THE SHIKONGREN ARCHIVE

VOL. IV

Testing the Claim

Evidence, prediction theory, and the work of remedy

Lü Wenyi

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VOL. IV

33 essays · www.shikongren.com

How to read this volume

Thirty-three essays on the question a reader eventually asks: is any of this checkable? What a prediction claims, how a case is judged, and what an adjustment is supposed to change.

This volume is three sections joined into one line of argument. First the method run on real cases (ten essays on divination), then what a prediction is allowed to claim once it has been made (ten on prediction theory), then what can be done after the claim is on the table (thirteen on remedy).

The attitude is the same throughout. A prediction explained only after the event is not evidence of anything. A method has to say where it will fail. A remedy, before it is sold, should have been tested — and should say how far up the chain it reaches.

If you only read three: “The Shikongren Method: Cases, Volume One”, “Adjusting Marriage and Romance”, “Five Notes on Resolving Disaster”

About this book

This volume collects 33 essays first published at **shikongren.com**, a free public archive of Chinese metaphysics (yixue) maintained by Lü Wenyi. The archive runs to several hundred pieces in Chinese; the English shelf is a translation project, and each essay here was translated from a Chinese original that is still online.

The translation is faithful to the argument rather than to the sentence. Idiom was rebuilt, not carried over. Where an essay names living people in dispute, the translation generalises the name; where a passage was pure invective, it is compressed to the argument and a note says so. Course prices, phone numbers and enrolment notices — common in the Chinese originals — are omitted.

Everything in these pages is a position taken by the author and argued from cases. It is not presented as laboratory finding, and no reader is asked to accept it on authority. The useful test of any claim in this book is whether it describes something you can go and look at.

Free to download and pass on. Please keep the source and credit it; do not sell it. Each essay is also readable, with its Chinese original, at www.shikongren.com.

Compiled 2026 · 33 essays

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CHAPTER ONE

The Shikongren Method: Cases, Volume One

2026-06-04 · 916 words

> **Translator's note.** The opening essay of the case volume, and the manifesto for the method used throughout it: read one change in a person's expression, one gesture, one shift in the scene around him, and name the event and its date. No hexagram, no chart, no birth time, no face reading. Two examples from a 2024 training course — a butterfly and a thumb across the nose — are given as the kind of thing this yields. The claim is not intuition but a fixed inference from a fixed table, which is what distinguishes it, in Lü's account, from the "external response" guessing that the trade sells.

Watch one change in another person's expression.

Watch one change in his gesture or movement.

Watch any change in the environment around him.

And from it predict, and verify, at exactly what point in his past, present or future a fortunate or unfortunate event of what nature occurred (or will occur), and with what kind of thing he will enter a close relation.

No casting of hexagrams.

No casting of charts or boards.

No asking his birth time.

No reading of his palms or his face.

No complicated chain of reasoning.

No need for him to have asked you for a reading at all.

You need only want to read, and you can predict for anyone, precisely, what kind of event occurred or will occur and when. To read a person you need only watch him from a distance for a few moments. Stranger or acquaintance, his fate information is yours: you can speak flatly and be accurate beyond error.

This technique is the Shikongren predictive method, a core system within Lü Wen-yi's Shikongren theoretical framework. It is one of the central courses of the disciple class and the hundred-day top-predictor intensive, and is currently taught to no more than one hundred and thirty people in total.

The technique is very easy to learn. It rests on two things only: judging the auspicious or inauspicious quality of any gesture, action or expression, and judging the auspicious or inauspicious quality of the people and things implicated by any change in the external environment. Both tables are published in full in the study materials; learning consists of looking them up and remembering them.

For example, during the hundred-day intensive of 16–27 August 2024, Lü Wen-yi saw a butterfly fly past a student named Chen and said on the spot: “In such-and-such a year a woman pursued you. You were moved but nothing substantial happened. Even now, from time to time, a little happiness comes back to you when you think of her.” Chen was embarrassed to admit it at the time, but a while later acknowledged publicly that it had happened.

Master Hua wiped his nostril with a finger. Teacher Lü said: “In such-and-such a year, in a matter of the greatest importance concerning money, you suffered a heavy defeat.” Hua said: “That year I went with a friend to Yunnan to gamble on rough jade. We not only made nothing, I lost a great deal. After that failure I threw myself into studying yixue, and I have been in it ever since.”

Across the whole twenty-six days of the course, Lü Wen-yi's readings of more than five hundred cases supplied by the students were a hundred per cent correct, without a single error. Every student present also mastered the technique, and reached the level at which, at one glance at any person, they can speak flatly and accurately about that person's fate. The Shikongren method is emphatically not the “external response” trick of guessing wildly. It is a complete theoretical system, in which time, space and person are perfectly united and the derivation follows strict logic, for making accurate qualitative predictions of events in a human life.

On the qualitative judgement of fortune and the precise dating of events, every other predictive art, once you have mastered this one, is not fit to tie its shoes.

The Shikongren method genuinely achieves the old ideal that “one who is good at the Changes does not divine.” With it, the slightest movement of the person before you and the slightest change in the things around him suffice to predict, very precisely, what kind of event happened to him at what time before, and what kind will happen at what time after. Some of the basics were taught publicly some years ago, and many friends in yixue now use them. Some say: this is the external-response method. I say: that is the remark of someone who has found no truth in predictive studies at all. Shikongren prediction rests on strict logical derivation from objective regularities — the relation between person and time, between person and environment, between time and environment, between a person's movements and time, between his movements and the environment, between his movements and the reader. “External response” is what a reader imagines off the top of his head. One and the same omen will yield ten thousand readings from ten thousand readers, which is exactly why so many students, having learned any number of external-response schools, go home and cannot apply them: you do not necessarily have the imagination of those “masters.” Yet faced with a client who raises an eyebrow, a hundred thousand Shikongren students will derive the same single result — because this is not prediction by imagination but by

strict logic. That is the great difference between a natural-science predictive method and a humanistic con.

CHAPTER TWO

The Shikongren Method: Cases, Volume Two

2026-06-05 · 1,149 words

> **Translator's note.** Two classroom readings, both from ordinary gestures. A student touches his upper lip and the table yields three separate histories — a boast, an unforgettable meal, an emotional high. A phone falls and cracks its case, and the components of the scene (the phone, the retrieving, the case, the ground) are read one by one. The last exchange is the interesting one: from the reported facts, Lü reasons backwards to the gesture, and is confirmed. The X's are the author's, who withholds the timing keys to keep the method from being learned in ten examples.

What follows are live case readings by Lü Wen-yi in the hundred-day top-predictor intensive. Through them you can understand the whole of the Shikongren method — and the essential difference between it and the "external response," "body and use," "analogy" and "image and meaning" methods you think you know, which have no logic at all and rest on random imagining. You will also understand why those methods are not fit to tie this one's shoes.

Enough talk; let the cases speak. Because the method is very simple, the key words in these cases are replaced with X to keep it confidential. Written out in full, ten or a dozen cases would teach you the whole thing, and Teacher Lü would have nothing to eat. A man must eat, so a little is withheld. Forgive me.

Classroom case one.

During the lecture, Teacher Lü saw a student **rub his upper lip with his hand.**

Analysis on the spot:

1. The mouth stands for people, matters and things connected with expression.

1. Rubbing is a sign of satisfaction.

1. Rubbing the lip: (a) it means the student has said something he is pleased with, done something he is pleased with, or spread news he is pleased with — for instance, posted a false item that drew three million hits, felt very pleased, and was then arrested by the public security bureau. The time of the event is recent, and at the points marked X and X. (b) It also means that recently, and at the points marked X and X, he ate something he cannot forget — he went south and someone treated him to puffer fish, or to snake, or he travelled and ate the local bees and grasshoppers: in short, something strange and rarely eaten. (c) The lips are also closely bound up with feeling, so recently, and at the points marked X and X, he also had a good experience in that domain.

The student's feedback:

1. In the year X he studied Teacher Lü's online course and also lectured to new students on it, and was praised.

1. In the year X he ate an enormous lobster, which he remembers to this day.

1. In the year X he averted a crisis in an elderly person's illness and helped bring that person back from the brink of death — helping another, and being pleased with himself. Saving the old person was also a matter of feeling, and touching the mouth is closely tied to feeling. Feeling need not mean romantic feeling: the birth of a long-wanted baby, the appearance of a friend whose interests match yours — all are good experiences of feeling.

Bringing an old person back, being praised for it, being commended, is also a good experience of feeling.

Classroom case two.

A student asked: “When I got up at noon my phone fell on the floor. I got up quickly and picked it up. The phone was not damaged, but the case cracked. It still works.” How does the Shikongren method read this?

Teacher Lü analysed on the spot:

1. **The phone fell.** (a) A phone is closely bound up with information and messages. (b) The phone flying out of the hand has two meanings: on one hand, there was some information he ought to have known and did not; on the other, he passed on some important information to others. (c) The time is recent, and at the point marked X.

1. **He got up quickly and retrieved it.** (a) Retrieving the phone means he obtained important information or news. (b) The phone is a tool; leaving and coming back means a replacement or a servicing of a tool he commonly uses. (c) The time is recent, and at the point marked X.

1. **The case cracked.** (a) First, it is information of loss of money, since the case is property, and a crack means it must be replaced. (b) Second, the case protects the phone and has the meaning of the *seal*; a crack in the seal means a loss in a matter connected with the seal. (c) The time is recent, and at the point marked X.

1. **It fell on the ground.** (a) The phone is *sha* — sand — and falling to the ground means inauspicious sand has appeared on the ground. But it appeared only very briefly and was retrieved at once, so its influence is small and need not be read. One may read it: sand appearing on the ground means a problem in expression; it also means loss and drain, emotional fluctuation, and information of bodily or mental injury. All of these,

however, are minor, because the inauspicious sand was there only a moment.

The student's feedback:

1. In the month X of the year X he broke off relations with a friend, and suffered a little emotional damage.

1. Recently, on the day X, his stomach was uncomfortable and he fell ill.

1. In the year X his vehicle was damaged and he replaced four tyres; he also secretly moved his ancestral grave.

1. In the year X he lost money investing in a trading company, and the right-hand door of his car was damaged.

Teacher Lü's reading: secretly moving the ancestral grave has no connection with the environmental event recorded here, because an ancestor is not a tool. But from what he reported about the grave we can reason backwards: he probably took the case off to check the phone after retrieving it, found the phone undamaged and the case cracked. That represents a process in which the seal (the case) and the tool (the phone) separated — which can be read as a separation in a matter connected with the seal.

Student's feedback: at the moment it fell, the phone and the case came apart.

Teacher Lü: then that is right. The phone and the case separated in the fall, so we may read it as a major change in a matter connected with the seal.

With the Shikongren method, when we see the fact and the outcome we can also reason backwards to the state of the person's action. This strict logic, working forwards to prediction and backwards to inference, is itself ample proof of the accuracy and the truth of the system.

CHAPTER THREE

The Shikongren Method: Cases, Volume Three

2026-06-06 · 233 words

> **Translator's note.** The shortest case in the volume, and the one that states the method's boundary condition: only a movement or environmental change that happens *while you are watching*, or one that first catches your attention, carries predictive force. The rest of the method is a table of correspondences — a bee is money and feeling — applied to the geometry of the event.

A student asked: a bee circled the person being observed and then flew off in the X direction. How does the Shikongren method read that?

Teacher Lü's analysis:

1. A bee stands for money and for feeling.

1. A bee circling him means entanglement in feeling or in money and property.

1. The bee flying off in the X direction means that recently, and at the point marked X, he will suffer a loss in feeling and a drain of money.

The student's feedback on the spot: in the year X he divorced, lost money, was hurt emotionally, and the paperwork of the divorce was troublesome in every way.

Teacher Lü's caution:

The movement or environmental change must occur **while you are observing the person** for it to have predictive meaning. Or, if you were not

observing him, his movement must first have caught your attention — and from the moment it caught your attention and you began to observe him, that movement carries predictive meaning too.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Shikongren Method: Cases, Volume Four

2026-06-07 · 383 words

> **Translator's note.** A case about flies, and about position mattering as much as event: two troubles at eye level are worse than two at the ankle, and one swatted, one away, means one danger dodged and one still coming. The student's follow-up — what if he slapped his own eye — gets the sharpest answer in the volume.

A student asked: two flies were hovering in front of the observed person's left eye. He slapped at them with his right hand, knocked one down so that it fell in front of him, and the other flew away. How does the Shikongren method read this?

Teacher Lü's analysis:

1. **Flies hovering at the left eye.** (a) A fly stands for troublesome people, matters and things, and for petty people. So it can be read as: recently, and at the point marked X, he encountered bad people, bad matters, bad things. (b) Where the fly hovers matters: in front of the eye is not the same as at the chest, at the abdomen, or by the foot. Hovering at the eye is more infuriating — which means the bad people and bad matters he met were worse, and it also means he watched with his own eyes, plainly and clearly, while someone took him in.

1. **One fly swatted down in front of him, one flown away.** This means that recently, and at the point marked X, he dodged one danger brought by

a bad person, matter or thing — but there is at least one more danger of that kind that he will not dodge.

The student's feedback on the spot: in the year X he did something foolish. He was taken in by his landlord, paid three years' rent in one go, and handled the matter badly.

The student asked again: in this case he slapped the fly onto his own eye. Does that need reading?

Teacher Lü: then it shows all the more that he was blind, and that his decision was wrong. You do not slap a fly onto your eye. It proves a serious error of decision: at that recent point he mistook a person, mistook a thing — bought a fake antique, took up with the wrong friend, chose the wrong partner. A whole series of mistakes.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Shikongren Method: Cases, Volume Five

2026-06-08 · 936 words

> **Translator's note.** Eight gestures in a row, read one by one like a sentence: the arm on the armrest, the rosary, the fist on the belly, the notebook pushed away, the cup, the tea leaf, the nose, the cheek. Then the sharpest question in the volume — does it matter that he was wearing gloves — and an answer that draws a clean line: what is worn is part of the body and carries no omen; what is held does.

Observed information:

The person being observed rested his arm on the arm of the chair; his left hand fingered a string of prayer beads; his right hand, in a fist, rested on his belly. He then pushed away the notebook in front of him, picked up the cup in front of him and took a sip of water, picked a tea leaf out of his mouth and threw it away, then stroked his nose with the index finger of his left hand and touched his left cheek.

Teacher Lü's analysis on the spot:

1. **The arm resting on the armrest** means that recently, and at the point marked X, he received the support and help of others, and the thing he planned or was doing found its footing.

1. **Fingering the prayer beads.** Beads stand for troublesome matters; fingering them means troublesome matters occur. So recently, and at the point marked X, he will have entangled, knotted, hard-to-clear trouble.

1. **The right fist on the belly.** The belly stands for secret people, matters and things. A hand placed on the belly means that recently, and at the point marked X, a secret matter will occur, or he will do something secret. At the same time, for a man the belly is also closely connected with feeling for the opposite sex, so it means that recently, and at the point marked X, something connected with such feeling will happen or be done.

1. **Pushing the notebook away.** A notebook stands for matters connected with the seal. Pushing it away means that recently, and at the point marked X, an important matter connected with the seal is postponed or pushed aside.

1. **Taking a sip from the cup in front of him.** A sip of water means that recently, and at the point marked X, money comes in. The cup is sand; sand in front of him means incoming money, and also means meeting an outstanding woman, and means he handled some troublesome people, matters and things correctly.

1. **Picking a tea leaf out of his mouth and throwing it away.** A tea leaf stands for money; one leaf means not much money. So recently, and at the point marked X, he will lose or spend a small sum.

Small money and large money are relative to the person observed. For Ma Y, losing ten thousand yuan is small money; for us, losing ten thousand is at least a middling sum, and not a small loss at all.

1. **Stroking the nose with the left index finger.** The nose stands for money. The index finger stands for decision. Stroking the nose with the index finger means that recently, and at the point marked X, money comes in, or he has put money or property away. Making an auspicious decision (stroking is an auspicious gesture) about money and property means the money and property have been stored: either he acquired a good thing, or he deposited the money in a bank or asked someone to keep it for him.

1. **Touching the cheek with the hand.** The hand stands for matters; the cheek also stands for matters. Touching the cheek means that recently, and at the corresponding point, he feels content about something he has done (touching is a state of pleasure, not of pain).

The student's feedback on the spot:

1. This year he attended the hundred-day intensive, with his family's full support.

1. In the year X money came in, but with a great deal of minor trouble.

1. In the *mao* month of the year X there was a matter of feeling.

1. In the year X he had planned to build a temple; because of certain changes it is now postponed.

The student then asked: he was wearing gloves when he touched his nose. Does that have special meaning?

Teacher Lü answered: wearing gloves is still touching the nose with the hand. If he had touched it with a tool, that would be another matter. Touching the face with a gloved hand is the same as holding the sleeve of one's own garment and touching the face with it. But taking the glove off and rubbing the face with the glove held in the hand is different — just as taking off a garment and rubbing the face with the garment is different from holding the sleeve of the garment one is wearing and rubbing the face with that.

Hold a pen and touch your nose: the pen is a tool, not one body with you. But a mask you are wearing and gloves you are wearing are one body with you. So wearing a mask in the ordinary way has no meaning of covering the eyes and mouth. The doctors and nurses you meet in a hospital all wear masks; that does not mean they are keeping hidden secrets, or that they bungle their speech all day. Clothing worn on the body is one with the body and carries no

predictive meaning. But an object held in the hand is not one with your body, and a held object carries omen meaning.

