive the ages, and all that is left are fragments or later ‘forgeries’. Fendos writes:

> The earliest mention of Jing Fang’s Jing-shi Yi Chuán goes back only to the Song 宋 dynasty (960-1279). There are many versions of this work, the most popular being the Lu Chi 陸績 (187-219) Zhu Xu Ang Jian edition. Often the Jing-shi Yi Chuán is compared with Jing Fang’s Jing Fang Yi Chuán – only remnants of which exist – and on the basis of this comparison suspected of being a forgery. There are two main reasons for this: difference in content and approximate age.

> The Jing Fang Yi Chuán is quoted 68 times in the “Wǔxíng zhì 五行志” section of the Hànshū 漢書. Generally speaking, these 68 quotes are all zaiyi 災異 in nature; they explain specific social or political phenomena in terms of having resulted from or leading to natural disasters or freaks of nature. None of these quotes can be found in Jing-shi Yi Chuán. In fact, there is little evidence of zaiyi theory in the Jing-shi Yi Chuán. The Jing-shi Yi Chuán is, instead, comparable to a book of diving formula used by a conjurer or magician.

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*a* I have a book called Jing Fang Yi Chuán 京房易傳 (author Wang Mo 王謨; Woolin Publishing Company, ISBN 957-35-0561-4), the frontispice says it is based on a book written during the third year of the reign of emperor Jiā Qìng 嘉慶 (r. 1796-1820) from the Qīng 清 dynasty. It contains several sections, one dealing with the Eight Palaces system. It seems to me that Fendos used this section for his information about the Eight Palaces system, as he quotes examples of the system, which I find in this section.

*b* Omens in the nature of “When locusts swarm, when walls collapse, this means a king who doesn’t care about virtue, or subjects who want to rebel”. 
Chronologically, the Jīng Fáng Yì Chuán appears to be older than the Jīng-shì Yì Chuán. The Han Shu dates from the first century. This implies that the Jīng Fáng Yì Chuán quotes found in it probably date around or before that time. As mentioned above, the earliest reference to the Jīng-shì Yì Chuán goes back only to the Song dynasty. This suggests that the Jīng-shì Yì Chuán was compiled sometime before the Song dynasty, perhaps as late as the Tang dynasty.

The differences between the Jīng Fáng Yì Chuán and Jīng-shì Yì Chuán are thought to suggest two conclusions. 1) Jīng Fáng probably authored the Jīng Fáng Yì Chuán. There is clear evidence that this work existed shortly after Jīng Fáng’s time. 2) Jīng Fáng probably did not author the Jīng-shì Yì Chuán. There is no mention of this work until almost 900 years after Jīng Fáng’s time. The content is different enough from the Jīng Fáng Yì Chuán to suspect that Jīng Fáng did not author it.

Michael Loewe gives extensive information about Jīng Fáng the Younger in his A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han & Xin Periods (221 BC – AD 24), which I will give here because it tells a lot about a man who was very influential in the history of Yìjīng studies, and yet quite unknown here in the West:

Jīng Fáng the Younger, style Jūnmíng 君明, of Dongjun, had changed his surname from Lǐ 李 to Jīng 君 after consultation of the pitch-pipes (Lǜ 律). He specialized in what was perhaps a somewhat exceptional type of interpretation of the Changes (Yì 易), his predecessors and contemporaries being largely concerned with textual exegesis, while he applied that esoteric work to events of natural, human and dynastic history whether of the past or the present. As an early advocate of regular means of examining the qualities of officials he courted opposition from a number of men in high places, falling a victim to their animosities. Jīng Fáng adopted the interpretative methods of his teacher Jiāo Yánshòu 焦延寿, but the claim that these could be traced back to Mèng Xǐ 孟喜 was denied by some of Mèng Xǐ’s own pupils. He explained unusual phenomena and disastrous events in terms of the hexagrams, applied such principles to contemporary problems and took climatic conditions as indicators of the future.

An accomplished expert at music Jīng Fáng was nominated a Gentleman (Láng 郎) in 45. Events in the years around 40 such as the rebellions of the western Qiāng 羌 tribes or an eclipse drew memorials from Jīng Fáng whose explanations and frequently correct predictions met with Yuándì’s 元帝 pleasure. When he further advised that appropriate means of selecting officials according to their merits would result in the cessation of strange phenomena and natural disasters, he received orders to draw up a systematic means of judging officials’ achievements and abilities. This was regarded as being too complex for adoption but was later approved by Zhèng Hóng 郑弘, Imperial Counsellor (YùShǐ Dàfū 御史大夫) from 42 to 37 and Zhōu Kān 周堪, Counsellor of the Palace (Guānglù Dàfū 光祿大夫); there is no record that it was implemented on a general scale.

