

## Wu Xing

In Chinese astrology and feng shui, the concept of wu xing is of utmost importance. Feng shui without using the wu xing theory is not feng shui but a joke.

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### The Five Types of Chi

In Chinese philosophy, the concept of "Wu Xing" has a prominent standing. In Chinese Medicine, Astrology and Fengshui, the idea of Wu Xing is used extensively. This term has been conveniently translated as "five elements" or "five phases". The word "Wu" means "five". To single out the word "Xing" and try to explain what it means is futile effort. "Wu Xing" is actually the short form of "Wu zhong liu xing zhi chi" or "the five types of chi dominating at different times". Water dominates in winter, wood in spring, fire in summer, metal in autumn. At the intersection between two seasons, the transitional period is dominated by earth. It is customary in Chinese writing to summarize a longer phrase into a couple of characters. Sometimes the meaning is completely lost in the abbreviated form if the original phrase is not referred to. Wu Xing is one such example. Common translations including "five elements", "five agents", "five qualities", "five properties" and "five courses" cannot bring out the underlying meaning of the abbreviated term. This is the deficiency of a word for word translation.

The names "water", "wood", "fire", "metal" and "earth" are only substances whose properties resemble the respective chi in the closest possible way. They do help us understand the properties of the five types of chi but they also mislead us if we take everything in the literal sense.

Here we list some of the properties of the five types of chi as their names imply.

Water	runs downwards, liberal
Wood	grows upwards, enduring
Fire	spreads in all directions, radiant and hot
Metal	pierce in one direction, sharp and pointing
Earth	attracts and concentrates, stable

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## Shapes and Colours

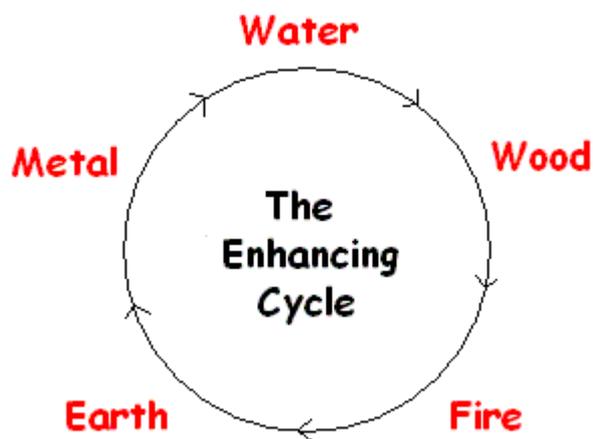
When chi is in the form of matter, the shape and color will determine which of the five types it belongs. More often than not, we have a combination of two or more different types. The table shows the shapes and colors of the five types of chi in matter form.

Wu Xing	Shapes	Colours
Water	Wavy	Black, Dark Blue
Wood	Rod-like or Beam-like	Green
Fire	Triangular	Red, Orange, Purple, Pink
Metal	Spherical	White, Golden, Silver
Earth	Cubic	Brown, Yellow

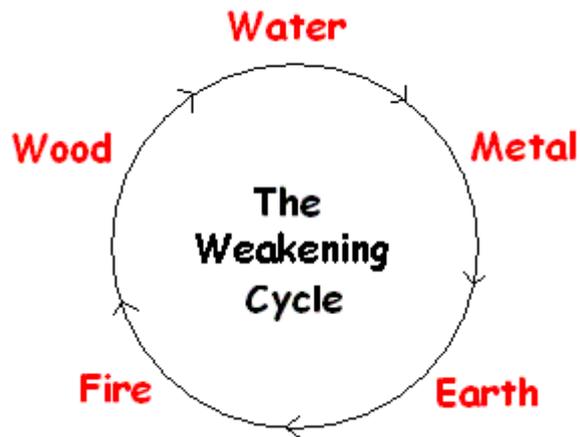
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## The Enhancing and Weakening Cycles

It is commonly translated as "the producing cycle". This cycle explains how one type of chi can help another type to exhibit its quality and ability. "The enhancing cycle" is a more apt translation. For example, instead of saying that water produces wood, we say that water enhances wood. When a tree is watered, it can grow more healthily. As a matter of fact, a man influenced by woody chi will be more upwardly mobile when watery chi enhances his woody chi.

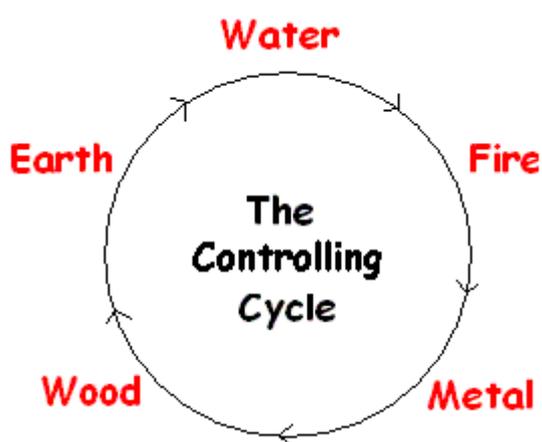


The reverse of the enhancing cycle is the weakening cycle. Wood helps burning, but in the meantime it loses energy. It is weakened. In the same way, if a person influenced by the fiery chi interacts with the earthy chi, the fiery chi will be weakened and one's ability to shine will diminish.



### The Controlling Cycle

It is erroneously translated as "the destroying cycle". This cycle explains how one type of chi can control and suppress another type. It does not destroy the other type of chi as matter and energy cannot be destroyed. For example, a metallic knife can be used to cut a piece of wood to make a wooden table top. It is controlling the shape of the piece of wood and not destroying it.



These ideas are very important in analyzing the [Four Pillars](#) of one's life.



This article was published in Master Joseph's Yu website:

<https://www.astro-fengshui.com>

Check other articles and find valuable knowledge in the courses and seminars in our Feng Shui Research Center! Welcome and enjoy!

**Joseph Yu B.Sc. 余若愚** was born during the second world war in a small village in South China. He spent his childhood as a country boy and did not receive any formal education until he came to Hong Kong at the age of eleven. A lot of people suggest to him that he should create a story of learning Astrology and Feng Shui in early childhood from a monk as do many a famous Feng Shui Master. He prefers to tell the truth.

Yu studied Mathematics and Physics in the University of Hong Kong in the early 1960's. He abhorred all kinds of superstition and vowed to destroy such absurd beliefs of ignorant people. He then frequented libraries, trying to find fault with Astrology and Feng Shui from ancient books. The deeper he went into the subject, the more excited he became about the rich legacy of ancient Chinese culture.

Whether or not to become a professional astrologer and geomancer or continue in the fields of mathematics and physics, became a constant dilemma. Astrology and Feng Shui have been viewed as superstition by their skeptics. Astrologers and Feng Shui masters have been linked with fraud for centuries.

Someone wrote in his book, "If more knowledgeable men provide true Astrology and Feng Shui services, the ignorant and fake 'professionals' will vanish." Sharing the same view, Yu decided to provide useful services and correspondence courses at an affordable price.

While Joseph Yu was a mathematics teacher after his graduation, he was lucky to have as his neighbor one old Feng Shui master. This old master was very kind to disclose a lot of secrets of the five arts to him even though he was not one of the old master's apprentices.

In one Chinese New Year party at the old master's home, the master said to his disciples, "This young man, though not officially under my care, has learned more than most of you because he has a logical mind and dares to argue with me on various issues."

The old master passed away a few months later. Joseph Yu did not feel comfortable in the company of the disciples of this good master. He is grateful, but circumstances make it impossible to express his gratitude towards the master who passed on to him a lot of invaluable knowledge.