CHAPTER SIX

The Shikongren Method: Cases, Volume Six

2026-06-09 · 788 words

> **Translator's note.** A restaurant scene read as a sequence of directions — and, unusually, a correction made in the middle of the reading: Lü points out that directions should be taken from the *point where the object is set down*, not from the observer. The scene then resolves into a story about an affair, repeated losses through friends, and a return to the old trade. The student's feedback confirms all three.

A student asked: the person observed, the male owner of a restaurant, carried three plates of eggs from the kitchen “in front” and set them down on the table “in front of me.” Just then a tofu seller arrived, and he ran “behind” to buy tofu. At the same time a man standing to his “right” left; a man came from the “left,” glanced over and left; a woman came from “behind” with a little boy, stood at his left hand and said nothing. Then he paid, picked up the tofu and went back to the kitchen past “in front of me.” How is this read?

Teacher Lü's analysis on the spot:

1. **Carrying three plates of eggs from the kitchen “in front” to the table “in front of me” and setting them down.** Carrying three plates is relatively laborious and troublesome. It means that recently, and at the corresponding point, troublesome matters will occur. Setting the plates down when he reached a place means that after a period the trouble was put down. Note: going “from the front to the back” takes the observer as the origin for judging direction. Strictly, one should take the *point where*

the observed person sets something down — the place where he put the eggs — as the origin, and see from which direction he came. The observed person himself has no direction; an origin has no direction. Only once there is a landing point does the question arise of what direction the starting point lies in relative to it. Judging direction from the observer, as in this case, is incorrect.

1. **A tofu seller arrived and he ran "behind" to buy tofu.** Buying tofu is loss of money. If, taking the place where he set down the eggs as the origin, the direction in which he bought tofu is "to the left," it means that recently, and at the point marked X, he will lose money.

1. **A man standing to his "right" left.** This means that the people, matters and things corresponding to inauspicious sand in the "right" direction have, recently and at the point marked X, gone away.

1. **A man came, glanced, and left.** Coming and then going means that recently, and at the corresponding point, a thing the observed person planned or had just begun was abandoned soon after starting — the corresponding person, matter or thing was given up halfway.

1. **A woman arrived with a little boy, stood at his left hand, and said nothing.** For a man, a woman arriving at his side means money coming in, and also means a romantic connection with the opposite sex arriving at his side. A child stands for one's children and subordinates. A child arriving can be read as a new person entering the household — a hire at the workplace, a birth in the family, a godson or goddaughter, or a child born to a woman with whom he has a romantic connection (a stepchild). A little boy also stands for petty people, so it means that recently, and at the corresponding point, petty people will also come to his side.

1. **He bought the tofu and went back to the kitchen.** As an event, he went around in a circle and returned to his starting point — he busied

himself in a circuit and ended up back doing what he had been doing at the start. For instance, he is living with his original wife again; he has gone back to his original trade.

The student's feedback on the spot:

1. He took a lover, found it exhausting after half a year, was discovered by his wife, and put it down the following year.

1. Friends often ask him into projects, and he almost always loses money and is taken advantage of.

1. This year his mind settled, he stopped doing anything else, and went back to his old trade — running a restaurant.

In the cases above, key points are sometimes blurred to keep the material from leaking. The purpose is to let you understand the basic lines of reasoning of the Shikongren method, not to teach you to do it. Grasp the general shape of the reasoning and you will see how simple, and how precise, the method is.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Shikongren Method: Cases, Volume Seven

2026-06-10 · 847 words

> **Translator's note.** The best case record in the volume: seven readings at one lunch table in Fufeng in July 2024, each triggered by an ordinary gesture — a chopstick dropped, a pancake bitten instead of the dish, a ladle stirred and only a little taken, a bowl of rice abandoned mid-mouthful, a trouser leg tugged, a phone scrolled. Each is dated by a stem-branch year, and each is confirmed by the person it was said to.

In July 2024 Lü Wen-yi took a group of colleagues on a field visit to Fufeng. At lunch on the 12th, a chopstick suddenly fell from Teacher Xu Hongtao's hand to the floor. Teacher Lü said with a smile: “You will shortly receive a message from a certain man.” Xu had barely picked up the chopstick and sat down when his phone rang. It was indeed a man — a business partner — calling about settling accounts on a project. Everyone marvelled at the Shikongren theory, and their interest rose sharply; they began watching one another for the information each was betraying.

Then Teacher Bai put some of the dish in front of her onto her own plate and did not eat it, but casually picked up a small pancake and bit into it. Teacher Lü said: “In the years X and X you took in a large sum, and then invested most of it in things that stand for the seal — a house, a car, a business. Only a small part was saved.” Bai was astonished at the accuracy. The fact: in 2021 she had indeed bought three flats and had also saved money, but most of the money had gone on the flats.

Next Lü saw Teacher Zhang's wife dip some of the dish from the plate in front of her into sauce and put it on her own plate to enjoy. Teacher Lü said: “In 2018 you took in a large sum and, along with it, a small sum too — but it had to do with the seal: a house, a car.” Zhang's wife said: “Yes — the house was sold to my own mother, and my mother gave me a little extra.” Everyone's jaw dropped, and the pace of eating slowed without anyone noticing.

At that point a waiter brought a bowl of soup. Teacher Guo Duowu stirred it a few times with the ladle but filled only a small bowl, tasted a little and set it down. Teacher Lü said: “In a *ren* year you had a sum of money coming. You picked and chose, and in the end you gave up the big money and got only a little.” Guo agreed: that year he had two projects, gave the large one to someone else, and chose to do a small one.

Lü then saw Teacher Li Qiang eating a pancake. Because someone was speaking, his eating hesitated several times before he went on. Lü analysed: “In a *chou* year you could have taken in a sum, but because petty people obstructed you, you did not get all of it — or you lost part of it.” Li thought and said: “Exactly. In 2021 I made money on a project, but I sent a large gift to a man in the middle of it, and then he died suddenly, and the money could not be recovered.”

Then Lü saw Teacher Li Chao pick up a bowl full of rice and begin eating quickly — but the moment someone spoke he put his chopsticks down. Teacher Lü said: “In a *gui* year you had some quick money, and because of petty people you did not earn all of it; you got only a part of the profit.” Li Chao answered: “Last year, the *guimao* year, a hundred-thousand-yuan job suddenly came. I finished it, but the client would not pay. In the end I got only thirty thousand, and it was settled only this year.”

Shortly after, Lü saw Li Chao tug at the trouser leg over his thigh. Lü said: “In a *chou* or *yin* year you did a piece of tidying-up and planning connected with the seal — a change of house, car, company or the like.” Li Chao, astonished,

answered: “In 2022 I tidied up the shop, moved the company, and changed the address.”

Turning his head, Lü saw Teacher Zhang's wife with her head down, scrolling and scrolling at her phone screen. Lü said: “In a *xu* or *hai* year you did a very tedious piece of work.” Zhang's wife replied: “From 2018 to 2019 I was up on the mountain cooking for the students, and I did it for nearly two years.”

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Any change of expression in anyone, any change in gesture or movement, any change of state in the environment around them — you need only watch from a distance for a few moments, acquaintance or stranger, and all of that person's fate information is yours to state flatly, accurately beyond error. That is the truth, the precision and the marvel of the Shikongren method.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Mount Wudang: A Discussion of Time, Space and Person

2026-06-11 · 1,612 words

> **Translator's note.** A long set piece from Mount Wudang in 2011, and the clearest statement of what the method is *for*. A Taoist abbot strokes the back of his own hand; from the direction of the gesture Lü dates an event, from the body part he names it, and from the smallness of the motion he sizes it — fifty yuan of phone credit. Then the reasoning runs backwards: what must the abbot have placed, where, and at what hour, for this to happen? He remembers. The lesson drawn is that no gesture is voluntary, and that this is therefore a technique not only for reading a fate but for arranging one. (The original repeats its second half verbatim; that repetition is omitted here.)

Wudang Shan, the foremost mountain of Taoism.

Its Taoist culture is vast and deep, of immense antiquity. It is not counted among the five sacred peaks, yet it is honoured as the Great Mountain and called “a wonder without equal since the beginning of time, the first immortal mountain under heaven” — with its mysterious, empty, numinous fairyland, its arcane and drifting martial art, and a culture that may be called the soul of China. It was the imperial altar through successive dynasties.

On 14 April 2011 (a *jihai* day) I arrived at the Zixiao Palace on Wudang Shan in Shiyan, Hubei. On the morning of the 15th, a *gengzi* day, accompanied by Chairman Yang of the Wudang Taoist Association, I went to the Qiongtai Middle Abbey below the Golden Summit. There Abbot Rao, director of the abbey's management committee, received us warmly, and host and guests talked in high good humour.

In the course of the conversation about Wudang Taoist culture we came to yin-yang and the five phases, and to fortune-telling, divination and feng shui — the traditional arts of China. When we reached the relation between yin-yang and the five phases and the various aspects of a human life, I set out for the several abbots present, all deep students of Wudang culture, the theory of the relation among time, space and person. One of them asked me to illustrate its subtle use with a concrete case.

At that moment Abbot Rao was sitting opposite me — I facing southwest, he facing northeast — and he was gently stroking the back of one hand with the other. Nothing moves without a cause; nothing moves without a consequence. By the theory of time, space and person, taking Abbot Rao himself as the centre, his stroking of the back of his hand occurred due west of him, which is the *you* direction. From the relation between time and person I inferred: on a *you* day — that is, the 12th of this month — something would happen to him. What kind of thing? From the relation between person and space I inferred: the hand is the tool most closely connected with oneself, and this tool moved in the *you* direction of space; therefore on the 12th something occurred involving the maintenance, servicing or repair of an important tool he uses. Abbot Rao recalled that his important tool was the ritual implement used in Taoist ceremonies — but that day there had been no ceremony, and he had not touched the implement. The abbots present were puzzling over it when Rao suddenly remembered: on the evening of the 11th his phone had run out of credit and been cut off, and on the 12th he had gone and paid to have it reconnected. The phone was his important tool.

From the smallness of the motion I inferred that the sum paid on the 12th was not large — a few tens of yuan, not hundreds or thousands. Abbot Rao said: fifty yuan.

Interest rose sharply, because two of those present were themselves deep students of fortune-telling, divination and feng shui, and they pressed me to

go further. I inferred, from the relation between person and space, that on the 11th Abbot Rao must have placed a solid object of no great energy in the *you* direction, or south-by-southwest, from the centre of his bed. Rao remembered: an implement brought up from the foot of the mountain, placed south-by-southwest.

Because the 12th was a *dingyou* day, the object had to have been placed in those two directions — *ding* and *you* — some time before the 12th for the event to occur on the 12th. Why did I infer a yang object rather than a yin one? From the relation between space and time: only if a yang object had been placed in the *ding* and *you* directions would the *dingyou* day bring spending and loss rather than income. With a yin object, the 12th would have brought money in, not money out.

Then, from the relation between time and space, I further inferred that the object must have been placed in the *ding* direction on the 11th, during the *guisi* hour (9 to 11 in the morning) or the *dingyou* hour (5 to 7 in the evening). Rao remembered: he had not stayed at the abbey on the night of the 10th but down the mountain, and had come back on the morning of the 11th — the *si* hour — and casually put the thing down opposite his bed, in the *ding* direction.

The abbots and Chairman Yang all exclaimed at once: “Extraordinary!”

At their warm invitation I summed up the theory of time, space and person:

1. The theory is not only for prediction, accurate as that is. More important is what prediction shows us: nothing that happens to a person happens because he wanted it to, nor fails to happen because he did not want it. Everything that happens happens after a person has received energy from something outside himself; it is when the energy of external things affects his own energy that fortunate or unfortunate events occur to him. Abbot Rao paid out money on the 12th to maintain an important tool, his phone, because on the morning of the 11th, in the *si* hour, he placed a yang object carrying energy in the *ding*

direction of his bed. It was precisely the energy of that object in that direction that changed his own auspicious and inauspicious energy, and produced an outflow rather than an inflow.

So a person's promotion and wealth, his dismissal and death, are all results produced when his own energy is changed by the energy of the things around him. Put an auspicious thing in an auspicious direction at an auspicious time, near a person or at his ancestral grave, and at a fixed time something auspicious will certainly happen to him — promotion, income. Put an inauspicious thing in an inauspicious direction at an inauspicious time, and at a fixed time something inauspicious will certainly happen — dismissal, loss.

So the real use of the time-space-person theory is this: by means of objects that carry energy, to **change a fate in a chosen direction** — and not merely to enjoy the marvel of predicting it.

Master this skill and at the critical moment you can use a particular object to settle everything for yourself and create every favourable condition.

2. What the abbots could not understand was the connection between Rao's stroking the back of his own hand and his placing a yang object in the *ding* direction in the *si* hour of the 11th.

Nothing moves unless it has first received a great force. Precisely because Rao placed a yang object in the *ding* direction in the *si* hour of the 11th, the energy of that object acted on him, and that force expressed itself through his movements. We might think: stroking the back of one's hand is a casual gesture — how can there be so much to say about it? But the fact is: why did you not casually touch your nose, your ear, your face? Why the back of the hand, precisely? Because at that moment, only stroking the back of the hand felt comfortable and pleasant. And why did only that feel comfortable at that moment? Because at that moment an external force was driving you, and only by following the direction and manner of that force would you feel comfortable — resist it and you feel acute pain.

Where does that external force come from? It is the energy of the object in the *ding* direction in the *si* hour of the 11th, which set off a change in Rao's own energy and produced a particular mode of expressing it.

So: no gesture of any person is accidental or arbitrary, and nothing happens without that person having, at a particular time, received the energy of a particular yin or yang thing in a particular direction.

Understand this, master the skill, and you can change your own affairs and other people's by placing particular yin and yang things in particular directions at particular times. Yang can benefit you; yin can subdue others.

Having unlocked the relation among time, space and person, everyone who masters it can, within the level of fate quality he was born with, go everywhere without defeat, and reach the very summit of his own level.

How high a person's level of fate quality is can be assessed accurately from the distribution and energy of yin and yang things inside and outside the house where his mother lived for most of her pregnancy, and at the ancestral grave.

The abbots pressed me to stay several more days. Business called; I could leave only a yearning for Wudang Shan, and a feeling of deep respect for the Taoists of Wudang.

CHAPTER NINE

The Shikongren Method: Cases, Volume Nine

2026-07-20 · 1,269 words

> **Translator's note.** A student's notebook, in four cases and then a page of practical advice that is more useful than any of the cases: pick the largest, most obvious movement; if you cannot read one, wait for another; you are not obliged to interpret everything. The two best moments are a chair that nearly tips and a teacup carried off by a waitress.

Teacher Xu Hongtao was demonstrating in the new classroom that one more person could still sit in the front row. Taking him as the origin, he sat down on a windowsill in the X direction of the room. The sill was a little lower than a chair; he lurched, and then settled.

The master read from this: in a *ding* year or a *gui* year there would be an important matter — a lurch, and then it settled. The feedback: in 2023, the *guimao* year, he moved a grave, taking his father from a small mine pit to the platform there, and later that same year moved it again to Jingbian and there it stabilised.

The buttocks stand for platform matters; sitting down is a matter of support, and an important one. When he lurched he grabbed the table, and the table stands for matters connected with the seal — houses, cars, ancestral graves, documents, certificates. The feedback: in 2023 he bought a flat from Evergrande, Evergrande collapsed, and the flat lurched; the handover had not happened, and in the end it was handed over. Because he was smiling as he did it, it was a happy ending. When he sat down he also leaned back against

the curtain, and everything to do with the curtain is connected with the seal. The classroom faces the *gui-ding* line, and he was facing north as he sat, which is why the judgement was for *gui* and *ding* years.

Analysis: a lurch means that the matter was lurched — like putting your back out — but in the end it landed. Had he fallen flat, that would prove a platform matter thoroughly ruined. Sitting on a chair or on the ground is the same: a platform, and sitting is something that supports you, an important matter. As he went down onto the empty space he grabbed the table — human instinct — and that shows the matter has to do with the seal, with the meanings the seal carries: house, ancestral grave, car, study. One cannot say it was the grave, but at the least it is closely tied to seal matters.

Only one movement was observed before he sat, and then the table grab read it as seal-related. When he had finally sat down, come back to himself and was still smiling, that meant the matter would end well, not badly. Evergrande had not handed over but in the end would; a nearly abandoned project, and in the end handed over — because after the lurch he sat down, meaning that though there was an obstacle, the ending was happy. The grave had been moved to a place that was not suitable, there was inauspicious sand, it was moved again — but the ending was a smile. One reading of a process can lock onto many matters. A grim face would mean a bad outcome; a bared-teeth grimace, a bad outcome; he was smiling, so the seal and all the important things connected with it were locked, and the final result was happy and good. The process had a slip. And when he sat he also leaned back against the curtain, and the curtain too is a seal matter: everything he did was closely tied to the seal.

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A woman was pouring tea for us. She thought the water too hot, and poured it back and forth between two cups — from this one into that, then from that one back into this. I have forgotten the year; the master read that a major transfer of money had occurred — not a loss, a transfer. Her feedback: she had sold a

house and bought a house; the money from the sale came back and then went out again. Money came and went, poured back and forth.