In a long homily which is reported in dialogue form, Jīng Fáng warned Yuándì of the danger of putting undue trust in some of those around him who were exercising full powers of government. Without mentioning any names, he had in mind Shí Xiǎn 石顯, Director, Palace Writers (Zhōngshū Lìng 中書令) as Yuándì was well aware. Shi Xiān and his friend Wūlū Chōngzōng 五鹿充宗, Director of the Secretariat (Shànhōu Lìng 尚書令), had been at variance with Jīng Fáng to the point of hatred. Asked to submit the names of those of his pupils who were able to judge the performance of officials, Jīng Fáng recommended Rèn Liáng 任良 and Yáo Píng 姚平, with the intention or hope that they would be appointed Regional Inspectors (Cìshǐ 刺史). He also hoped that with access to official registers they would be able to send in reports that would bring certain abuses to an end. Persuaded by Shi Xiān and Wūlū Chōngzōng to remove Jīng Fáng from the capital, Yuándì appointed him Governor (Taishǒu 太守) of Weijun (37), at the low grade of 800 shí 石. In this capacity he was able to appraise officials of the commandery according to his own methods. Aware of the dangers of the antagonism to which he was subject, Jīng Fáng immediately submitted a
memorial in which he invoked climatic changes to show how Yuándì had been open to deception. In a further submission he referred to certain hexagrams in protest against attempts made to frustrate his direct communication with the throne.

Within a month of his appointment Jing Fang was recalled and put to prison. At an earlier period Zhang Bo, his former pupil and his father-in-law, had tried to help him in his efforts to introduce his system of assessment of officials; but while Jing Fang was away in Weijun both he and Zhang Bo had been denounced by Shi Xian on charges which included entering into a plot and denigrating the emperor. Both Jing Fang and Zhang Bo were executed in public, Jing Fang then (37) being 41 years old.2

Little is known about the first Jing Fang:

Jing Fang the Elder had been trained in the Changes (Yì) by Yang He of Zichuan. As Grand Counsellor of the Palace (Tàizhōng Dàfū) he had been the instructor of Liángqiū Hè and was appointed Governor (Tàishǒu) of Qi jun.3

Because so little is known about Jing Fang the Elder, maybe it is safe to assume the Younger designed the system of the Eight Palaces. He did more than designing the Eight Palaces. Larry James Schulz writes in his dissertation Lai Chih-Te, (1525-1604) and the phenomenology of the “Classic of Change” (Yijing):

Jing Fang’s is the name associated with the earliest appearance of numerous other explanatory and integrative devices, among them the systematic application of a hexagram’s “nuclear trigrams (hútǐ or zhōngyáo)" – lines two through four and three through five separately considered – to expound the hexagram’s verbal properties; the “Eight Palaces (bā gōng)" system of arranging hexagrams (...); and incorporation of the Five Phases (wǔxíng), the “heavenly stems (tiāngān)”, and the “earthly branches (dìzhī)” designations to amplify the Change’s linear figures in what is called the “nàjiǎ” theory.4

From Meng Xi’s effort to correlate hexagrams and natural phenomena it is said that Jing Fang developed the concept of “twelve accumulation and dispersion hexagrams (shí’èr xiāo-xī guà)”, which assigns that number of hexagrams to the twelve months and became stock-in-trade for exegetes thenceforward. Beginning with the hexagram RETURN (hex. 24) at approximately the winter solstice, the twelve accumulation and dispersion hexagrams present a graphic illustration of the ascent of yang qi over the first six months and its displacement by yin qi during the remainder of the year.5

More about this system can be found in Fung Yu-lan’s A History of Chinese Philosophy, Volume II.

The system

Let’s make The Eight Palaces clear by listing them as a table, this also shows which system is used to derive the other seven hexagrams in each Palace from the Palace Hexagram.

The sequence in which Wilhelm gives the Eight Palaces is not the original sequence. The original sequence orders the Palaces like the family order of the eight trigrams, often attributed to King Wen:
### Table 1. King Wen’s sequence of the trigrams

We will maintain this sequence here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daughters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The Eight Palaces

Every Palace begins with one of the main hexagrams (1 乾, 2 震, 29 坎, 30 艮, 51 艮, 52 兑, 57 巽, and 58 离); the first hexagram is called **gōng guà 宮卦** ‘Palace Hexagram’ or **chún guà 純卦** ‘Pure Hexagram’. In later centuries it is also called **shǒu guà 首卦** ‘head hexagram’.

The names of the hexagrams

Within each Palace every hexagram has a name:

- The first hexagram is called ... **gōng ... 宮**, with ... being the name of the first hexagram in the Palace.
- The second hexagram is called **yí shì guà 一世卦**, ‘first generation hexagram’
- The third is called **èr shì guà 二世卦**, ‘second generation hexagram’
• The fourth is called 三世卦, ‘third generation hexagram’
• The fifth is called 四世卦, ‘fourth generation hexagram’
• The sixth is called 五世卦, ‘fifth generation hexagram’
• The seventh hexagram is called 遊魂, ‘wandering soul’
• The eighth hexagram is called 归魂, ‘returning soul’.