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Chen Peng — I read that he had lost money because of a woman. In a very auspicious direction of his, a teacup; a waitress came and took the cup from in front of him. He was just saying, “Read me, then, how am I?” — 2019 or some such year, I forget the direction — and the master read that he had lost money because of a woman. He said it was not one woman but two. His wife had invested all the money with another woman; that woman ran off. He had given all his assets to his wife, his wife invested them with someone else, and that person took them and ran. He had only fixed assets left; not one yuan of savings, all of it cheated away. The waitress cleared the table completely clean, and on her way out put in one more word.

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To handle a client, catch the most obvious actions and gestures; there is no need to strain your eyes. Will you refuse to read because he licked his tongue? Watch the large movements, or the large movements in the outside environment, and read from those. One man will produce countless gestures and the environment countless changes. Choose the most obvious, the easiest to read. If some action is hard to interpret, do not interpret it; interpret whichever one you can. Wait for the action you can read, and read that. If a girl appears in the northwest and you do not know how to explain it, wait until a girl appears in the southeast and explain that. You have forgotten what the northwest means — fine, remember that the southeast is wealth and getting rich, and a girl is also wealth. A little girl appearing in the southeast is information of money coming in. Then read that in a *chen* or *si* year, or a *xu* or *hai* year, money will certainly come in.

If you do remember that the northwest is cultivation, study and culture, you can read that in that year he gained something through study — or that money came, because it is connected with study: he joined a class, met someone, and that person asked him to look at a feng shui site and he earned a little. That is profiting through study.

Watch who spills food on his clothes, and in which direction he spills it, and you can date it. If there is no time at all, say “recently” — in the next few days, the last two days, or within two days.

When you go out to inspect feng shui, the client who follows you is always producing gestures, and a few readings with the Shikongren method will impress him. If he is climbing a slope and does not get up it and falls, look at the direction: if he was climbing south and fell on the southern slope, then in a *bingwu* or *renzi* year there will be a setback in his career.

On 24 May, a *wuxu* day, the agent said the house could be sold and asked us to come and do the paperwork. It came to nothing; we made the trip for nothing and had to wait again. On 19 June we went back from Beijing and formally completed the transfer.

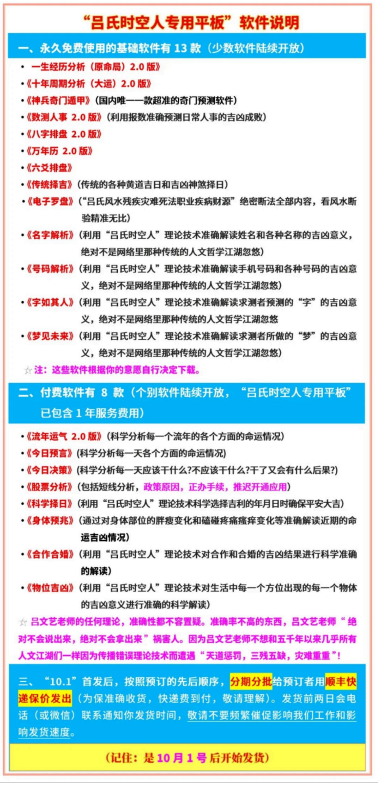
Recorded by Xu Hongtao and Wang Lixiao, noon, 17 June 2026

CHAPTER TEN

The Shikongren Method: Cases, Volume Ten

2026-07-21 · 2,265 words

> **Translator's note.** Fourteen short cases recorded by a student, and the most compact demonstration in the volume of how the method scales down: a scald on the index finger, a woman sweeping water, a butterfly, a mosquito, a fistful of a trouser leg, a bag strap over the head. Each entry has the observation, the derivation and the reported fact. Read them as a workbook rather than as proof.



1.

On a certain day, while pouring water in the morning, I (Hu Lina) was suddenly scalded on the index finger of my left hand by hot water from the flask. Teacher Longlong read from it: a sudden situation involving the seal would require a decision (the seal stands for cars, houses, documents, contracts, receipts, diplomas and the like).

Analysis: the fingers stand for the progress of what one is doing or planning; the index finger stands for making a good decision; being scalded suddenly means the event is sudden.

Feedback that evening: I was at the high-speed rail station with my nephew, waiting. Because of an earthquake in a certain city, most trains were suddenly

cancelled or delayed, with no estimate of the delay, and countless passengers were stranded. The station announced that regardless of tickets, anyone could board a train that passed through their destination. In the end I decided on the spot to board whatever train came that passed through Xuzhou. It was delayed, but we squeezed onto one and got home safely.

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2.

Near Teachers Gao, Ma and Zhu, a middle-aged woman was sweeping up standing water from the ground, sweeping all the way to the three of them. She stopped near them, and there was a joyful exchange of glances between her and the three.

Analysis: (a) A middle-aged woman stands for wealth — information of money coming in. But is it certainly money coming in? Look at how the distance between her and the three changes: growing further means more loss than gain, growing nearer means more gain than loss. If the middle-aged woman is inauspicious sand, she means loss. (b) The standing water she sweeps is also wealth. Water swept in the X direction carries information of loss, but there was little water, so it does not amount to inauspicious water. (c) Her stopping in the X direction means first that there is inauspicious sand in that direction, and that at the times X and X there will be an error of decision, or a bad habit picked up (with a client one should not say "bad habit"; say "a particular interest"). Though it is inauspicious sand, the exchange of glances was joyful, which means the error of decision brought a pleasant experience.

Feedback: (a) Teacher Gao took in money in the *renyin* and *gengzi* years, but with trouble and disputes. From the trouble we can reason backwards that when the woman swept the water, some splashed on Teacher Gao: money came in, yes, but being splashed is irritating; and the woman standing in the X direction is inauspicious sand, and inauspicious sand in that direction also means disputes and trouble. (b) In the year X a superior gave Teacher Ma a

car, and after three months he gave it back; in the year X he bought American shares and hit a funding obstacle, which was resolved; in the year X he bought a car. (c) Teacher Zhu: in the year X someone gave him a laptop.

If the three teachers were in the same company, one could read what happened as a collective event, connected with the company. And because their positions differed, the time points read from each also differ.

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3.

A butterfly flew from Teacher Chen's *hai* direction to his *si* direction and away, almost hitting him in the face. Chen watched it with a smile. There was no contact between them.

Analysis: a butterfly stands for feeling. It was small, so the money information can be left aside; it is chiefly feeling. At the time X, or recently, a beautiful woman took a liking to Teacher Chen, or he took a liking to one; there was a fluctuation in feeling.

Feedback: Chen said he had thought about it, but nothing happened.

In modern society, attraction and emotional fluctuation are universal. It does not follow that something necessarily happened; but the accuracy of the judgement in this theory exceeds what social generality alone would explain.

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4.

Teacher Lü stroked the back of his head; his hand was in the X direction.

Analysis: the back of the head stands for dangerous people, matters and things. Stroking stands for handling something properly — difficulty and crisis will pass easily, or quickly.

Feedback: in the year X he was reading feng shui for someone and was held overnight because of the epidemic; the next day epidemic controls began and he was quarantined locally for more than a month.

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5.

Teacher Lü was standing by the roadside when a mosquito bit him on the left forearm. After he noticed, Teacher Tang swatted the mosquito dead with one hand, and there was blood.

Analysis: a mosquito stands for a petty person; that there was blood after it was killed means a loss caused by that petty person. The mosquito being killed means the petty person was dealt with. Since the petty person was dealt with, and though it was only a monthly cycle, the blood was still on the body, it means money came in because of the petty person. It bit the forearm; one would normally say the arm rather than the forearm or upper arm, and the arm stands for assistants, subordinates and children.

Feedback: in the year X a petty person interfered and affected his children; the petty person was placed under *shuanggui* — detained by the discipline authorities. (The petty person was dealt with, brought under control.)

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6.

Teacher Qin braced himself against a red pillar with his right upper arm, his left hand on his hip, thumb forward and the other four fingers behind.

Analysis: bracing means finding support, a way to solve a problem; the X direction means a close connection with the opposite sex — help obtained from the opposite sex, the problem properly solved. The waist stands for important and critical people, matters and things; the hand on the hip is a state of controlling the waist, so it reads as the ability to control important

people, matters and things. Thumb forward, four fingers behind, is an awkward grip, meaning that controlling the matter took some effort. The pillar did not move here; it has only the meaning of support, and no meaning of its own. A red pillar is conspicuous, and red can be understood as sand: one is receiving the influence of auspicious sand's energy. (Colour does not move or not move; colour moving or not is still movement. Colour is a wave; as soon as colour is observed it has colour's meaning.) Do push-ups in a sandpit and the sand has its meaning.

Feedback: on the day X at the hour X he collected three sets of "Shikongzuobiao" clothing; in the year X, while renovating his house, someone reported him, the property management staff were women, and the property office handled it properly.

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7.

A teacher repeatedly stroked his chin with the middle and ring fingers of his right hand; the hand was in the X direction.

Analysis: the middle finger stands for plans, schemes, methods of communicating with people. The index finger stands for making decisions, and for a woman, for spouse and lover. The chin stands for children, subordinates, houses, vehicles, documents, certificates, and female elders. In physiognomy a poor chin means a bleak old age; the chin does not stand for elders — a bleak old age is mostly bad children.

Feedback: during period X he received a call from his child: the boy had passed the first medical examination for military service and was preparing for the second.

Here a medical examination does not mean illness; it means something connected with the seal and with certificates, since a certificate of health must be obtained. Examinations have two meanings: (a) a health check, (b) an

examination whose purpose is a driving licence or proof of fitness for service. The judgement: it is either a health matter or a seal matter.

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8.

Teacher Ma struck the cap of a pillar on a railing hard twice with his right hand, reddening his palm, and then rubbed his two palms together.

Analysis: a pillar stands for support. A railing stands for obstruction. The cap on the railing means what he struck was in effect the railing; the cap is not there for obstruction but for appearance. Striking hard means handling the obstruction with effort. The railing did not fall, which means it was not handled well. The palm reddened means the problem was not solved and injury was added. Rubbing repeatedly means looking for a way to lessen the pain.

Feedback: in the year X, to take on a project, he paid a deposit of five hundred thousand; then he did not want to do the project, and could not get the deposit back. That year his child replaced his car for him.

Reasoning backwards: because the hand hurt, the other hand rubbed it to lessen the pain; a hurting hand can mean disaster to children, or to oneself. A child changing his parents' car is also the fulfilling of a wish — spending money to change his parents' car fulfils a wish.

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9.

Teacher Lou touched his buttocks; the hand was in the X direction.

Analysis: the buttocks, for a man, stand for money and wife. The hand stands for what one plans to do, for tools, subordinates and children.

Feedback: in the year X his son married; the children gained.

Touching one's own buttocks means money coming to oneself, and also an elevation in feeling between oneself and one's wife.

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10.

Teacher Liu was standing taking notes when a black, elongated flying insect rushed at his abdomen and then flew away. He was startled and cried out.

Analysis: an insect one does not recognise stands for strange people, matters and things. Rushing at the abdomen means the strange thing came into close contact with him. The insect was small, so its energy was small: a small bad person, matter or thing.

Feedback: on the day X, while standing, Teacher Liu suddenly felt dizzy and his vision blurred, and he went back to the dormitory and lay down for a while.

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11.

A little girl was holding a cup of water facing the X direction, stroking the cup again and again with a happy expression.

Analysis: stroking the cup repeatedly — a cup stands for people, matters and things connected with the seal. At a particular time, the seal brings a joyful mood.

Feedback: before the *guimao* year of X, her New Year money was kept every year by an elder; after the year X she kept it herself. There was no feedback of a seal matter, but a seal matter will still occur.

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12.

Teacher Lü was walking on the temple stairs and saw a small pink shoe — a girl's shoe — abandoned at the side.

Analysis: a small shoe means encountering petty people, encountering bad things, being given a hard time behind one's back (in Chinese, “giving someone small shoes”).

Feedback: in the year X, while building the Foyin Temple in Meizhou, he met a very large petty person — an elderly woman of great age.

Meeting a small shoe, best to kick it away at once, or keep away from it and not go near. Do not pick up any shoe you find, and above all not a worn-out one. Do not give shoes as a gift to someone you like: you will send the one you like away. If the relationship is already close, you may; and giving shoes to someone with whom a relationship has already occurred will make it closer.

The Shikongren method predicts mainly the past, but it can predict the future too. What happens in the future, if it has happened before, will manifest as something small or very small; if it has not happened before, then what happens at that future point will be large.

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13.

Teacher Zhou hung the strap of his backpack over the top of his head, so that the bag covered the half of his face below the nose, hiding his nose and nostrils.

Analysis: the head stands for important people, matters and things; a strap hung over the top of the head means enormous pressure on them. The bag covering the mouth means something hard to say or something he does not want to say. Covering the nostrils — the nostrils being an organ essential to life — means something connected with the safety of his life will occur.

Feedback: in the year X he underwent major surgery, and in the year X he had surgery again.

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14.

Teacher Hua took a wooden stick in both hands and prodded his own abdomen.

Analysis: a wooden stick struck against one's own shoulder or neck is a tool. Prodding carries danger. The abdomen stands for money. Together: a dangerous matter concerning money.

Feedback: in the year X he lost money.

Recorded by Hu Lina

CHAPTER ELEVEN

What Is the Use of Reading a Fate?

2017-10-27 · 670 words

> **Translator's note.** The plainest statement of what prediction is for, and the one to hand a sceptic. A reading is a health check, not a treatment: it finds the problem, and the intervention comes afterwards. Four uses follow — averting harm, timing a good move, raising a person to the top of their own level, and adjusting a company's premises. The definition offered in the middle is worth noting: prediction is “a mode of inference that is mathematical and philosophical,” not a mystery.

Reading a fate is like a medical check-up. The check finds what is wrong, and we then use every means medicine has to bring the body back to health. That is the point of a check-up. The point of reading a fate is the same: if we find bad people and bad events ahead, we can avoid or resolve them by various means; if we find good people and good events ahead, we can also work to bring them sooner and to enlarge the result. Prediction itself does not change a fate, any more than a check-up cures a disease. Prediction is only an instrument and a method for examining the course of a life. Only intervention on the basis of the prediction achieves the purpose — moving toward the auspicious, away from the inauspicious, turning harm into benefit.

Prediction is not mysterious and not superstitious. It is a mode of inference that is mathematical and philosophical. To understand fate prediction correctly is beneficial and not harmful to our society. To see the subject correctly and to spread it is more conducive to breaking down superstition: the less one understands a thing, and the less one is able to understand it, the more easily one sinks into the swamp of superstition.



First. When a bad event is predicted, comprehensive adjustment by various methods, together with one's own adjustment, can turn a great matter into a small one and a small one into nothing. Even a bad event that has already occurred — a lawsuit, an illness, a quarrel — can, through adjustment, be dissolved to the greatest possible extent.

Second. When a good event is predicted, comprehensive adjustment plus one's own adjustment allows one to choose the right timing, the right manner of acting, and to move quickly — so that the thing is done faster and better.

Third. Through adjusting the feng shui of the ancestral grave and the home, one can change the energy of a person's life and fate, and push him to the summit of the level he was born at. With a large-scale adjustment one can even push a person past his native level onto the next one up. Suppose a man's native level is that of a county or division chief. Even at that level he is not necessarily at its summit. Adjust the feng shui and his life-fate energy rises, and he may reach the top of that level, or jump to the next, the provincial-

ministerial level. But to jump a whole level by feng shui, one must find an ancestral grave of exceptional energy and a home of exceptional energy, so as to obtain enough of that great energy; otherwise one can only reach the top of one's own level. The same applies to wealth, length of life, health, the quality of one's children, cultural level and moral character, exactly as to official rank.

Fourth. For an enterprise or institution, adjusting the feng shui — especially the position of the leader's office and the finance office, and the arrangement of what is inside them — can not only increase the unit's wealth but increase the leader's chances of promotion, and further avert unpleasantness such as quarrels and lawsuits involving the leader.

The greatest significance of reading a fate is this: to guard against trouble before it arrives, to mend the roof before it rains, to make every adjustment and preparation in advance, so as to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead and win the greatest victory.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Why Fate Can Be Predicted

2017-11-08 · 1,202 words

> **Translator's note.** The philosophical foundation, written in 1998 and revised since: if matter moves by law, and a person is matter, then a life moves by law, and a life can therefore be predicted. What follows is the argument for why time alone is not enough — two watermelon seeds planted in the same hour, one in a greenhouse and one outside — and the most specific claim in the corpus about twins: same grave, same house, different birth order, different inherited information, therefore different reception of the same feng shui field.

Long-press the QR code to follow.

Dialectical materialism holds that the movement and change of matter follow laws. A person is matter; therefore the development and movement of a human life follows laws. The law of that development and movement is what we call a person's fate. So a fate follows laws. And if it follows laws, it can be predicted.

But whether a fate can actually be predicted depends on the crucial question of whether the law of a human life's movement can be found. Find it, and we can predict. At this point you may ask: you have argued at length — have you found it? Yes. Using the models our ancestors invented — the trigrams and lines, the bazi, and feng shui, built out of yin-yang, the five phases, the stems and branches — and joining them to our own analysis and summary of the fate facts of tens of thousands of people using modern methods, we have deciphered the relation between those models and a human fate. Extensive testing has proved that a fate can be predicted, and predicted accurately. For a

given person, setting aside the occasional error of the reader, a *qualitative* prediction — whether money will be lost or made, whether there will be promotion or demotion — can be made a hundred per cent. As for *quantitative* prediction — how much lost, how much made, how far the scope of authority expanded, how many ranks were climbed — accuracy falls off sharply.

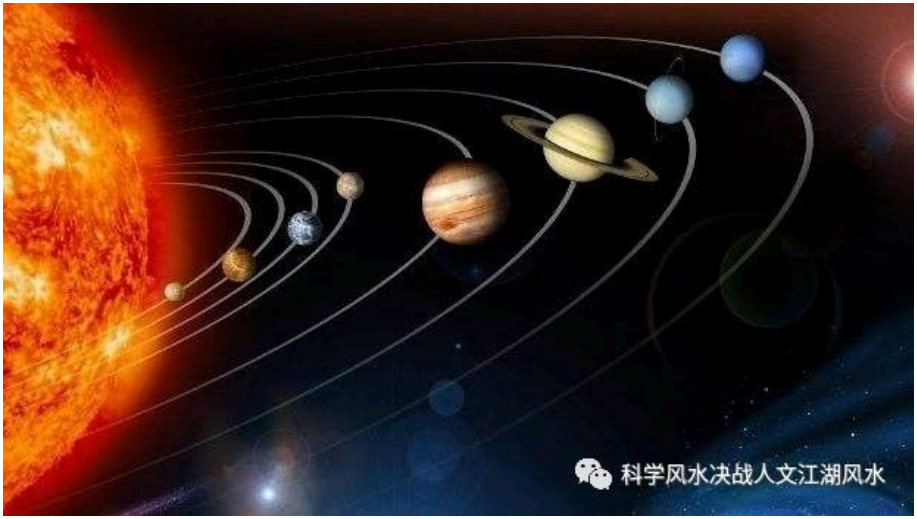


As to the traditional arts of the trigrams and lines, the bazi and feng shui (the home environment and the ancestral grave), extensive practice has established: to predict a single event, the trigrams and lines are the fastest and most accurate; to predict the wealth, rank, fortune and lifespan of a whole life, or the luck of a given year, the best is a perfect combination of bazi and feng shui. Only so can one be accurate without error, and only so can one help people move toward the auspicious and away from the inauspicious.

Why? Marxist dialectics holds that the universe is the combination of time and space, and that every thing in the world is composed of those two factors. A person living on earth has both a temporal and a spatial nature. Attend only to the factor of time and ignore the factor of space — environment — and predict from birth time alone, and your prediction has only temporal characteristics: the result can say only that such-and-such a fact *should* appear at such-and-such a time, but not whether it will in fact appear.

An analogy. In winter, at the same moment, a farmer plants two watermelon seeds, one inside a greenhouse and one outside. Predicting by time alone, we could conclude with confidence that in a hundred-odd days both will bear large watermelons. In fact the seed outside will not even sprout, let alone bear fruit. From which it is clear that prediction from the bazi alone, a mere time factor, is unscientific and of limited accuracy. Accurate prediction requires the factor of space — the home environment and the ancestral grave.

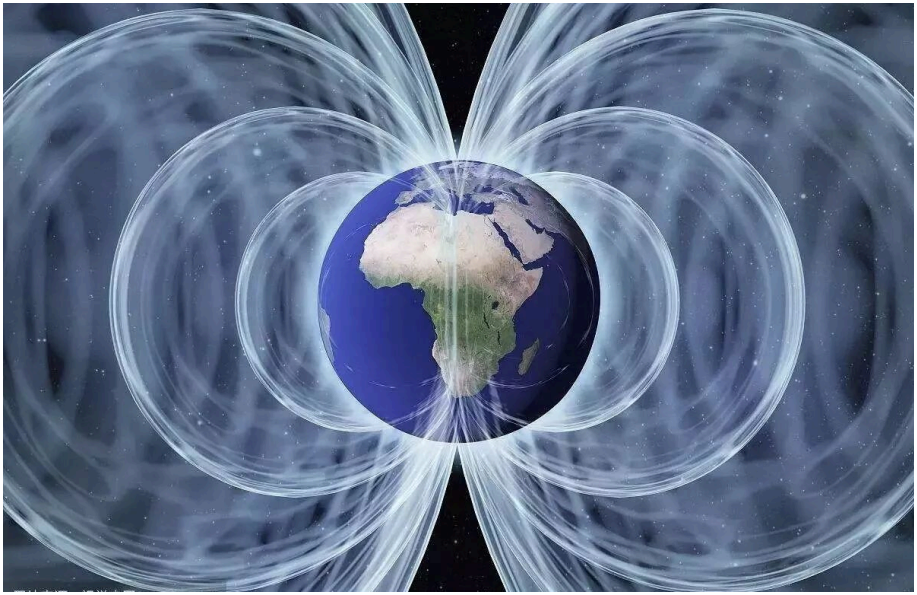
Predict without environmental feng shui and it would follow that everyone born in the same year, month, day and hour has the same fate; and that twins and triplets of the same sex born in the same hour have fates even more certainly identical. But the fact is that even same-sex twins born in the same hour have different fates, sometimes enormously different. One twin dies young and the other grows up; one rises in office and makes money and the other is poor and dull; one lives at peace and the other in turmoil; one marries and has children and the other lives alone. Such facts are everywhere. Which shows plainly: a fate can be predicted, but the method of prediction is decisive. Only by fusing the trigrams and lines, the bazi and environmental feng shui into one can prediction be accurate without error.



Why do same-sex twins born in the same hour have different fates?

We have said that people born in the same year, month, day and hour differ chiefly because of environmental feng shui — home and ancestral grave. But then, you may ask, do twins not share the same home and the same grave? Why still a great difference?

Because their birth order differs. And because their birth order differs, the hereditary information they received from their parents differs. That difference in inherited information decides that they receive the qi-field information — the feng shui information — of the home and the grave differently. And that difference in reception decides that same-sex twins born in the same hour have different fates.



In any home or any grave site, different terrain and different arrangements of things inside and outside produce different information-energy fields: the distribution of magnetic strength, the distribution of sound, light, wind, frost, rain and snow. These different fields — this feng shui — affect a person's wealth, rank, fortune and lifespan. And the same field affects the people living in it differently.

In daily life, if we put several goldfish hatched in the same hour into the same tank, in time they will plainly show different fate characteristics. As for environmental feng shui, the configurations formed by different terrains affect people differently: some configurations make the eldest son an official and rich; some make the second or third son so; some make all three; some make the eldest son childless, some the second or third; some make the eldest die young, some the second or third; some make the eldest have only sons and no daughters, some make the second and third have only daughters. And so on, endlessly. For same-sex twins born in the same hour there is the distinction of

first, second or third birth; and against one and the same environmental feng shui, that produces a difference in fate.

From which it is clear that bazi alone, without environmental feng shui, gives only limited accuracy. And it follows that people of the same sex born in the same year, month, day and hour, if their birth order is the same and the configuration of their environmental feng shui broadly similar (though the strength of the information-energy field need not be), will have broadly the same fate: if one of them is promoted in 1998, all of them will be promoted that year — but how great the promotion is, is decided entirely by the strength of the field formed by each one's own environmental feng shui.

Fuding, Fujian, 1998

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

What Fate Prediction Actually Is

2017-10-31 · 1,086 words

> **Translator's note.** The answer to the oldest joke in the trade. One foot inside the door and one out: tell me which way I will move, and I will do the opposite. A bird in a sage's hand: alive or dead? The paradox dissolves only if you see what prediction is actually predicting — the outcome of things following natural law, not the outcome of things defying a prediction they have been told. From that follows the “principle of correct consciousness” and the rule that a disaster avoided is not a disaster cancelled: the energy must go somewhere.

Long-press the QR code to follow.

A single slap can kill a fortune-teller. Do you know what kind of slap?

Everything has a fate; it is not only people. The whole course of a thing's arising, developing and changing is that thing's fate. A person, a bird, a pen, a sheet of paper, a car — each has its own fate.



What is the essence of fate prediction? Every master has a flawless-sounding answer ready. But:

Suppose someone stands in a doorway with one foot outside and one foot in, and asks: Master, can you predict whether I will go out or come back in? At that, most masters would not know what to do.

In antiquity there was a sage who held a small bird in his hand and put the question to Shao Kangjie — the most famous predictor of the old world: predict whether this bird will be dead or alive an hour from now. The old books record neither how Shao Kangjie answered nor who won. But from these two mocking questions we can see how very few predictors, from antiquity to now, have understood the essence of their art. Masters may have formidable technique, yet faced with this kind of trap they fall silent — because they know that whatever they answer, the other party will act against it. Predict that he goes out, and he will step back in; predict that he

comes in, and he will go out. Predict that the bird lives, and the sage crushes it; predict that it dies, and he lets it go. So whatever answer the master gives, the actual outcome makes it wrong.

Faced with this mockery, which is as old as the art itself, we should not blame the people who ask the question. We should reflect on ourselves, and on our own theory. We are the masters, the experts, the scholars. If we cannot surpass ourselves, if we cannot resolve the paradox inside our own theory, what face have fortune-tellers and feng shui masters left for playing the oracle about the affairs of the world?

So anyone who practises Yijing prediction or environmental feng shui should, while mastering the technique, also think philosophically about the core questions of the art. These two mocking questions are in fact not difficult at all. They became an ancient joke at our expense for one reason only: the masters never understood **what the essence of fate prediction is.**

Once you understand that, the joke stops being a problem.

Because the essence of fate prediction is to predict the outcome that arises when people and things follow natural law in their development and change — not to predict the new outcome that arises when people and things, having been told the predicted outcome, act against that natural law.

Having understood this, we can predict with complete accuracy whether the man with one foot in the doorway will go out or come back in, and whether the sage will release the bird or crush it. Let me explain, for some may still not see it. **Provided the theory of the technique contains no error**, we write the prediction on a piece of paper. We do not tell the man in the doorway what we have written. We do not tell the sage holding the bird. We wait quietly for the natural outcome to appear. When it appears, we make public the prediction — which has been in the custody of a third party all along — and it will be found a hundred per cent accurate.

Why? Because, as said, the essence of prediction is the natural law of change in people and things. Not telling the sage or the man in the doorway is precisely what allows the natural outcome to occur. Tell them, and they will act against the natural law — and then we are no longer inside the principle of prediction at all.

In practice we often use exactly this to avert disaster. It is what I call the **principle of correct consciousness** among the five principles of averting disaster. With it we may act against the natural law of a human affair in order to adjust a fate — though only within the level of fate fixed by the prenatal environment, moving up and down inside that level, never crossing to another.

Suppose we predict a car accident tomorrow. We can perfectly well stay somewhere an accident absolutely cannot happen, and that guarantees no accident. But a disaster is a form of energy. Acting against natural law in this way guarantees no crash, yet the energy of the disaster will still discharge in some other form: a quarrel with family, money borrowed by a relative or friend and not returned, a valuable thing broken, a fall and an injury. Through the principle of correct consciousness we can still choose, actively, a form we are willing to accept. Having actively avoided the crash, we should also actively dissolve that energy — give blood two or three days in advance, give a sum of money to public welfare, and so on. Avoid it and do nothing else, and you will "escape the first day but not the fifteenth," escape this disaster but not the next.

So the most effective way to dissolve a disaster is the **method of energy conversion**, and the **principle of energy conversion is also the essential principle of fate prediction.**

The essence of fate prediction is to predict the outcome that arises when people and things follow natural law — not the new outcome

that arises when, having learned the predicted outcome, they act against it a second time.

A person is matter. The movement and change of all matter follows law. Find the law, and predicting a human fate is entirely possible. So a fate can be predicted; the technique is scientific and not in the least superstitious.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Problem with Formulas

2020-08-06 · 1,408 words

> **Translator's note.** Why the classical formulas "work" and "fail" at the same time: every one of them is accurate *with its conditions attached*, and no book ever printed the conditions. Two reasons are given — secrecy, and the cost of woodblock printing — and two famous formulas are then dismantled and rebuilt: "when the year cycle repeats the luck cycle, either you die or someone else does," and "when the wounding officer meets the officer, disaster of a hundred kinds." There is also a fine argument against reading hidden stems.

1. With their conditions, all the formulas are exact

Every formula in every system of fate prediction is accurate, and every one is inaccurate. Add the conditions of use to a formula from the old books and it is accurate; ignore the conditions and apply it anywhere, and it is inaccurate.

Why did the ancients not write the conditions in the books? At least two reasons.

The first is secrecy. Learning was scarce in the old world, and a master with a small invention or a small discovery would not readily tell others, or even his own disciples. Guiguzi had only so much to teach, and Sun Bin and Pang Juan studied with him for decades — because he would not speak readily. One sentence every three months: a hundred sentences in twenty-five years. *The Art of War* and the Thirty-Six Stratagems were almost unobtainable in their time. Sunzi did not write them down; and even when written, he did not let them be seen, but now and then produced a single stratagem for you, and with that you prospered. Our ancestors were extremely

secretive about transmitting knowledge — and that is exactly why so much excellent traditional culture was carried into the coffin, generation after generation, and lost. Secrecy is a national sorrow.

And because the ancients were like that, we now have a crowd of fraudulent "masters" with nothing in their bellies taking disciples. The phrase with which they fob off a disciple and conceal their own ignorance is: "that cannot be spoken." The disciple, cheated, believes the master formidable and merely conservative. I tell you: he could teach you everything and you would still not learn it. And if he is holding back, how will you learn? If he is holding back and you are still paying him, are you not a fool? Tsinghua and Peking University would like nothing better than to turn every student into an expert; they teach desperately and the students still do not learn. Hold back on top of that and it is finished. So any master who says "this is secret, this cannot be spoken" is proving only that he does not know it at all.

The second is the limits of printing. The ancients began with woodblock printing, and even after Bi Sheng invented movable type in the Song, printing a book was expensive. So they wrote with the fewest possible characters to convey the most possible content. High cost meant the writer could not put down everything he wanted to say. Editions were small and dear; many could not afford books and had to borrow to study.

Take a formula we all know: **"when the year cycle coincides with the luck cycle, either you die or someone else does."**

Does such a coincidence bring disaster?

Once you understand what we have said about useful and unfavourable gods, you will see that the old sentence is very accurate. When the annual and luck cycles arrive with identical stems and branches, the number of one or two elements suddenly surges, and a sudden surge in the number of an element is disaster. If the chart contains *jiayin*, the luck cycle is *jiayin*, and the year is *jiayin*, then six of the twelve positions of chart, luck and year have become

wood. A sudden surge in wood brings disaster. Anything whose number suddenly multiplies in a short period brings disaster — just as a sudden multiplication of cancer cells gives a person cancer.

But not everyone with such a coincidence meets disaster. It depends on whether the doubled element becomes a useful or an unfavourable god. In chart, luck cycle and year taken together, an element whose stems and branches reach four or more is unfavourable; below four, useful. So it is easy to judge: has the doubled stem become unfavourable? That is the condition of use. If the chart contains *yiwei*, and the luck cycle is *yiwei* and the year is *yiwei*, then *yi* wood and *wei* earth are both useful gods, and the coincidence brings not trouble but one good thing after another — what kind of good thing depending on what has arrived.

As to whether one reads the hidden stems in the branches when judging at such a coincidence: read them if you like, but my theory does not. It is like signing a contract with you in business: I have no need to concern myself with the woman's handkerchief in your left pocket and the woman's bracelet in your right. People use hidden stems because their eight characters cannot read accurately and they must find a reason inside the branch. That is a theory of finding fault, not a theory of solving problems. If something is hidden, do you think it can play an important role? However powerful a hidden stem may be, if it does not come out it means nothing — the American aircraft carriers are powerful, but America has not dared sail them inside our twelve-mile limit; keep them hidden in some harbour and they are no threat to us at all. And if the hidden stem has already appeared among the visible stems, why look at the hidden one? The carrier has already opened fire on us; do we still need to know where it was hiding before? That is my view of hidden stems. Our system does not use them.

Another familiar formula: **“when the wounding officer meets the officer, disaster comes from a hundred directions.”**

Remember: the wounding officer does not mean only the wounding officer; it also covers the eating god. The officer does not mean only the direct officer; it also covers the seven killings.

Is the formula true? Someone wrote a whole book on it and never got to the bottom. Is it so complicated? No.

The condition is simple: look at the relation between the wounding officer and the officer.

If a useful god combines with or clashes an unfavourable god, no disaster. If an unfavourable god combines with or clashes a useful god, disaster.

If the relation is punishment or harm, and one of the two is useful and the other unfavourable, the result is bad — because punishment and harm are mere acquaintance, they cannot settle the other party. If both are unfavourable, then punishment, clash, combination or harm all bring disaster.

So judging useful and unfavourable comes first. Second, look at who has settled whom. Stare only at strength and weakness and your reading will usually be wrong.

From these two familiar formulas you should see: every formula has its conditions. With the conditions, all are accurate; without them, none is.

2. “Unconditional formulas” are the trade's way of hooking people

Take “when the year cycle coincides with the luck cycle, either you die or someone else does.” The sentence itself smells of the marketplace. What is the scope of “someone else”? Grandparents? Parents? Children? Does the same generation include classmates, army comrades, close friends? Does it include neighbours? There is no specified scope — which means that if in that year you attended anyone's funeral at all, the formula was perfectly accurate.

Unconditional formulas come in two kinds. One kind really is unconditional and accurate everywhere. For example: “a chart in which wealth combines with the owl-seal will make a name in his own professional circle whatever trade he follows”; “a male chart in which the day master and the wealth star at the gate clash will have a marital crisis.” These hit the mark every time, without conditions. The other kind is the marketplace kind, which claims to be accurate and is in fact a con: “when the year cycle coincides with the luck cycle, either you die or someone else does”; “when the white tiger sits at the head, without disaster there will be calamity”; “when the year god presses the luck, nothing goes well.”