The problem with the Eight Palaces is that the designer, Jing Fang, didn't give any explanation about his system. We don't know why each hexagram is called how it is, nor do we know why each line is named how it is.

The yóu hún 遊魂 and the guī hún 归魂
The names of the first to sixth hexagram in each Palace are ‘generation hexagrams', and their names seem to indicate each stage in the progressive moment we can see in each Palace. The names of the seventh and eighth hexagram, however, are more puzzling. They are both hún 魂 hexagrams, and maybe this word is a key to find the original meaning of the 八宫 system - although I must confess I have not found this meaning yet. But the word hún, 'soul', plays an important role in the Chinese view on life and death, and in Daoïst alchemy. I am not quite familiar with this subject, but fortunately my book shelves contain some works of experts in this field. By presenting some citations from these works, I hope to make the term hún a bit clear, and at the same time present a possible explanation for the use of this word in the 八宫 system.

The soul in Chinese society
Jean Cooper writes in her Chinese Alchemy - The Taoist Quest for Immortality:

The idea of the soul developed in a unique way in China. The soul was made up of two essences, its positive and negative aspects, the mind-nature and the body-nature, the yáng 陽 and the yīn 陰. The yīn was the pò 魄 soul, heavier, earthly, which reverted to the earth at death, and the yáng was the hún 魂 or lighter, heavenly soul, rising to the heavens, each returning to its natural element. Later these souls multiplied in number, there being three hún and seven pò souls, symbolizing the different attributes of the human being. The hún controlled the intelligence and the pò the emotions.6

The Can Tong Qi, an important work on Chinese Alchemy, which uses images from the Yijing, says:

If you would foster your inborn nature,
Lengthen your years and turn back time,
Consider the final outcome of all things,
And ponder that which comes before -
Man is endowed with a solid body
Which fundamentally is pure and empty:
The original vital seed showers out as a cloud,
Depending on an energy to surround it at the beginning.
As the yīn and yáng become the measure
They come to rest as souls, the hún and the pò.
The yáng spirit of the sun is the hún,
The yīn spirit of the moon is the pò;
The hún and pò join together
And link in accord to set up home.7

Michael Loewe, an expert on the Han dynasty, writes about what I first thought could be meant by the guī hún , the returning soul in the Eight Palaces:

It is unlikely that any formal definition of death can be found in early Chinese literature, but many might well have agreed that death was marked by the separation of the hún from the human body. Very often the first steps that were taken, when it appeared that this had occurred and that life was extinct, were designed to tempt or persuade the hún to return to its mortal coil and thus to defer the moment of death. This seems to have been the motive that lay behind a number of rituals of invocation. (...) From some of the treatises on correct behaviour (...) we learn of the rite that was performed for this purpose. At the moment of death the official robe of the deceased person was carried to the roof of the Palace and an invocation was made to the hún to return to the body that it had apparently deserted. The appeal was made by an official or attendant whose rank suited that of the deceased person; he faced north and proclaimed the invocation three times. It has been suggested that the robe of the deceased person acted as a substitute for the body, should the hún be induced to make a return then and there.8

When I read this paragraph, at first I thought this could be what was meant with a guī hún: a soul which, after some persuasion, successfully returned to his body to continue life. The movement of the lines at this stage in each Palace could support this view. But when I looked in my dictionaries at the several meanings of the character guī 當, and the compounds in which it is used, I noticed the character is often used in words concerning an irrevocable death. Gui (Mathews 3617), which is also the name of hexagram 54 guīmèi 馥妹, 'the Marrying = returning) Maiden' means 'returning', but it is a different returning than fù 復 (Mathews 1992), which is hexagram 24, or huí 回 (Mathews 2309), characters which are more used for denoting 'return' than guī. Mathews gives the following words and expressions, which distinctively show how gui has to do with death:

- 歸人 guī rén - a dead man
- 歸佳城 guī jiā chéng - to die (lit. 'to return to the beautiful city' )
- 歸古 guī gǔ - to die
- 歸天 guītiān - to return to Heaven, to die
- 歸宿 guīsù - the final resting place
- 歸根 guīgēn - at last; finally; in the end; to revert to the original condition.
- 歸泉 guīquán - to die (lit. 'return to the spring, the source' )
- 歸真 guīzhēn - finally; in the end. To die (Buddh.)

Except for 回煞 huīshà, 'the return of the soul, which is said to take place several days after death', and 回西方 huī xīfāng, 'to return to the west - to die', I could not find similar words or phrases using huí or fù. Therefore I assume that a guī hún is a soul that has, despite some effort, not returned to its body and that the person may be pronounced dead.
There is not much to say about *yóu* 遊 (Mathews 7524), except that it is often exchanged with *yóu* 游 (Mathews 7522); both mean ‘to wander, to travel’. Maybe the *yóu hún* is the condition of the soul just before it is irreversibly detached from his body, wandering disorientated, not knowing which way to go. These are just speculations, and I am sure there are sources which deal with this matter far better than here. However, I do believe that the words *yóu hún* and *guī hún* are important to grasp the original meaning of the Eight Palaces.

**Jou Tsung Hwa and Miki Shima**

There are at least two books which mention the *yóu hún* and the *guī hún*, but they do not mention the Eight Palaces, although they are clearly derived from them.

Jou Tsung Hwa, the late venerable Tai Chi master, says in his *The Tao of I Ching - Way to divination* (my commentary added in square brackets):

If a hexagram’s 5th *yao* [line] is *bian* or moving *yao*, and the *shi gua* [resulting hexagram] is a pure hexagram, than this hexagram is called *qúihún* [sic] (歸魂) or soul returning hexagram. If we change *qúihún*’s lower trigram, each *Yáo Yin* to *Yang* or *Yang* to *Yín*, we get a new hexagram which is called *Yòuhùn* (遊魂) or soul wandering hexagram. When one gets *qúihún* or *Yòuhùn* hexagram, it is a bad omen, especially related to illness. These hexagrams are:9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qúihún</th>
<th>Pure</th>
<th>Yòuhùn</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>53</td>
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<td>61</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>62</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In the middle column we see the pure hexagrams, the hexagrams which form the starting point for each Palace. The right column shows the seventh hexagram of each Palace, the *yóuhùn*, and the left column shows the *guihún*, the last hexagram of each Palace.

Jou says the *guī hún* and the *yóu hún* hexagrams are bad omens, especially related to illness. Probably this comes from the associations the names have with death. At hexagram 18, Jou says:

If we change the 5th *Yao Yin* to *Yang*, *Gu* becomes a *Chùn* or pure hexagram 57 *Sun*. So *Gu* is a *Qúihún* or soul returned hexagram. If you get this hexagram, and feel even a little uncomfortable, the best thing to do is going to your doctor to find out what is happening.10

And, at hexagram 35 ✧

Jin or Advancing is a *Yóuhùn* hexagram of Dáyou [14] or great possession. If a patient consults Yi jing and gets Jin, he is in a very serious condition.11
At more hexagrams he warns of the dangers of guihün and youhün.

Miki Shima, in The Medical Yijing, also warns against these hexagrams, saying

The guihün hexagrams are considered inauspicious because they symbolically suggest the soul or hün returning to its origin, i.e., death. [Yóu húns] are also deemed unfavorable because they connote such conditions as coma or near-death when the soul wanders around outside the body. (...) In medical divination, both guī hún and you guï [sic] hexagrams are considered inauspicious and sinister portents indicating possible higher morbidity and mortality than other hexagrams. Traditionally, guī hún hexagrams have been strongly associated with death and dying by many Yijing masters. While yóu hún hexagrams have been associated with near-death or comatose conditions.12

The Generation Line: shì yáo 世爻
Every hexagram has a line called the shì yáo 世爻, the 'generation line'. In the Palace hexagram, the first hexagram of every Palace, this is the top line. In the second to seventh hexagram it is the line which has changed compared to the former hexagram. In the eighth hexagram it is the third line, the top line of the three lines which change at the same time.

Line relationships: shì yīng 世應
In the appendix know as the Ten Wings, there is mention of relationships between the six lines of a hexagram. Line 1 and 4, 2 and 5, 3 and 6 are in harmony if the one is yang and the other is yin. This is called yīng 应, 'response'. In this way the two trigrams are connected. This also plays a role in the Eight Palaces, but only with consideration to the shì yáo. In the few examples of hexagram interpretations that are left by Jing Fâng, he uses this shì yīng 世應 system to explain the meaning of a hexagram. To do so, he gives the lines the following names:

- 6  zōngmiào 宗廟 royal ancestral temple
- 5.  tiānzǐ 天子 Son of Heaven
- 4.  zhūhóu 諸候 feudal dukes/princes
- 3.  sān gōng 三公 three nobles
- 2.  dàfū 大夫 senior official
- 1.  yuánshì 元士 senior serviceman

Mansvelt Beck from the University of Leiden gave me some info about these names. He explains that the names signify, as Fendos calls it, a 'degree of nobility':

- Yuánshì is the lowest rank, and means nothing else than 'administrator in service'.
- Dāfū is the highest noble of the court, they have a rank in nobility and a position in court; in later time the nobility aspect disappears.
- Sān gōng is the collective name for the three highest ministers who assist a sovereign.
- Zhūhóu is the name for all feudal princes, those who stood a step lower than the Emperor, who is designated by the name
• *Tiānzi*, the Son of Heaven. Above the Emperor we find his ancestors, who were honoured in the
  • *Zōngmiào*, the royal ancestral temple.