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

What "Injury, Illness and Disaster" Actually Means

2020-02-21 · 482 words

> **Translator's note.** A short piece that exists to prevent one specific argument. A client is told there is injury, illness or disaster in a period; the period passes; nothing visible happens; the client says the reading was wrong. The author's answer is a definition: the category covers psychological injury as much as physical, covers a scar and a remembered grief, and covers a chronic illness *getting worse* rather than merely existing. There is also a practical note on bloodshed and blood donation, and a warning about the readers who open every consultation with a death portent.

In fate calculation, **injury, illness and disaster means harm to the body and harm to the mind.** A chronic illness that suddenly worsens also carries the information of injury, illness and disaster.

Yet in the minds of many masters, and of ordinary people, only physical injury counts as injury, illness and disaster. The information in a chart genuinely includes **psychological wounds**. Being exposed in the media, and the blow that deals to a person's mind, is injury, illness and disaster. The clearest case of all is **mental illness**, which is exactly this category. If a child develops cancer, the psychological blow the parents suffer registers in the parents' charts as injury, illness and disaster.

Any scar left on the body, whatever its size, is information of this kind. Any grief that is still remembered is information of this kind. An ordinary cold is not. A cold that recurs and will not clear, or a cold that brings on other illness, is. A long-standing chronic illness that suddenly relapses or worsens is

information of this kind — if a man has chronic bronchitis but it did not flare up in the previous period, then in that previous period there was, by definition, no such information in his chart; and if it flares up in the next period, then the next period holds it.



Here is the trouble. From a chart we can only determine *that* the information is present; we have no way to measure *how much*. So a reading is frequently correct and the client still says it is wrong. The reason is always the same: before giving the result, nobody explained what the category actually covers.

The essence of a "bloodshed disaster" is loss of blood. Giving blood is the best way to defuse it. Donating blood also defuses other unfavourable information — loss of money, being targeted by petty people, lawsuits and disputes — because the direction in which an energy expresses itself can be turned. Modern medicine has established that donating blood does the body no harm.



Some people, in order to extract money, tell everyone who sits down that they face a “matter of life and death, a pass they must cross.” The only purpose is to send the client looking for a remedy, and paying for it.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Principle of Adaptation

2017-11-11 · 2,131 words

> **Translator's note.** This is the keystone of the author's method, and the one idea here that a Western reader can test against intuition and find immediately useful. A chart does not say "an event will occur." It says what will *change relative to what already is*. Move a grave from a good position to a bad one and the family meets disaster; move it from a bad position to a slightly less bad one and the family improves — same new position, opposite outcomes. From that one observation follow answers to three questions that otherwise defeat a reader: the marriage-year question, the illness question, and the prison question. The fish-and-polar-bear analogy and the camel in the desert carry the rest.

In my books I have repeated the same points over and over: that fate is materialist and dialectical; that the reading of fate is likewise materialist and dialectical; that the art of reading fate is a directional description, accurate in direction, of how people and events actually develop; that its predictive principle is nothing other than the reasoning of people and affairs in real life; and that anyone who studies the *Yijing* must stay tight against real life. Only with both feet on that ground can the study of *yi* achieve anything or break through anything.

Working in the field — surveying sites, judging charts, reading hexagrams — and teaching, it is precisely because my feet were on that ground that I did not go wrong. It let me tear off, quickly, the layers of superstition and fake method wrapped around the art, and see the thing as it is. That is where my essays exposing frauds in the field and false predictive theories came from, and where what I call Lu-style feng shui and Lu-style bazi came from.

What follows is one of the “secret techniques” — though it is nothing of the kind, only a small piece of ordinary reasoning — taken straight from everyday life.

1. Seven graves on one terrace

The example is here to show what the principle is worth in practice, not to advertise my skill.

In April 2005, at a training course for professional readers, a master from Lüliang in Shanxi, Mr Zhang Haizhu, put a question that silenced all forty-seven students present.

A mountain in his village had been requisitioned. Several dozen families had graves scattered on its slope. Within two or three days, seven of them moved their graves to the same level terrace on the hillside — a strip running east to west, no more than seven or eight metres wide and a few dozen metres long. East of the terrace was a deep ravine. West of it, near the edge, stood a huge high-tension pylon. Standing at the seven grave points and looking outward, the surrounding landform was indistinguishable; there was no variation worth speaking of. All seven had mountain to the north and falling slope to the south. All seven faced the same direction to the same degree — one geomancer had done them all.

Within a year, in two of the seven families, the eldest son of the deceased — the first-born male — had cancer. In the other families the eldest sons showed no marked change at all. In one family, the eldest son had actually improved.

By Lu-style theory, the family that moved first, and the family nearest the pylon, should have been the ones in trouble. Neither was. Mr Zhang asked: can Mr Lu tell, from these seven graves, which two families have the disaster in the first-born son, and which one has plainly improved?

The students assumed he was trying to humiliate me. They watched my face.

They did not know my teaching history. For six years, at every course, students had brought me questions of every bizarre shape; I was used to it. And the question only looked cruel to someone who did not know the principle of adaptation. Know it, and Mr Zhang's question answers itself.

I asked him: do you know the landform at the *fate position of the eldest son* at each of these seven graves **before** the move?

He described it, family by family. I then sorted the seven eldest sons into three types according to the auspiciousness at their own fate position before the move — **good**, **bad**, and **neutral**, meaning very little change in the quality of the position between before and after. Then I told the class:

- the two families whose eldest sons had stood at a **good** position were the two where disaster appeared after the move;
- the four families at a **neutral** position were the four where nothing much happened;
- the one family at a **bad** position was the family that plainly improved.

Mr Zhang confirmed the judgment on the spot, and could not for the life of him see why. Why should the good turn bad, and the bad turn good? The principle of adaptation was doing it.

2. What the principle says

Everything — person or object — has an environment it has already adapted to. Only inside that adapted environment does it keep to its existing trajectory. Change that environment abruptly, and the trajectory it was on is changed with it.

Put a tropical fish in the Arctic Ocean and it dies at once. Put a polar bear in the tropics and it dies too. But put the polar bear somewhere slightly *colder* than where it lived, or the tropical fish somewhere slightly *warmer*, and neither dies; both carry on normally.

A bronze buried for two thousand years and suddenly exposed to air begins to corrode almost immediately. Add a little more covering over it instead, and it will not corrode at all.

With that in hand, Mr Zhang's seven graves are unambiguous. The two eldest sons who had stood at a good position were moved to a position that was bad: they could not absorb the speed of the change from good to bad, and disaster followed. The one who had stood at a bad position was moved to a position much better in degree than his old one: he did not worsen; he improved, because the environment had eased. The four who had stood at positions bad to about the same degree as the new one changed neither way, and continued on their original track.

That is the principle of adaptation as it applies to reading fate.

3. The marriage question

A man has been married sixty years, devoted, no affairs. From his chart you can see which year he married. But suppose a client who has been married forty years asks: *will I marry this year?* You do not know his circumstances. What do you say?

You may say: I read that you married in such-and-such a year. But I will ask: does a chart hold marriage information in exactly one year and no other? If you admit it holds it in more than one, and this happens to be one of them, how do you judge?

Know the principle and you can answer with total confidence:

> There is marriage information in your chart this year. If you are not yet married, then you will certainly marry this year. If you are already married, then you will not marry this year — instead the relationship will improve on what it was, or an affair will appear, or a long separation will end in reunion.

Same information, different expression, because the baseline is different.

4. The illness question

A man who has been tormented by a chronic illness for a dozen years asks whether this year holds illness or injury. His chart shows no such information this year. You do not know he is chronically ill. What do you say?

> In your chart there is no illness information this year, so this year brings no illness. But if you were already ill before this year, then this year merely continues the condition and it will not suddenly worsen. If you were not ill before this year, then no illness will appear.

5. The prison question

An escaped convict asks whether this year holds prison. You do not know he is a fugitive, and the chart shows no prison information. What do you say?

Some master will claim he can see from the chart that the man is a fugitive. I ask him: does a man who spends his whole life in prison carry prison information in every year, every month, every day, every hour of his chart? If you say yes, then I ask: does a common labourer who never saved a penny carry "not one penny" in every year, month, day and hour of *his* chart? Say yes again and there is nothing left to discuss, because you are plainly lying with your eyes open, and there is no arguing with a man who wants his face more than he wants the facts. Say no — and this year, month, day, hour the client has chosen happens to be a moment with no prison information and a moment with a penny in it. Then what?

Know the principle and you answer:

> Whatever you have or have not done, whatever sentence you have or have not served, this year you are a free man and this year holds no prison. But if you

> have offended before and been sentenced before, then the first year that does carry prison information is the year you are arrested and taken in.

The principle applies in feng shui and in bazi, and in every other predictive method as well.

6. The camel and the missing elements

The principle also explains a fact that puzzles everyone: why a man whose chart lacks one, two or even three of the five elements lives to eighty or ninety with wealth, honour and flourishing children, while a man whose chart is perfectly balanced dies young in poverty and leaves no heir.

Lacking one to three elements is not in itself frightening. The camel is the ship of the desert. Water is scarce there, but give it water wherever it is found, and it lives out its course in perfect order. A man short of one to three elements is no different: let the luck cycle or the year, month, day or hour supply the missing element in due course, and he continues along his own track.

But put the camel on a water meadow, permanently, and it sickens. Force the missing elements into a chart permanently, on the same logic, and you are not helping; you are doing harm.

Any living thing, any object, that still exists has adapted to its "short of this, short of that" environment, and does not experience it as suffering. To such a creature it is *our* environment that looks unbearable. We cannot judge a fish's feeling about water and air by our own need for air and our own fear of water.

Deficiency is not inauspicious; sufficiency is not auspicious. What matters is whether a thing can live freely in the environment it is in. If it can, that is auspicious; if it cannot, that is inauspicious.

The hive has its queen, the anthill its king, mankind its emperor, the heavens their Jade Emperor, the Buddhist cosmos its Tathagata. It is not suffering to be something other than the Jade Emperor; it is not suffering to be the queen of a hive. Force the Jade Emperor to be an ant king, force the ant king to be the Jade Emperor, and *that* is suffering, and that is death.

Move a person or a thing abruptly and on a large scale, and its trajectory lurches. Move it to a place not far from where it was, and the trajectory holds.

Once this is understood, a great many locked doors in this field open at once. Space forbids more examples; let the reader think.

7. Why this matters

Any method of prediction that leaves behind the reasoning of real people and real affairs is false doctrine and a way of taking money. Any method that stays tight against it can answer every awkward question that leaves the great masters, saints and prodigies of the field without a word. Any method that stays tight against it will survive a thousand years of testing by students of *yi*, and be passed down.

The two famous problems my systems claim to have solved — why people born at the same hour in the same place have different fates, and how a single chart can hold, in one year, promotion, loss of money, divorce, injury, dismissal, imprisonment *and* death — were both solved under the guidance of exactly this habit of thought.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Why More Than a Hundred and Thirty Died at Once

2017-11-03 · 954 words

> **Translator's note.** The obvious objection to any individual fate reading is the crowd: if a hundred and thirty people die in one building on one night, and their birth charts all differ, what was the reading worth? The answer here is a two-level model — an individual fate is held inside a collective fate the way plants are held inside a greenhouse, and when the greenhouse comes down, every plant in it goes with it. The analogy is worked carefully, and it produces a claim the author does not soften: in a large enough catastrophe, individual prediction simply stops working.

At two in the afternoon on 15 November 2010, a high-rise apartment block on Jiaozhou Road in Shanghai caught fire. Many of the residents were retired teachers. The fire began between the tenth and twelfth floors; the whole building was soon wrapped in it, and many residents had not got out. By ten-twenty on the morning of the nineteenth, fifty-eight people had died and more than seventy were still in treatment.

The cause was traced to an unlicensed welder working in violation of regulations. Four suspects were detained. Behind that, the renovation had been subcontracted repeatedly in breach of the rules; the site was chaotically managed and there had plainly been a rush to finish; large quantities of nylon netting and polyurethane foam, both highly flammable, had been used where they should not have been; and supervision by the responsible authorities had been inadequate.

I want to look at only one aspect of it: from the standpoint of the traditional Chinese study of fate, how does a thing like this happen to so many people at once?



Collective disaster means two or more people meeting disaster at the same time in the same place.

The natural objection: their birth times differ, their environments differ, their feng shui differs. Why should they meet disaster together?

1. The greenhouse

In a remote mountain village an old farmer planted leeks, cucumber, aubergine and scallion in his greenhouse, meaning to sell them at a good price before the Spring Festival. Half a month before they were to go to market, a blizzard destroyed the greenhouse. Apart from part of the scallion, the leeks,

cucumbers and aubergines were frozen dead. The old man's hope collapsed with them, and he was grief-stricken.

Now: each vegetable in that greenhouse had its own pattern of growth — its own fate-tendency. Predicted in the normal way, none of them should have died half a month before market. What intervened was a sudden storm carrying enormous energy, which in a moment destroyed nearly all of them, each with its own separate pattern of growth.

The lesson is that **individual fates are contained inside the fate of the whole.** Only while the whole is not subjected to a sudden information-field of enormous energy can the several individual fates run along their normal tracks. This is the dialectic of whole and part: a personal fate is affected by the fate of the group.

In feudal society the collective fate was poor. Even the emperor, whose individual fate was the best available, could not have flown in an aeroplane — the thing did not exist. Collective fate in the present day has advanced a great deal, and so a person whose individual fate is not the best, or is even rather poor, can still sit in an aeroplane. That is proof enough that an individual fate is built on the foundation of the collective one.

And if that foundation is suddenly withdrawn, the individual fate becomes unpredictable. In the Tangshan earthquake, in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, hundreds of thousands of people met disaster at the same moment — because the foundation of collective fate was suddenly gone. Which is why individual fates became unpredictable there, and why each one departed completely from the track it should have held.

2. Even then, they differ

And yet, even when the energy of collective fate has overrun the energy of individual fates, the individual outcomes differ enormously.

In the greenhouse, some plants froze; the scallion did not — though even the scallion took some damage. In Tangshan, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, hundreds of thousands met disaster together, but no two met the same disaster. Some suffered greatly, some slightly, some hardly at all. That spread comes from the difference in the quantity and the form of the energy each person carries.

By the same logic, even among those who all died in a collective disaster, no two died the same way or felt the same thing in dying.

So: individual fate rests on collective fate, and upon that foundation the differences in each person's quantity and form of fate-energy produce the endless variety of one life against another.

3. The price of a flat

Property prices across the country are climbing fast. That climb is the collective fate of everyone buying. But the pressure it puts on each buyer differs wildly with income. Whether a square metre costs thirty thousand or fifty thousand makes no difference at all to a billionaire; to an ordinary salaried worker it is an enormous difference. That difference in pressure is exactly what individual fate looks like when it is standing on collective fate.

The same holds for the fire. The hundreds of people in that building had different birth times and different environments; judged as individual fates, they should not have met disaster together. But the collective fortune of the building itself changed — it caught fire — and each individual fate was carried along by it.

That is the dialectical relation between the fate of the whole and the fate of the person.


科学风水决战人文江湖风水

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

How Sima Yi Knew from the Stars That Zhuge Liang's Time Was Up

2017-10-21 · 848 words

> **Translator's note.** A short piece of technical history rather than argument. The famous scene in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* — Zhuge Liang reading his own death in the sky, Sima Yi reading Zhuge Liang's — is usually left unexplained by the novel. The explanation offered here is that both men were watching the same star, and that "watching the stars" in the old literature almost always means watching the Big Dipper, understood not as seven stars but as nine. The four rival naming systems for those nine stars are set out, since a Western reader will meet all four and assume they are different things.

In *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Zhuge Liang looks up at the sky and knows his own end is near; Sima Yi watches the stars at night and knows that Zhuge Kongming's allotted span has run out. The skill is enviable. What is disappointing is that the novel never says *how* — never explains what Zhuge Liang saw, or what Sima Yi saw. Readers have been left hanging for centuries.

For more than ten years I travelled to see good teachers, read the old books, and worked at the study of fate. Somewhere in the middle of it I found the secret of how the ancients watched the sky.

It is this. Beyond pure astronomy, whenever the heavens were read for the fate of a state or of a person, the observation was — apart from a few cases needing one particular star — almost always an observation of **the change in the Big Dipper**. This essay is about the Dipper only.

1. Seven stars, or nine

What we call the “seven stars of the Northern Dipper” is really **nine**. Beyond the seven usually seen there are two faint “hidden stars,” called **Zuofu** (Left Assistant) and **Youbi** (Right Assistant). With them the set is complete, and the nine are counted in order.