Fendos gives an example which shows how Jing Fang applied *shi yīng* in combination with these names:

The *shi yāo* of [the hexagram Kan 𩸃] stands in the position of the ancestral temple. It resides in a yin position. It is adjacent to line 5. It is complete in the way of Kan. It is far from disaster and harm. The three nobles reside in [the position of] response. They are also yin and dark...\(^{13}\)

'Self' and 'Other' lines in Sherril & Chu

The *shi yīng* rule is mentioned in Sherril and Chu's *An Anthology of Yijing*, where it is used for, as they call it, 'advanced divination'. Here they call the *shi yāo* the 'self' line, and the *yīng yāo* the 'other'. They make no mention of the different names of the lines as Jing Fang used them.\(^{14}\)

The following table shows the *shi* and *yīng* lines for every hexagram.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Palace of Qián 乾</th>
<th>乾</th>
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<td>The Palace of Zhèn 震</td>
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<td>The Palace of Kǎn 坎</td>
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<td>63</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Palace of Gèn 艮</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Kūn 坤</td>
<td>坤</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Xùn 禧</td>
<td>禧</td>
<td></td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Lí 禹</td>
<td>禹</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Dùi 兌</td>
<td>兌</td>
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<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4. Shi and yīng lines*
Hidden hexagrams: 飛伏

According to the bagong system every hexagram contains a hidden hexagram. This principle is called 飛伏. 飛 means ‘flying’, and the term is used to refer to the hexagram generated during divination; 伏 means ‘hidden’ and refers to the hexagram hidden in the divined hexagram. To find the hidden hexagram, the following six rules can be used:

1. The hidden hexagram is always one of the Palace Hexagrams (宮卦, 1, 2, 29, 30, 51, 52, 57 or 58).
2. The hidden hexagram of a Palace Hexagram is always the Palace Hexagram with the opposite polarity.
3. The hidden hexagrams of a 一世卦, 二世卦, and 三世卦 (see p. 5) are obtained by doubling the lower trigram of the hexagram.
4. The hidden hexagrams of a 四世卦 and 五世卦 are obtained by doubling the upper trigram of the hexagram.
5. A 遊魂 hexagram has the same hidden hexagram as the 五世卦 in the same Palace.
6. A 归魂 has the same hidden hexagram as the Palace Hexagram in the same Palace does.

To make finding the hidden hexagram easier, the following table shows the hidden hexagram of all hexagrams in the Eight Palaces:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>宮卦</th>
<th>一世卦</th>
<th>二世卦</th>
<th>三世卦</th>
<th>四世卦</th>
<th>五世卦</th>
<th>遊魂</th>
<th>归魂</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Qián 乾</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Zhèn 震</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Kǎn 坎</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Gèn 艮</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Kūn坤</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Xùn巽</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Just as with the *shì yáo*, Jīng Fáng uses the hidden hexagram to explain the significance of a hexagram obtained through divination.

**Stems, Branches and Elements**

The Han dynasty was a time when all kinds of systems, whether related or not, were linked with each other. Especially the oldest system for time reckoning, the *gānzhī* 干支 system of Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches, and the *wǔxíng* 五行 system, the Five Phases (here in the west most familiar by the erroneous name ‘Five Elements’), were important collaborators in the *xiāngshù* 象數 ‘image and number’ school, as opposed to the *yìlǐ* 義理 ‘meaning and principle’ school. Therefore I think it will not come as a surprise that Jīng Fáng also used these systems in his Eight Palaces. He links them with the lines of the Pure Hexagrams.

The following tables show the *tiāngān* 天干, the Heavenly Stems, the *dìzhī* 地支, the Earthly Branches, and the *wǔxíng* 五行, the Five Phases. For easier reference I respectively give them a letter, a number and abbreviation.

### Table 6. The Ten Stems

| A.  | 甲 | jiǎ |
| B.  | 乙 | yǐ |
| C.  | 丙 | bǐng |
| D.  | 丁 | dīng |
| E.  | 戊 | wù |
| F.  | 己 | jǐ |
| G.  | 庚 | gēng |
| H.  | 辛 | xīn |
| I.  | 壬 | rén |
| J.  | 癸 | guǐ |

### Table 7. The Twelve Branches

| 1.  | 子 | zǐ |
| 2.  | 丑 | chǒu |
| 3.  | 寅 | yín |
| 4.  | 卯 | mǎo |
| 5.  | 辰 | chén |
| 6.  | 巳 | sì |
| 7.  | 午 | wǔ |
| 8.  | 未 | wèi |
| 9.  | 申 | shēn |
| 10. | 酉 | yǒu |
| 11. | 戌 | xū |
| 12. | 亥 | hài |

### Table 8. The Five Phases

| E.  | 土 | tǔ |
| M.  | 金 | jīn |
| Wa. | 水 | shuǐ |
| Wo. | 木 | mù |
| F.  | 火 | huǒ |
Table 9. Stems, Branches and Phases associations with the lines of the Pure Hexagrams

Every trigram in the sixty-four hexagrams has a combination of a Stem, a Branch and a Phase connected to their lines, according to the table on the former page. It depends on the position of the trigram (nèi 内 or wài 外 - inside or outside) which combination is applied.