A reader who goes into the old texts will meet four separate sets of names. They are not four systems. They are four vocabularies for the same nine stars, and the correspondence is fixed:

#	Direction	Ziwei (purple star)	Bazhai (eight houses)	Qimen (nine palaces)
1	North, water	Tanlang, the Greedy Wolf	Shengqi, Life Breath	Tianpeng
2	Southwest, earth	Jumen, the Great Gate	Tianyi, Heavenly Doctor	Tianrui
3	East, wood	Lucun, the Salary Store	Huohai, Harm	Tianchong
4	Southeast, wood	Wenqu, Literature	Liusha, Six Killings	Tianfu
5	Centre, earth	Lianzhen, Integrity	Wugui, Five Ghosts	Tianqin
6	Northwest, metal	Wuqu, Military	Yannian, Long Life	Tianxin
7	West, metal	Pojun, Army Breaker	Jueming, Severed Life	Tianzhu
8	Northeast, earth	Zuofu, Left Assistant	Fubai, Hidden Position	Tianren
9	South, fire	Youbi, Right Assistant	—	Tianying

So the catalogue that runs “Tanlang, Jumen, Lucun, Wenqu, Lianzhen, Wuqu, Pojun”; the one that runs “Shengqi, Tianyi, Huohai, Liusha, Wugui, Yannian, Jueming, Fubai”; the one that runs “Tianchong, Tianren, Tianrui, Tianpeng, Tianying, Tianxin, Tianzhu, Tianfu, Tianqin”; and the one that runs “one white, two black, three jade, four green, five yellow, six white, seven red, eight white, nine purple” — all four name the same nine.



2. How the observation was made

The ancients held that each of the nine governs a different department of human affairs. To predict a given matter you first decided **which star to watch**; then you judged good or ill from **how that star's light behaved**.

If the star you were watching shone steadily and its light was bright and clear, the matter it governed would go well. If it was dim, lustreless, or its light was smothered by haze, the matter would go badly.

3. What each star governs

- **Tianpeng** — securing borders, building walls and cities
- **Tianrui** — teaching the way, making friends, lecturing, cultivating virtue

- **Tianchong** — going to war, taking revenge, bestowing favours, making friends
- **Tianfu** — seeking wealth, long journeys, marriage, building and burial
- **Tianqin** — sacrifices and prayers for blessing
- **Tianxin** — diagnosing illness and seeking medicine
- **Tianzhu** — concealing a trace, burying a form
- **Tianren** — meeting the powerful, negotiating
- **Tianying** — feasting, drinking, pleasure

4. Which star they were watching

From that list the inference is straightforward. **Tianxin governs the diagnosis of illness and the seeking of medicine.** Zhuge Liang watched Tianxin and knew his own end was near; Sima Yi watched Tianxin and knew Zhuge Liang's span was spent.

That is how the ancients did it: through exactly this kind of thought — seemingly precise, in fact blurred at the edges — observing the changes in the nine stars of the Dipper to read the fate of a state, or of a man.

Haikou, March 1999

CHAPTER NINETEEN

What Actually Fixes a Person's Hour of Birth?

2020-08-05 · 1,452 words

> **Translator's note.** A reader in the West who has had a chart cast knows the experience: the practitioner asks for the minute of birth, sometimes the second, and if the hour is uncertain will "rectify" it — a procedure with no agreed method and a strong smell of guesswork. This essay argues that the whole demand for precision is a mistake, and that it was manufactured by practitioners who could not read accurately and needed something to blame. Three arguments are given, the third decisive: birth is a process, not an instant. What follows from it is that a chart at an hour boundary can be read either way and come out right.

Fixing the hour of birth was originally very simple. In the early days of the four pillars, and before there were four pillars at all, ordinary people settled the hour with a rhyme:

> Midnight is *zi*; the cock crowing, *chou*;
> first light, *yin*; sunrise, *mao*;
> breakfast, *chen*; sun east of south, *si*;
> noon, *wu*; sun west of south, *wei*;
> the slanting sun, *shen*; sunset, *you*;
> dusk, *xu*; when people settle in, *hai*.

In the old world there were no accurate timepieces and no such thing as Beijing time — no "four fifty-two and thirty seconds in the afternoon" to be

had anywhere. There was nothing to be precise with.

1. Why precision is not needed

Why should the hour need to be fixed to the minute or the second? What the earthly branch of the hour *is* has been set out elsewhere. But step back: the hour was determined by where the sun stood, rising or setting. That is, the hour records **what kind of energy field a child received at the moment of birth** — some received the energy of sunrise, some of the noon sun, some of sunset. That field has no precise boundary to divide it by. It is not that precise, and it does not need to be.

2. The argument from the clock

Here is the third reason, and the strongest.

Suppose one child is born at 6:59:59.99 in the afternoon and another at 7:00:01. Is there any difference between these two births? You may say: one is *you* hour, one is *xu* hour.

But then: what instrument are you timing with? Is it that accurate? Suppose it is an atomic clock and it is. Then I ask again: in a birth, natural or by caesarean, does the clock start when the child is entirely out, or when some part of the body first appears? Can you establish which? Either way, the fastest delivery takes minutes. A difficult labour takes hours, sometimes days. **Birth is a process, not an instant.** If the process straddles the line between *you* and *xu*, which hour was the child born in?



3. Who made it complicated

These are non-problems, and the masters have made them desperately complicated. Why? Because their theory is faulty. When a reading fails they do not suspect the theory; they blame the hour. Others invented “true solar time,” and still could not read accurately.

Before there were clocks, our ancestors read charts by the hour and read them accurately. Since clocks arrived, nobody reads accurately. That says we have made the hour too complicated, and that we no longer know what the hour means.

There is no strict boundary between hours. There never was, and there never will be. Confirming the hour has to match the facts. When a birth crosses from one hour into the next, whether you start counting when the head appears or when the whole body is out cannot be settled — and what scientific evidence do you have that it is the whole body? Masters routinely ignore the facts and commit the error of pure assertion: whatever they think, is. Who are you? Are you heaven? Can you decide the earth's revolution and

rotation? Can you decide where the sun rises and sets? Can you decide wind and rain and thunder? If you can decide nothing, how is what you think correct?

So the hour is not a problem. There is no precise hour.

4. Beijing time is not local time

Beijing time and local time differ. A man whose birth certificate says seven in the morning: if he was born east of Beijing, read *chen* hour; if west of Beijing, read *mao*. Beijing time runs two hours ahead of Urumqi, half an hour ahead of the Xi'an–Taiyuan line, and more than half an hour ahead of Harbin. Watch for this when fixing the hour.

The traditional method of fixing a child's birth hour was to judge by **the height of the sun** — that is, by local time.

And the earth is a sphere. Outside the equator, sunrise and sunset times vary greatly both by latitude and by season at a single place. Not to grasp this, and to insist on pinning Beijing time onto the chart, is absurd in itself. **Reading a fate should return to local time.**

5. The consequence for boundary births

If a chart is read on the time system alone, a person born in *chen* hour and one born in *si* hour have very different fates. A failed reading then only proves that the theoretical system is at fault.

There is no precise boundary in this world — and birth in particular is a process, not a moment. No moment means no precise division of hours; no precise division means that for a child born at the boundary, **a reading on either side is correct**.

In our model, for a person born at the junction of two hours, reading with the earlier hour and reading with the later hour are both accurate. Why? Because

the question is whether the fate-energy is *expressed* or not.

In essence, the year, month, day and hour of a chart are the relative positions of **Jupiter, Saturn, the sun and the earth**. A different chart means a different configuration of those four; a different configuration means every living thing on earth receives a different quantity of life's motive energy; a different quantity means a different fate. Now: a person born a tenth of a second before such a boundary and a person born a tenth of a second after — do you think their fates differ? They do not.

6. Changing the hour

Masters whose readings fail never say their theory is at fault. They change the hour instead. **Any master who changes a client's hour is a fraud.** Some clients give an hour that is certainly correct — especially children born in the modern era, where the record is exact. On what authority do you change it?

The hour is a simple matter that fraudulent masters have made complicated. The question is what the hour *is*, and what it *means*. Once that is clear, the whole business of true solar time and of seconds and minutes dissolves.

7. The *zi* hour

A person born at 22:59:59 and one born at 23:00:01: if you insist on distinguishing them, one is *hai* hour of the first day and one is *zi* hour of the second, and the charts differ entirely. On your theory the two fates differ greatly.

Read on our model, the *hai* reading of day one and the *zi* reading of day two come out the same. Where it is the same person, the fate is the same — because his fate-energy has a channel of release and a direction of expression, so no difference arises. And therefore the whole question of “night *zi*” and “early *zi*” does not arise either. That distinction was invented by people whose

system was incomplete, who could not solve accuracy and so dragged it in — unwilling to say they were wrong, insisting the hour was at fault, looking for someone to take the blame. Once you understand the system, test it in practice: for the same person, a boundary hour read either way is right.

The ancients held that past eleven at night it is already *zi* of the next day. Their boundary was eleven, not midnight. “The third quarter of the *wu* hour” is twelve o'clock. It is we who insist on reading the old sayings with modern assumptions.

The great failing of readers today: when a reading is wrong, they always decide the client is at fault, never the theory.

We constantly push our own understanding back into the old books. We should read them historically — one of the five habits of thought I have set out for studying this field. The ancients' picture of the world and ours differ enormously.

CHAPTER TWENTY

How Much Does Choosing the Day Matter?

2022-12-04 · 377 words

> **Translator's note.** A short piece stating one rule, cleanly, and worth having on its own: in date selection, the *unit of time you get wrong* determines the *size and the delay of the consequence*. Get the year wrong and the disaster is large and arrives within two years; get the hour wrong and it is small and arrives within ten days. The remainder of the original is a course advertisement and has been omitted.

The influence of date selection on a fate is not to be underestimated.

A person does a great many things in a lifetime, some large and some small. Whatever it is — and for large undertakings especially: marriage, burial, moving house, building, founding a business, taking up a post — if you choose the wrong **year** for it, then within two years there will certainly be a disaster of matching scale.

If you choose the wrong **month**, then within half a year there will be a disaster of corresponding, middling scale.

If you choose the wrong **day**, then within thirty days there will be trouble of an ordinary kind, of matching kind.

If you choose the wrong **hour**, then within ten days there will be some small misfortune, matching in kind.

The rule runs the other way too. Choose the right year for a large undertaking and within two years there will be a great good fortune matching it. The right month, and within half a year there will be good of a middling scale. The right

day, and within thirty days there will be ordinary good. The right hour, and within ten days there will be small good.

For lesser matters the year carries little weight. There the day and the hour matter, and the good or ill they carry reaches at most thirty days. It does not settle anything permanently.

Note what the rule actually claims. It is not “a bad day brings bad luck.” It is a **table of scale against delay**: the coarser the unit you got wrong, the larger the consequence and the longer before it lands; the finer the unit, the smaller the consequence and the sooner. That is a specific, falsifiable claim, and a reader can test it against their own record of undertakings.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Five Notes on Resolving Disaster

2017-10-18 · 1,847 words

> **Translator's note.** The right place to start with this layer, because it is mostly a warning against the layer itself. Five notes on what "resolving a disaster" can and cannot be: accurate reading first, then a method, then enough energy in the remedy to matter — and most of the remedies on the market fail the third test. There is a documented experiment in the middle: 280 letters, all warned of a car crash in the same year, of which 38 had a sprain and one broke an arm. The rest is an argument that a charm cannot outweigh a motorway.

Every client and every reader, in every age, has gone looking for the magic that would cancel a disaster outright. None has found it. In recent years the field has been thick with famous names trading "methods" under the banners of ancestral transmission, secret transmission, a monk's transmission, a Daoist's transmission, or science of their own invention — and enthusiasts who did not know better carried those methods out and used them on clients. The toad jumps the threshold and bruises both its backside and its face.

So: the nature of "resolving disaster," set out again, for those who want to argue with it.

1. The foundation is an accurate reading

Only an accurate reading allows a remedy to be designed to fit the disaster. And accuracy is very hard to demonstrate. Different readers have different specialisms — one is good on relatives, one on wealth and office, one on illness and injury. No reader is good on everything, and accurate on everything. So if

you decide a man's reading is trustworthy because he correctly told you how many brothers you have, or which parent died first — matters that do not touch the actual pain of a life — and on that basis accept his verdict that you face disaster, you have made yourself entirely available to be cheated.

That is the opening the “immortals” and “masters” walk through.

In Hainan, two masters; in Shandong, one prodigy: whoever sat down in front of them was told there would be a car crash. Terrified enthusiasts paid up and had it resolved. In the single *renwu* year I received close to 280 letters from students of the field, every one of them reporting that a car crash had been predicted. When the first month of *guiwei* ended, all of them wrote or telephoned to report on the year. Thirty-eight had sprained something or cut themselves slightly. One had come off a motorcycle and broken an arm. The other two hundred and forty had had no injury of any kind.

Set aside simple inaccuracy. The car-crash line exists to sell the resolution. These masters can see perfectly well that your *renwu* year is a year of great gain and high office; they tell you instead that nothing will go right and disasters are massing, then charge you to fix it. When the year passes well, with no disaster, you are now convinced of their skill. They have taken your money and your respect at once. Why would they not?

And the methods they sell are these: talismans, incantations, turning the bed to face another way, wearing a particular colour, clearing a particular direction, installing a “house heart,” making offerings to Buddhas and bodhisattvas, burying a suppressing object, hanging a *huasha* mirror, stone lions, crystal ornaments, a stone inscribed “Mount Tai stone wards off all,” sending ghosts and gods away, performing rites, giving alms, building bridges and mending roads as good works, arranging eight-trigram formations. Every one of these has been tested by history and found to do very little — mostly because the energy involved is nowhere near enough to cancel a disaster that carries real energy.

The rule “resolve a disaster if there is one, do nothing if there is not” has ceased to mean anything to most of these masters. Which is why, from antiquity to now, those who practise divination, medicine and the *yi* have so often been men whose own lives were a tangle of calamity and who left no descendants.

A practitioner should understand: *de* — virtue, integrity — is the great accumulation of the universe's positive energy. It is like air: an energy every person requires. Without air no one survives; and without the common field of *de*, no individual survives either. No *de*, no positive energy. No positive energy, calamity without end.

2. The essence is the method

You have read a disaster; how to resolve it is the substance. But every method on the market is a dependent of the reading system that produced it, and different systems produce different remedies — and the remedies contradict each other.

Take a case. By the hexagram method, the east ought to be strengthened in wood. By the four pillars, the east ought to be reduced in wood. The client does not know which way to turn, and neither, honestly, does the reader.

So the received remedies have to be analysed at the level of what they actually are.

Having worked through the essential principles of the hexagram method, the four pillars and feng shui, my conclusion is this: **the disaster a hexagram or a four-pillar chart predicts, and the disaster feng shui predicts, are the same disaster, with no difference at all.** But because the instruments differ — the way of examining the body differs — the treatments built on those instruments differ in kind.

A hexagram reading and a four-pillar reading are an X-ray machine and a CT scanner. They diagnose. They do not treat. Therefore any remedy derived from four-pillar or hexagram theory works like a course of antibiotics for an epidemic: once the illness is gone, the medicine must stop. Keep taking it for months or years and you produce a new disease.

Which is to say: resolving by hexagram or four-pillar theory is not impossible, but it must be done on this condition — **the moment the disaster is resolved, stop.** Continue, and you generate a fresh one.

A remedy derived from feng shui, by contrast, adjusts at the level of the constitution. It is like breathing exercises, dietary therapy, fresh air, physical training: it can be kept up for life. (Understand that feng shui decides a person's fate, and this follows.) In short: after feng shui adjustment the configuration can stand for life; after hexagram or four-pillar adjustment, once the matter is settled, dismantle it and return to the permanent feng shui configuration.

3. Accurate reading plus correct method — is the disaster then resolved?

No.

First, it must be done in advance. As with illness, prevention is the effective thing. Once the disaster has happened, or has advanced to a late stage, resolution becomes extremely difficult.

Second, even beforehand, the remedy must reach a certain level of energy. It is not enough to bring in some object that carries little or none. Preventing illness is not achieved by smelling the medicine; the dose must be enough.

In practice: **talismans and incantations have a psychological effect only.** They work on illness that is psychogenic in origin. They do essentially

nothing about accidental injury, loss of money, or trouble with the authorities. If a talisman carried energy, then a man who wore one all his life and recited its incantation all his life would have no disasters at all. But the monks in the temples and the priests in the monasteries do not escape disaster either. That settles the question of talismans.

As for turning the headboard, wearing colours, installing Buddha images, adopting a child of another surname, changing your name, hanging a *huasha* mirror, burying suppressing objects, arranging eight-trigram formations: objectively, some may have a small effect. None of them will cure the disease on contact and turn disaster into fortune. Their energy is simply too small to block or drain the energy of the offending object. **A remedy works visibly only when the energy of the object used is greater than or equal to the energy of the disaster.**

The masters' claim of "four ounces moving a thousand catties" is nonsense and does not survive testing. A trunk road runs straight at your house or your ancestral grave, delivering wind, exhaust and noise along its axis. Will hanging one mirror, or writing "Mount Tai stone wards off all" on a slab, resolve that? A million-volt transformer sits in front of the house, broadcasting its field into your rooms. Will a stone lion and a paper charm resolve that?

No more needs saying. Some disasters can be resolved and some cannot; not all of them can. Whether a given one can be resolved depends on three things: the reading, the plan, and **the energy of the object used**.

4. The best method is conversion of energy

See "The Five Principles of Disaster Resolution." Conversion is simple, quick, and works remarkably well.

An example. A year hexagram shows the *guangui* — the officer-ghost — holding the ruling position. On the traditional reading this is excellent for a man already in office, and for a commoner with no post it means: *when the officer-ghost holds the world, there is no peace; if you do not fall ill you meet the authorities; goods and money are constantly lost.*

How is that resolved?

By the conversion principle: the officer-ghost governs calamity, and it also governs career, work and the pressure of living. Its energy is fixed, not unlimited. If more of it is spent on career, on work, on the pressure of striving, less of it is available to express as disaster.