For instance, take hexagram 5 卯. The upper trigram is kǎn 坎, so the upper trigram of hexagram 29 in the table gives the combinations for this trigram. The lower trigram is qián 乾, so the lower trigram of 1 gives the combinations for this trigram. Which produces:
The liùqīn 六親, Six Relationships

Every Phase stems from another Phase:
- Wood gives birth to Fire,
- Fire gives birth to Earth,
- Earth gives birth to Metal,
- Metal gives birth to Water, and
- Water gives birth to Wood.

Also a Phase suppresses another Phase:
- Wood suppresses Earth,
- Earth suppresses Water,
- Water suppresses Fire,
- Fire suppresses Metal, and
- Metal suppresses Wood.

From this are the liùqīn 六親, the Six Relationships are derived:
- fùmǔ 父母, ‘Parents’
- xiōngdì 兄弟, ‘Brothers’
- zǐsūn 子孫, ‘Descendants’
- qī cái 妻財, ‘Wife and Wealth’
- guān guǐ 官鬼, ‘Officials and Ghosts’.
These titles are applied to the six lines of a hexagram. As shown above, every line in a hexagram has a Phase assigned to it.

- When the line Phase creates the Phase of the Palace the hexagram belongs to (see the top row in Table 9), the line becomes the Parents.
- When the line Phase is the same as the Palace Phase, this line becomes the Brothers.
- When the line Phase is created by the Palace Phase, the line becomes the Descendants.
- When the Palace Phase suppresses the line Phase, this line becomes the Wife & Wealth.
- When the line Phase suppresses the Palace Phase, this line becomes the Officials & Ghosts.

In the Hé-luò Jīngyùn 河洛精蘊, The perfect collection of the Hé (map) and Luò (map), it is summed up like this:

乾兌宮卦. 以土為父母. 金為兄弟. 水為子孫. 木為妻財. 火為官鬼.
艮坤宮卦. 以火為父母. 土為兄弟. 金為子孫. 水為妻財. 木為官鬼.
震巽宮卦. 以水為父母. 木為兄弟. 火為子孫. 土為妻財. 金為官鬼.
坎宮卦. 以金為父母. 水為兄弟. 木為子孫. 火為妻財. 土為官鬼.
離宮卦. 以木為父母. 火為兄弟. 土為子孫. 金為妻財. 水為官鬼.

- Palace hexagrams qian and dui. Regard Earth as the Parents. Metal as the Brothers. Water as the Descendants. Wood as the Wife and Wealth. Fire as the Officials and Ghosts.
- Palace hexagrams gen and kun. Regard Fire as the Parents. Earth as the Brothers. Metal as the Descendants. Water as the Wife and Wealth. Wood as the Officials and Ghosts.
- Palace hexagrams zhen and xun. Regard Water as the Parents. Wood as the Brothers. Fire as the Descendants. Earth as the Wife and Wealth. Metal as the Officials and Ghosts.
- Palace hexagram kan. Regard Metal as the Parents. Water as the Brothers. Wood as the Descendants. Fire as the Wife and Wealth. Earth as the Officials and Ghosts.
- Palace hexagram li. Regard Wood as the Parents. Fire as the Brothers. Earth as the Descendants. Metal as the Wife and Wealth. Water as the Officials and Ghosts.

**Wén Wáng bāguà 文王八卦** divination

Wén Wáng bāguà 文王八卦 divination is a form of Yijing divination which uses all the rules of the bā gōng system as described by Jing Fáng, but also applies other rules not found in Jing Fáng’s Yi Chuán. These rules mainly involve interaction between the Stems, Branches and Five Phases, and seem to be derived from bāzì 八字 Four Pillars Astrology.

**Hidden hexagrams in Wén Wáng bāguà**

A difference found in WWBG divination is the designation of the Hidden Hexagram. In Jing Fáng’s Yi Chuán every hexagram has a Hidden Hexagram, but not in WWBG. WWBG speaks of fūshén 伏神, a ‘Hidden Spirit’. The Hidden Spirit is always a line in a Palace Hexagram. It can be found by looking at the Six Relationships. When one of the Relationships is not present in the hexagram, then the line in the Palace Hexagram who has the missing Relationship, is the Hidden Spirit. The same line in the original hexagram is called the fēishén 飛神, the Flying Spirit.

Let’s take hexagram 44 as an example. Hexagram 44 belongs to the Palace of Qian 乾.
### Line Phases & Relationships in the original hexagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINE</th>
<th>PHASES &amp; RELATIONSHIPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. E土</td>
<td>父母 Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. M金</td>
<td>子孫 Descendants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. F火</td>
<td>兄弟 Brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. M金</td>
<td>官鬼 Officials and Ghosts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. M金</td>
<td>兄弟 Brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. E土</td>
<td>父母 Parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Line Phases & Relationships in the Palace Hexagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINE</th>
<th>PHASES &amp; RELATIONSHIPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. E土</td>
<td>父母 Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. M金</td>
<td>妻財 Wife and Wealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. F火</td>
<td>兄弟 Brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. M金</td>
<td>官鬼 Officials and Ghosts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. M金</td>
<td>兄弟 Brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. E土</td>
<td>父母 Parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2nd line of 1 is the Hidden Spirit

The 2nd line of 44 is the Flying Spirit

---

**The Duànyì-tiānjī 斷易天機**

A good summary of all this can be found in a book from the Ming 明 dynasty (1368-1644), the Duànyì-tiānjī 斷易天機, 'the Complete (or definitive) Yijing Mystery'. In the Midauhger mailinglist I wrote that the presumed author was Xú Shào-jǐn 徐紹錦, but the frontispiece of the copy I recently obtained says that Xú was only one of the proofreaders ('jiàozhèng 校正'). The other proofreader was Yù Jǐn-chéng 豫錦誠. The blockprints of the book were prepared by Mǐn Shū-lín 閩書林 and Zhèng Yún-zhāi 鄭雲齋. All these names are unfamiliar to me, and I have not been able to find some information about these persons.

**Jou Tsung Hwa’s The Tao of I Ching**

Jou Tsung Hwa borrowed quite some material from the DYTJ for his book *The Tao of I Ching*. The pictures in his book are modified pictures from the DYTJ. Also, at every hexagram, in the section ‘Zhan or hints on divining’ he writes something like 'This is a Februari hexagram. It is good in spring and bad in fall'. This comes directly from the DYTJ. However, I think he makes a little mistake when he mentions the months, because the DYTJ mentions yī yuè 一月, ‘èr yuè’ 二月, etc. - 'first month', 'second month', etc. Whether this is the lunar calendar or the solar calendar, it never is the same as the Western calendar. The section 'Window of the hexagram' is a direct translation of the text that comes with the pictures in the DYTJ. Also the section 'Image and Symbol' comes from it. The pictures in my version of the DYTJ are somewhat different in style than the pictures of Jou, and my version seems to be closer to the text than Jou’s version. For instance, at hexagram 24, in the window text, there is mention of the character 东 (‘east’) which should be in the picture. In Jou’s picture it can’t be found, but in my version it does appear.

Another interesting feature of the DYTJ is the fact that the hexagrams are arranged in the sequence of the Eight Palaces.
A page from the Duånyì-liănji

- the upper and lower trigram
- ‘six relationships’, below it the Stem, Branch and Phase of every line
- the lines • • for a yin line, • for a yang line, and the ‘self’ 世 and ‘other’ 应 lines marked
- the relation for each line (see b.)
- fei 飛 Stem, Branch and Phase
- the month this hexagram belongs to
- fu 伏 Stem, Branch and Phase
- The favorability of this hexagram for each season (also in Jou, Tsung Hwa)
- explanation and interpretation of the picture (also in Jou, Tsung Hwa)
- ‘image and symbol’ (also in Jou, Tsung Hwa)
Hidden hexagrams in the Duànyì-tiānjī

There is something strange in the DYTJ. What Jīng Fáng calls the Hidden Hexagrams, the DYTJ calls fei, ‘flying’. What is called fu, ‘hidden’ in the DYTJ is the Palace Hexagram of the Palace in which a hexagram resides – except for the first and the last hexagram in each Palace. Moreover, the designation of the fei and fu hexagrams is not done by mentioning the hexagram names, as Jīng Fáng does, but by referring to the combination of Stems, Branches and Phases as in Table 9.

For instance, at hexagram 19 戊 we find:

伏
巳乙
火
飛
卯丁
木

The left column is the fu hexagram, and in Table 9 we can find the mentioned combination 乙巳火 at the second line of hexagram 2. The fei hexagram, the right column, gives 丁卯木, which belongs to the second line of hexagram 58. In this way not only a hexagram is given, but also a line indication. But it seems the line is always the shi yao 世爻, the generation line.