So the advice to the commoner in that year is: **open a new undertaking. Set a goal different from any you have pursued, and work at it hard.** The disaster of the officer-ghost holding the world is not merely resolved; it is converted into advantage. (The detailed adjustment must be read from the whole hexagram — the officer-ghost alone does not decide it.)

The conversion principle is not merely sound in theory. It has held up in practice.

5. Two asides

Burying a barrel of water. Some masters, when a site needs water, have the client bury a large iron barrel filled with water. This is actively harmful. If the barrel is sealed, no vapour escapes, and without vapour it is not water but strong sand. If it is unsealed, how long does one barrel of water last, and how much energy does it carry? Even kept full permanently, the energy is tiny. And on some terrain it readily produces the "opposite palace, same water" configuration within the local frame — which is very bad indeed.

Crystal is not water. A master will tell you crystal is of the water element. It is a mineral, and minerals are earth. If crystal were water, then every

gemstone would be water, and by the same reasoning glass would be water, and sandstone (which contains quartz) would be water, and brick and cement would be water. The absurdity is complete.

Taiyuan Normal College, August 2003

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Five Principles of Disaster Resolution

2020-07-19 · 3,413 words

> **Translator's note.** The longest and most systematic piece in this collection: five principles for cancelling a predicted disaster, and eleven forms that external aid can take. Two things make it worth reading even for a sceptic. First, the underlying claim is physical rather than magical — a disaster is an abnormal quantity of energy, and resolution means either blocking it with equal energy or routing it into another channel. Second, the passage on talismans is a piece of real analysis: it dissolves the talisman into its materials and finds five Chinese drugs. Where the author is wrong he is at least wrong in a way you can check.

What is a disaster? Harm done by nature or by people.

What is resolving one? Using human intelligence and capacity to stop it happening, to avoid it, or to cancel as much as possible of what has already happened.

Whatever the disaster and whatever its size, if we can accurately predict its cause, its time and its place, we can reduce the loss to a minimum, and often cancel it entirely. The Tangshan earthquake was catastrophic because the prediction work had not been done. The Yangtze flood peak of 1998 was met with clear objectives and minimal harm because the prediction was good — when the peak would arrive, and where, was known accurately in advance.

So there is no disaster that cannot be resolved. The key is accurate and timely prediction.

Out of a great deal of practice I arrived at what I call the five principles. Across nearly a thousand cases — illness, litigation, divorce, loss of money — it has held: apply these five and a great disaster becomes a small one, and a small one becomes none.



Principle one: right consciousness

Before anything can be adjusted, the person being adjusted must *want* it. By right consciousness I mean that a person facing disaster must have a strong intention to resolve it, and must cooperate actively. Given a particular environment, he must first be willing to have it changed and willing to work with you on it. If he is unwilling, or if you explain what to do and he does not do it, then no feng shui adjustment on earth will help.

Matter determines consciousness, and consciousness acts back on matter; correct consciousness promotes, incorrect consciousness obstructs. In practice this is exact. A patient who does not want to live cannot be saved by the best physician — cure him and he will find another road. Right consciousness is the most basic precondition for changing a fate.

Principle two: place and direction

Do not be at the place where the disaster will happen. That is the method.

A man travelling from Guangzhou to Beijing, or from Harbin to Beijing, is moving along a direction and to a place. The direction of travel affects a fate enormously. A human life is not essentially different from a tree, a grass, a sheep. Move a coconut palm from Hainan to Harbin and it lives at best from summer to autumn; move it in winter and it dies faster and worse. Transplant a northeastern pine to Hainan and in a few years it may flourish and seed.

Set aside climate. In moving, a person cuts across the geomagnetic field at an angle. Guangzhou to Beijing is running against the field. Harbin to Beijing is a diagonal cut across a south-running field. Japan to China is a transverse cut across it. Travel one way along the lines of force and the effect on your fate is one thing; travel another and it is another. **Direction of travel matters more than the feng shui of a dwelling.**

Principle three: time

Miss the moment at which the disaster would occur. That is the method.

Two people arrange to meet. With a place and an intention but no time, they may run into each other by luck, or never meet in a lifetime. Time affects a fate enormously — but time does not decide a fate.

Only when time, direction and environment are unified does time mean anything. Strip away direction and environment and all times are meaningless. Is environment meaningful without time? Yes. Your mother does not tell you what hour she will be home, but wait in the house and she will come. Tell her only that she is going out today, without saying where, and you may never find her. Environment outweighs time by a great deal. Time becomes important only in matching with environment; on its own it is nothing, because time is neither matter nor energy. In ordinary

understanding, every thing has a course from birth to death, and time is the instrument for recording that course. It is not a cause.

You may prefer to call time an energy. But that energy is fair to everyone, balanced for everyone. Being equal for all things in the universe, including people, it can be set at zero. Environment is not equal: lie on damp ground long enough and you fall ill; sleep eight hours in a bed and fatigue lifts and the mind clears. So the balanced term drops out of the equation, and **what decides a fate is environment.**

Principle four: external aid

Bring outside force to bear.

A man's foot is pinned under a boulder he cannot lift. If someone helps, the foot comes free and the disaster is over.

External force is the crux of whether a disaster can be resolved. The forms it takes:

1. Adjusting the environment

Changing the energy-field configuration of where a person lives. In this whole catalogue, this is the principal and most fundamental technique.

2. Medicine and specific foods, to balance the body's internal field

A diabetic who eats less sugar changes his fate. Eating particular things can bring a person wealth, or position, or the knowledge he wants.

A child who will not study may genuinely need his diet changed — and parents generally feed a child what he likes, beef every day if he likes beef. What those parents may not know is that beef, which helps another child, may be seriously damaging this one's intellectual development.

No one is so clever that being drunk leaves him clear-headed. There is a Buddhist story of an arhat of great power who could subdue demons and tame tigers; one day he lay drunk by the roadside and a toad came and licked the food from his mouth. A man of supernatural capacity, unable to deal with a toad, because he was drunk.

So do not underestimate what food does to a fate, and do not eat what should not be eaten.

Physicians speak of a balanced diet. Before the 1980s, for thousands of years, where in China was there any such balance? Not from unwillingness — there simply was not the food. People ate the same few things all their lives: in the north, millet, maize, sorghum, sweet potato, potato, radish, cabbage, and very little wheat. Tens of generations lived that way. So the point is not balance; the point is **eating what you need**. Change a child's diet and a child who would not read may change materially. This is not superstition; it is testable.

3. Colour, to balance the five-element field

See my book *Invisible Negotiation*.

4. Qigong practice, to adjust the field

Whether or not qigong or religious practice draws energy from the cosmos, at least this much is true: while you practise, the mind can settle. A settled mind relaxes the body moderately, and a relaxed body presents more surface, more volume — which means more of the benign “zero-state energy” of the universe can be taken in. On that ground the method is viable.

5. Changing the name, to force others to emit a field favourable to you

Does changing a name work? Yes. But a name does not decide a fate; at most it accounts for one or two per cent. What it certainly does is shift a person's

own psychology.

6. Doing good, to change the information field of the people around you

So that the field becomes favourable to your own existence.

7. Religion, rites, taking refuge — to connect with a field beyond the ordinary

Believing is like qigong, except that qigong trains body and mind together while religion mostly trains the mind. But a change of mind produces a change of behaviour, and a change of behaviour supplies motive force to a change of fate.

All religions perform rites. Do rites work? Certainly they do. How much they work depends on two things. **First: are you doing it with a sincere heart, or are you acting? Second: who is performing it for you.**

Rites have two kinds of content.

Rites of reconciliation. You must speak sincerely, yourself, to the people you have wronged, the people who have hated you, the people you have hated. Whether that conversation works depends entirely on whether you are sincere. Pay someone else to do it and the grievance cannot be dissolved — because the other party knows whether you mean it. That such beings are ghosts and spirits means they have capacities we do not: we cannot tell what they are thinking; they may well tell what we are thinking. That is the difference between their realm and ours.

And who performs the rite matters as much. Think of a mediator between two quarrelling parties: without standing, without one party's trust, he reconciles nothing. Two people in dispute who trust no lawyer cannot be helped by a lawyer; who trust no judge cannot be helped by a judge. The one performing the rite is mediator, lawyer and judge at once. Whether the reconciliation

succeeds depends on whether he has standing with both sides — either their trust or their fear — and only real cultivation gives him that. Without standing he may make the quarrel worse.

Rites of petition. Praying for descendants, for office and wealth, for health and long life. Here the essential thing is sincerity; this is not a game. Treat it as a game and the bodhisattvas will not trouble themselves — but the guardians will. Only after that does it matter who performs it, and by then the performance has become secondary. You are petitioning the bodhisattva directly; if the bodhisattva needed a third party to learn what you were asking, it would not be a bodhisattva. Ghosts and spirits, having far less capacity, do not know how sincere you are — they know a little — and so a third party is needed to reason with them, or frighten them, before the grievance dissolves.

8. Hardship and self-mortification, to balance the field

This resolves major disasters.

The essence of a “bloodshed disaster” is that you lose blood and feel pain. **Donating blood is, in essence, a bloodshed disaster** — a benign one. If your health allows, give blood once every six months or a year. Better that than losing it through injury. Three benefits: the body is disciplined and the injury-illness information is discharged; another person's life is saved, which is merit beyond measure; and the surplus blood is drawn off, stimulating new production and improving marrow function, with a good long-term effect on the cardiovascular system.

This is the conversion principle applied. A man whose chart says he cannot possibly become a doctor of philosophy becomes one. How? He rose early and slept late and studied hard for twenty years. He converted the energy of pleasure — dating, play — into the energy of hardship, and paid with it against the bad energy in his fate. Absent that discipline of body and mind, he would have run the course his chart laid out: no education, no standing.

9. Talismans and incantations

Do they work? In real terms a talisman is a document, and whether a document works depends on who wrote and issued it. Copying a design out of a book produces nothing. A letter of appointment signed by the person in charge has effect; the same letter signed by an office boy does not.

In meaning, an incantation is a sequence of syllables in a set order, uttered to produce an effect — a form of language in which a human being states an intention.

Why does reciting do any good? Read the words and they contain a great deal, but look at the act from another angle and its value is plain: **reciting settles the mind.** Reach the state of a still pond and inspiration arises; a person with inspiration knows what is about to happen around him and what has happened. Then, in everything he does, he knows what should be done and what should not, what will profit and what will injure. Make no more mistakes and the fate changes. That is the whole secret.

As to the various interpretations of what a given incantation *means*, I do not accept them. If the world is matter and spirit, then every explanation of what a mantra means is wrong, because the patriarchs could compose them this way or that. The tantric canon holds thousands; no one recites them all in a lifetime; many Tibetan monks cannot recite many of them. Where did so many come from? Were the patriarchs inventing? Had Shakyamuni only mantras to teach, why teach so much dharma? **The reasoning is fundamental; the mantra is not.** The purpose of reciting is not to make a bodhisattva appear. It is to settle your own mind, and a settled mind can communicate with the information of the universe, which gives you insight, which means fewer errors, which means success.

As to the material composition of a talisman: in the old world some could be eaten, and had pharmacological effect. Look at what one is made of.

1. **Yellow paper.** Made from a specific grain straw, not from wheat straw or wood pulp as now. The straw is itself a Chinese drug: it enters the bladder channel, reduces inflammation, promotes urination.
2. **Turmeric.** The original dye for that paper, not a modern chemical dye. Also a drug: it moves blood, breaks stasis, reduces inflammation, drains water. For a boil or a red swelling on the skin, a piece of turmeric-dyed yellow paper — with nothing drawn on it — laid on the place reduces the swelling in a day.
3. **Bletilla.** Cinnabar is ground with bletilla before writing, because bletilla is adhesive and the writing does not flake off. Bletilla is also a drug: it enters the lung channel and tonifies the lung.
4. **Cinnabar.** The pigment. Also a drug: it settles the spirit, drives out the malign, calms.
5. **A guiding drug.** Four drugs are already present; add one or two guides and you have a complete prescription. For stomach trouble, tangerine peel as the guide. Add a channel-guiding drug according to the illness.

With that anatomy in hand, the conclusion is unavoidable: **a talisman treats illness because of its material composition, not because it commands gods and spirits.**

Which incantation is best? The one everyone recites. If each person is an energy field, then an incantation recited by everyone from antiquity to now has the most energy in the universe behind it, and reciting it is the best available choice.

10. Releasing animals

Connecting yourself to a particular field in nature, to balance your five elements.

Releasing has become common and disorderly, and in many places a trade. Every religion's intention in it is good: to cultivate kindness, and kindness does change a fate.

Seen subjectively: in the act of release your state of mind and your behaviour improve, and that improvement affects your fate. It is not that the snake you released will return as a beauty in a future life to serve you. Seen from a third-party angle: the animal you released ought to be grateful, and when the information of disaster arrives, the snake or the turtle carries the illness off on its back. Read it that way if you like — it does no harm. But it is a shallow reading. No one attains realisation by release alone; no one leaves the six realms by release alone. Release is an auxiliary method, not the root method.

My own view: **do not release dangerous animals.** Release a venomous snake near where people gather and it kills someone, and no hell is deep enough for you. That does not mean kill every venomous snake you meet — it is a necessary link in a local food chain and holds an ecosystem together.

Release must also be scientific. Non-venomous snakes are fine. Release carp, not an introduced predator like the piranha, which will wipe out much of the fish in its new water and wreck the local balance. The point of release is that you benefit, others benefit, and the animal benefits: three parties. Release a venomous snake that bites a neighbour, or a cage-bred sparrow that starves because it only knows millet and has never learned that insects are food, and you have lost the meaning entirely. Buy a poor child a dictionary and some books instead, and raise a person — that is better.



Fish killed by being released.

The present fashion for mass release — freshwater fish tipped into the sea, a land tortoise thrown into water, hundreds of turtles into one small temple pond until the temple puts up a notice saying the pond is full and please stop — is not release. It is killing. Release in moderation, in the right quantity, and with some understanding of what you are doing.

11. Adjusting the six relations

Changing your own field by changing the people closest to you.

This covers not only relatives but close friends. Which is the principle that a person can kill a person. Among your friends, one is somehow there to help you and another is somehow there to harm you: go out with the first and things go well, go out with the second and they go badly. You may keep the second as a friend; keep your distance.

Principle five: conversion of energy

A disaster is an abnormal quantity of energy. Resolving it means draining and discharging that quantity. **Conversion** means turning the abnormal energy into ordinary energy by a set route — draining rather than defeating. This is entirely unlike external aid, which is a contest of strength.

Bloodshed. Its defining feature is loss of blood. Blood can be lost by donation, by injury, by blood disease. Predict a bloodshed month and you can go and donate on the first day of it, more than once, converting a malignant bloodshed — injury, or blood disease — into a benign one: blood given, a life saved.

Loss of money. Its defining feature is that money leaves your hands. It can leave by theft, robbery, fraud, loss, damage, medical bills, celebration, lending, donation. There is bad loss and good loss. By the conversion principle you pre-empt it: **lose the money deliberately, and lose it well.** Lend to a reliable institution or a reliable friend. Donate. Buy fixed assets that do not deteriorate. Bring a celebration forward. Convert the energy of bad loss into good loss in advance. Bad loss is pure waste; money donated resolves the disaster, helps someone, earns merit, and earns reputation. Then be careful in your financial dealings. The disaster is converted and the theft, the robbery, the fraud, the hospital bill do not arrive.

And yet most people would rather lose badly than lose well, which is exactly why most people's disasters cannot be resolved.

The old saying is that losing money buys off disaster. That is the conversion of fate-energy. Every person is a vehicle with a fixed load capacity. Overload it and faults appear continuously. The gentleman's advantage is that he knows his fate — knows what kind of vehicle he is and what his capacity is — and learns to set down some of the cargo so that the vehicle lasts longer and goes further. **“Losing money buys off disaster” is not psychology. It is physics.**

Of all the methods, conversion is the most fundamental, the most direct, the most effective, and the easiest for people to accept.

Resolving disaster is a scientific doctrine consistent with materialist dialectics; and only a method consistent with materialist dialectics can resolve every disaster it meets.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Time, Space and Person: The One Principle Behind Changing a Fate

2017-12-22 · 2,502 words

> **Translator's note.** The theoretical spine of the whole remedial layer, and the most abstract piece in the collection. Its argument is that every method of changing a fate — astrological, medical, psychological — works only when time, space and the person are aligned, and that the traditional systems have all been reading the *group* rather than the *individual*. The strongest passages are the appointment analogy at the start and the "eldest branch" paradox in the middle, which is a genuine logical objection to the standard feng shui claim. (The original illustrates the peace-versus-war point with two named countries; I have generalised it, since the argument does not depend on which countries they are.)

Chinese predictive method has many schools and many theories. Some read accurately, some badly; some are strong on one subject, some on another. Prediction, however, is not the end. The end is to move toward the auspicious, avoid the inauspicious, alter a fate and cancel a disaster.

Because that is the end, a thousand years of schools have produced an enormous number of methods for achieving it. Look past the surface differences and they fall into three families:

1. **Methods derived from a predictive system** — if the useful element is wood, travel east and wear blue-green; if the east of the house is open, treat it as water; change the facing of a door; add or remove sand and water. And so on through every school.

2. **Methods drawn from science** — medicine being the largest and best of them.
3. **Methods that work through the mind.**

All three can fail. To get the largest and most reliable effect, at a date you can name in advance, every one of them must satisfy a single condition: **space, time and person must be unified.**

1. An appointment

What does that mean?