In short, according to the DYTJ, the Flying Hexagram is always found by doubling the trigram which contains the shi yao. So, when I work out the Flying Hexagrams in the DYTJ, it produces the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>宮卦</th>
<th>一世卦</th>
<th>二世卦</th>
<th>三世卦</th>
<th>四世卦</th>
<th>五世卦</th>
<th>遊魂</th>
<th>歸魂</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gōng guà</td>
<td>yī shì guà</td>
<td>Èr shì guà</td>
<td>sān shì guà</td>
<td>sì shì guà</td>
<td>wǔ shì guà</td>
<td>yóu hún</td>
<td>guī hún</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Qián 乾</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Palace of Zhèn 震</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Kǎn 坎</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Gèn 艮</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10. Flying Hexagrams in the Duànyì-tiānjī

To make the picture complete, a table with the Hidden Hexagrams according to the DYTJ:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gōng guà</th>
<th>yì shì guà</th>
<th>Èr shì guà</th>
<th>sān shì guà</th>
<th>sì shì guà</th>
<th>wǔ shì guà</th>
<th>yóu hún</th>
<th>guī hún</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Kūn 坤</td>
<td></td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Palace of Xùn 巽</td>
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<td>The Palace of Lí 離</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Palace of Duì 兌</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gōng guà</th>
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<tr>
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<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gōng guà</td>
<td>yī shì guà</td>
<td>Èr shì guà</td>
<td>sān shì guà</td>
<td>sì shì guà</td>
<td>wǔ shì guà</td>
<td>yóu hún</td>
<td>guī hún</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>宮卦</td>
<td>一世卦</td>
<td>二世卦</td>
<td>三世卦</td>
<td>四世卦</td>
<td>五世卦</td>
<td>遊魂</td>
<td>歸魂</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Palace of Kūn 坤</th>
<th><img src="image1" alt="Hexagram" /></th>
<th>2 24 19 11 34 43 5 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Xùn 离</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Hexagram" /></td>
<td>57 9 37 42 25 21 27 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Lí 禧</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Hexagram" /></td>
<td>30 56 50 64 4 59 6 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palace of Duì 兌</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Hexagram" /></td>
<td>58 47 45 31 39 15 62 54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 11. Hidden hexagrams in the Duànyì-tiānjī*

As you can see, the Hidden Hexagram is the Palace Hexagram, except for the first and last hexagram in each Palace.

**More hypotheses**

When I wrote the first version of my Dutch book “De I Tjing in ons Leven”, I added a chapter about the Eight Palaces, but I didn’t have the dissertation of Fendos at that time. The information I had was summary, and I had to find some significance in the Eight Palaces just by examining the system myself. That is how I came up with the following hypothesis.

Every line of a hexagram depicts a layer of the ancient Chinese population. The lower line stands for the farmers, the second line for the tradesmen and businessmen, the third line for the scientists, diviners and priests, the fourth line for the ministers, the fifth line for the emperor and the sixth line for the sages. Now, if we look at the progressive changes in every Palace, it is possible to see in every Palace the overthrow of a dynasty. This overthrow begins with discontentment in the lowest layer of the people, climbs up to the higher levels, and sooner or later the complete country is in state of rebellion. The ministers of the fourth line turn against their emperor, and after a while the emperor is deposed. A new emperor is chosen (depicted by the change in the fifth line), new ministers are appointed (the change in the fourth line) and spread the orders to the people below them. The people retake their proper positions, and the country is in peace, until the next revolution takes place. The sixth line isn’t affected, because the sage isn’t moved by the developments in the empire.
The hypothesis used on other hexagrams

The principle of the progressive changes in each Palace can also be applied with any hexagram as a starting point, sometimes giving remarkable results. Suppose a country is in the situation of hexagram 12, ‘Stagnation’ ''); The people are dissatisfied, starting to protest, the dissatisfaction moves upwards, the emperor is overthrown and the country comes at peace again. The result: hexagram 35, ‘Progress’ ')); Another example is hexagram 47, ‘Oppression’ ''); This ends in hexagram 40, ‘Liberation’ ''); A country which is in a state of 54 '', a hexagram whose text sounds quite negative, ends in 58 ''. These are some of the examples I found quite striking. Of course not all hexagrams give remarkable results. There are also hexagrams which, when changed, don’t give a positive result. Maybe not every revolution changes things for the better. Except hexagram 5 '', maybe this is because a country in a state of Waiting isn’t very healthy.

Conclusion

This is what we know about Jing Fang’s Eight Palace system. This doesn’t mean the story ends here. Through the centuries the Eight Palaces have served several purposes – other divinatory systems are build on it and the system itself has been expounded upon, adding more schemes and rules to it. There is much more to be said. I hope this article will answer some questions many people have about the Eight Palaces, but no doubt it will raise some more too. Comments, corrections and additions are very much appreciated.

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Notes

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3 id.; p. 199
4 Schulz, Larry James; Lai Chih-Te, (1525-1604) and the phenomenology of the “Classic of Change”(I Ching); p. 16
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6 J.C. Cooper, Chinese Alchemy; p. 82-83
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13 Fendos, Fei Chih, p. 356-357
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