You arrange to meet a friend. Whether you meet depends on three things:

1. **When** — which year, month, day, hour?
2. **Where** — which point in space?
3. **Do you both actually go?**

For the result "we met" to exist, none of the three can be missing. Agree a time but no place, and even if you both set out, the chance of meeting is very small — unless by coincidence. Agree a place but no time, and again the chance is very small. Agree both, and one of you does not go, and the chance is essentially zero.

Only when all three hold does the result appear.

You will object: what if someone dies the day before, what if the traffic is blocked for three days or a year, what if the meeting place is demolished? But a death the day before makes meeting *easier*, not harder. A traffic jam that lasts so long means the two of you were incompetent at planning. And if you agreed a latitude and longitude, demolishing the building does not move the point.

In substance: two intelligent people cannot be prevented from meeting by an accident, because they will have thought the arrangements through, and will

have agreed fallbacks — if not here, then there, at such an hour. Only fools arrange a meeting that cannot happen.

Every result in this world, once it has occurred, has occurred inside space and time. For a person, every auspicious or inauspicious fact likewise sits inside space and time. So to produce the result "fate altered, disaster cancelled," you must take the person as the centre and **move that person's position within the four-dimensional grid of space and time.**

2. Space is a grid of points

A person lives in a three-dimensional environment of length, height and breadth. Within it there are millions of coordinate points available to live at. Around each point, the composition of matter — its properties, its energy — is not the same as around the next. So no two points are auspicious or inauspicious in the same way, and **the same person living at different points has a different fate.**

Nor is any point stable. With the passage of time the matter around a point changes, more or less, and so its quality changes, more or less, and so the fate of whoever lives there changes.

Consider one person at the foot of Everest, on its flank, and at the summit. Three different fates, in the ordinary sense of good and bad. Consider different people at the *same* point at the foot of Everest: their fates are still essentially different, because their innate quality differs — and their innate quality differs because the "factory" that produced them differed, that is, because the environment their mother occupied during pregnancy differed.

A fate is decided by two things: innate quality, and the coordinate point of the environment afterwards. Innate quality cannot be changed once a person is born. But by changing the coordinate point he lives at, and by

changing the matter around that point, his fate can be substantially changed. That is the whole basis of the remedial art.

3. Time

A person also lives inside a process of change.

As time passes, his innate quality changes — not in its basic character, but in its strength. Meanwhile the matter around his coordinate point also changes. Buried river mud becomes stone over ages; buried plants and animals become fossils.

So both terms are moving at once. And the rule is this: **if at the right moment a person moves to a new coordinate point that suits the direction in which his innate quality is already shifting, his quality will tend toward the good. If he moves to one that opposes it, it will tend toward the bad.** The same holds for changing the matter around his existing point.

4. Graves and houses

From this, two familiar operations become intelligible.

Moving an ancestral grave, or moving house or office, changes the coordinate point. Adjusting the surroundings of a grave, or the interior and exterior of a dwelling, changes the matter around the point.

Do either correctly and the innate quality shifts, over time, toward the favourable. Do it wrongly and it shifts toward the harmful.

We cannot change a fate absolutely — a pig cannot be turned into an elephant. But we can give the pig an environment in which it lives happier, healthier and safer. To a very large extent a fate can be remade and a disaster cancelled.

5. Two layers of environment

Now: what about the person decides which environment to choose?

Space has two layers.

The first layer is the environment as it is for everyone. A plain versus a summit. Fertile, well-watered land versus poor land with irregular rain. A battlefield versus a quiet bedroom. A country at peace versus a country at war. This is what people ordinarily mean by good feng shui and bad feng shui: good for anyone, bad for anyone.

Note the logic carefully. Being president of a peaceful country is better than being president of a country at war — but being president of a country at war is better than begging in a peaceful one. And begging in a peaceful country is better than begging in a country at war. The judgement of a site's quality is made **for people in general**, not for a particular person.

The second layer is the environment as it is for this one person. Even in a battlefield — unambiguously bad feng shui for everyone — there is good and bad for individuals. One man dies there; for him it was bad. Another comes through untouched, is decorated, is promoted; for him it was good. Though even for him, the battlefield is not good in the way a peaceful posting would be.

So: whatever the general quality of the environment, if it is favourable **to this individual**, his fate will be favourable.

Choose both — the point and the matter around it — and the leverage is greatest.

6. The eldest-branch problem

Traditional feng shui studies the first layer almost exclusively: the environment as it is for everyone. Very few have studied the second.

The consequence is a limit on precision that the whole field has lived with. Ask a traditional practitioner about a family and the best he can do is “the eldest branch, the second branch, the third branch” — a group, not a person.

Stop and look at that answer.

In one family, the eldest branch himself has sons who are eldest, second and third branch. So does the second branch. So does the third. **Which branch's branch are you reading?**

Further: your great-grandfather was the eldest branch. Your grandfather was the eldest branch. Your father was. You are. Your son is. Your grandson is. **Which eldest branch are you reading?**

Any system that stops at “which branch” is still reading the fate of a group. However you adjust the environment, you adjust it for a branch, not for a man.

This is not to say the group-level adjustment is worthless — it visibly helps everyone in that branch. But to get a precise result for one person you must adjust the group environment *and then* adjust again, on top of it, for that individual.

And even where the group environment cannot be touched at all, the individual adjustment can still be made. We cannot move a president from a country at war to a peaceful one; but we can change the circumstances around that president so that he governs his own country very well indeed.

7. Birth order, then birth hour

So what about the person decides what to change?

First, his birth order among his parents' children — this sets the whole group environment for everyone born in that position.

Second, his hour of birth — this sets the individual environment that suits him.

The reason the second works is a distinction worth holding on to: **the birth time reflects the *type* of a fate; it does not decide the *quality* of one.** Quality comes from the environment during pregnancy and from the ancestral grave. The dwelling and the grave afterwards merely move the quality up and down within its band.

Because birth time gives the type, a chart can be read accurately for everyone born at that time of that sex: same type of fate, similar features of fate.

Take an analogy from manufacturing. Products of the same function come off different production lines, with different machines and different workers. So two products with the same function differ enormously in appearance and in build quality. But whatever the differences, they remain functionally similar — which is why we do not mistake a tree for a television, a pig for a plant, a person for an insect.

For people: two men born in the same year, month, day and hour, of the same sex, differ in body and in the quality of their fate, because their mothers occupied different points during pregnancy and their ancestral graves differ. But their fates remain similar in type. That is exactly why a chart can be read at all.

And so: adjust the group environment, then adjust the individual environment according to the hour of birth, and the fate moves. All phones make calls; not all can stream video. Modify one model and it acquires a capacity the others lack — without ceasing to be a phone.

Which means: any adjustment made on the basis of a given chart will produce a similar shift in everyone born under that chart who lives in that environment.

8. The two preconditions — and the warning

At this point the chart-masters will pounce. *So the chart does decide the fate after all, and you can adjust feng shui by the chart.* If a master says that, know him for a fraud.

The claim that a chart-guided adjustment can change a fate holds only under two conditions. Strip them away and **adjusting feng shui this way is not treatment — it is killing.**

Recall the geometry. Each person comes into being at one point in time and one coordinate point in space. At a single moment there are millions of such points, and millions of people born at them — and the matter around those points is not identical. Which is to say: **people with the same chart did not have the same feng shui before birth.**

So:

1. A chart theory must be able to distinguish, among people born in the same year, month, day and hour of the same sex — and even among those sharing the same parents — the sand-and-water quality across the twenty-four mountains of the eight palaces of their **prenatal** environment.
2. It must equally be able to distinguish, for each such person, the sand-and-water quality of their **postnatal** environment, year by year, month by month, even day by day.

Only a chart theory that does both can be used to adjust feng shui, because only such a theory satisfies the unity of time, space and person.

The "useful element is wood, so open the east and put water there" school satisfies neither. It is not merely useless. On the argument above it is dangerous.

9. When to adjust

And when?

Take a medical analogy. A man goes to hospital for treatment. Is it auspicious to have his kidney replaced before he is ill? Is it auspicious to replace it after he has died of kidney disease? Neither. **The right time to replace a kidney is when the disease exists and there is no prospect of self-repair.**

Feng shui is the same. Adjust too early and it does little; adjust too late and it does little. Two people arranging to meet: arrive too early and you wear yourself out; arrive too late and you may not meet at all. The right time is inside the agreed window.

For a particular person, then, you must select the moment — year, month, day, hour — and the position — among the twenty-four mountains — and the object, all from his chart: his four pillars, his luck cycle, the year, the month, the day, the hour. Only then can a specific area of his life be adjusted — wealth, office, career, study, affection, marriage, litigation, illness — with an effect whose date of arrival can be named in advance.

10. What this buys

Any method that ignores the unity of time, space and person may produce an effect, but only by accident. It cannot be relied on, cannot be repeated, and cannot produce its best effect at a predictable date.

Any method that satisfies it can.

And because it can, it can be tested: run the experiment a hundred times, a thousand, ten thousand, on someone who does not believe any of this, and let him establish for himself that the effect arrives when predicted and is plainly visible. **Practice is the only test of truth. On this question, only repeated, dated, visible results can establish that the art is real.**

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

What “Promotion” and “Demotion” Mean in a Reading

2020-02-21 · 460 words

> **Translator's note.** A definition, and a useful corrective. In a Chinese reading, “promotion” does not mean promotion. It means anything the ordinary person would recognise as an improvement in work and career — including a driver getting a newer vehicle, or a teacher moving from a non-core subject to a core one. This is why clients and readers talk past each other: the client hears “you will be promoted” and looks for a title, when the chart may be flagging a shift of desk.

In fate calculation, “promotion” means advancement in post and development in career.

It covers, specifically: direct elevation in rank; a step up in professional title; the growth of a business; a student's progress; success in an examination; winning a prize; taking up a post; entering employment; an expansion of authority; a transfer with no change of rank from a small or poor unit to a large or good one, or from a small place to a large one; a move from countryside to city; a change of position for someone whose whole career has been unremarkable; and ordinary progress at work —

a driver exchanging an old vehicle for a good one; a teacher moved from teaching into administration; a teacher moved from a lower year or a non-core subject to a higher year or a core subject; a teacher moved from being overlooked to being relied on.

Whatever ordinary people would agree counts as "getting better" in work and career is the information of "promotion" in fate calculation.

In fate calculation, "demotion" means a fall in post and obstruction in career.

It covers: being removed from office; failing to win a title; failing an examination; a decline in study; a transfer with no change of rank from a large or good unit or a large place to a small or poor one, or from a small place to a smaller one; resigning; being stood down; moving from being relied on to being overlooked; a move from city to countryside with no change of rank; an ordinary person moved from a good position to a poor one; criticism from a superior; and ordinary decline at work.

Whatever ordinary people would agree counts as "getting worse" in work and career is the information of "demotion."

Read the two lists against each other and the design is clear. The pair is not about rank. It is about **direction** — up or down — in the one domain that Chinese readers have always used as the index of a life's standing. That is why the vocabulary is so much wider than the words suggest, and why a reading that says "promotion this year" can be right about a man who never held a title in his life.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Breaking a Gaming Addiction: A Worked Method

2021-06-26 · 2,137 words

> **Translator's note.** The clearest worked example in the collection of how a remedy is actually designed: take a behaviour, find its structural description in the chart, and adjust the environment so the behaviour loses its footing. The reasoning here is worth following even if you accept none of it — the move is from "he sits still" to "make the day master move," and from there to the two directions that govern it. Note also the honesty about side effects: the author tells the client the remedy will cost money, and lets him choose. The last section sets out a criterion for a real theory — proposition and converse must both hold — which is a better piece of epistemology than most of what appears in this field.

A behaviour has a structural description, and once you have the description the remedy follows from it. What follows is the author's method worked end to end: from the chart, to the two directions that govern it, to the side effects the client is asked to accept, to the food on the table and the friends in the room.

1. The ordinary method

A gaming addiction has one defining feature: **the day master is still.** To break the addiction you must make it move. A person who is running around, never in one place, does not have a gaming addiction — because games require sitting down. Get him running, playing sport, moving, and he cannot sit. **Making the day master move is the root of the method.**

People will tell you to adjust the resource star, or the output star, or the officer star. None of it works.

Adjust the resource and you raise his **skill at the game** — not his reading. Strengthen the output star and he plays better still: a mediocre player becomes a good one, and with the resource fixed on top of that, a good one becomes top-tier. Adjusting resource and output has nothing whatever to do with breaking the addiction.

We insist on one thing: to solve a problem you must return to the observable facts. Reasoning that stays inside a theory is wrong, always. Theory and fact must agree before anything is solved.

So the method is simple — make the day master move — and there is exactly one way to make it move: **clash.**

By feng shui, adjust two things: the direction of **the stem that clashes with the day master** (primary), and **the day master's own stem** (secondary). The second is adjusted because only when the day master's position carries strong, auspicious energy does the child think normally at all.



Every child knows gaming is bad for him and cannot stop. That is close to universal: in a person with a gaming addiction, the feng shui at the day stem's position is invariably bad sand and bad water. He cannot control himself because the position he stands on does not support control.

So the two positions must both be brought to strong, auspicious sand and water.

Breaking the addiction is good for the family and good for the country. The internet is good for a nation; the gaming industry is not. In its effects it is indistinguishable from the gambling industry.

How to do this in a given year depends on identifying what is holding the child still, and removing it. That is the general method. There is also a method specific to one child.

2. The non-standard part

Beyond the two directions above, different children need different additions.

Direction of exercise. The best direction to exercise in is the direction that clashes with the day master's stem. Note that this direction is auspicious *for this purpose* and not necessarily for anything else.

Go in that direction and break the addiction, and you may fall ill, or lose money. **Solving the principal contradiction means ignoring the secondary one.** The choice is yours.

Which is true of everything we do: every act carries some cost. What matters is which problem you have decided to solve. The best direction for breaking a gaming addiction is the one that clashes with the day master; the best direction for getting a divorce is the one that clashes with the day branch.

If you want a partner to leave you, there is no need to quarrel. Move to the direction that clashes with your day branch and the partner will leave of his own accord. The best way to shed someone is not negotiation — certainly not what men in power do, killing a mistress rather than ending it. Go to that direction and your body fills with an energy the other person finds uncomfortable; being near you becomes exhausting, and he or she leaves. One of my students was pursued by a woman who threatened suicide if he would not marry her, and could not shake her. He went to the direction that clashed with his day branch; a month later she stopped contacting him.

Once you understand the principle, helping and harming are both easy — but so is solving a problem. If you do not want to be entangled with an enemy, there is no need to fight him. Choose a direction to move in and the enemy loses interest, because in that direction he suddenly finds the hostility pointless.

A single direction of movement can settle a matter. The same applies to diet, to clothing, to the people around him, and there is real help in the twelve-animal pendants.

One of my students distributes household appliances. His son had stopped studying for online games and played to the point of forgetting food. I explained the adjustment over QQ. Three months later the boy told his parents he wanted to go back to school. He has not gamed since and is studying well. The father sent a large consignment of appliances to a mountain temple. Breaking the addiction is not difficult — the difficulty is seeing the cause.

3. Why counselling and shocks fail

The counselling programmes run in many places do very little good.

A person with an addiction cannot leave the environment that produces it, and his body is not receiving the energy that would make him move. Every method that does not change this is temporary.

Take gratitude education: the addict weeps, swears never to play again, goes home, holds out two or three days, and starts again — because his body has refilled with the energy of playing. Take the electrical-aversion method: every time he plays he is shocked, he stops, and a month or two later he starts again.

It is the same with gamblers who cut off a finger and swear off. They gamble again, because their bodies are full of the energy of gambling. If you cannot remove that energy, or block the channel by which the environment feeds it to him, he will gamble. You need not cut off his finger.

4. Worked case

The question came up: how do you adjust this when the day stem is *wu* or *ji*?

Answer. If the day stem is *wu*, bring the two opposite palaces *chen* and *xu* to auspicious sand and water. If it is *ji*, do the same for *wei* and *chou*.

Case, male: renwu / gengxu / wuchen / wuwu. Luck cycle *renzi*; year *gengzi*.

The feng shui adjustment. The two opposite palaces representing the day stem *wu* — *chen* and *xu* — must be made auspicious, and the energy of the adjustment must be large. Adjust weakly and he will be back at the game within days.

Direction of movement.

1. **The *gui* direction breaks the addiction.** *Gui* combines with *wu*; going there pulls the day stem *wu* out of the chart and away from the environment in which he wants to play. (If the day stem were *ji*, the direction would be *jia*.)
2. **The *zi* direction also works.** In the coming *gengzi* year the year branch *zi* clashes the hour branch *wu*, which activates the hour stem *wu*. Day master and hour stem are both *wu*; the hour branch *wu* sits beneath the day master. In the *zi* direction that branch is kept in constant agitation by *zi*, the seat beneath the day master will not stay still, and a person who cannot sit still cannot play.
3. **But going to *gui* or *zi* costs money.** *Gui* water and *zi* water are unfavourable here. Move to *zi* and the wealth star, unfavourable, is thrown into motion: he breaks the addiction and spends a great deal. **If you are willing to lose money to break the addiction, go; if not, the child keeps the addiction.**

Sometimes an unfavourable direction is the one you must take to reach an objective — as you must enter the enemy's camp to get his intelligence.

And note what kind of unfavourable star it is. If the water is the wealth star, the side effect is financial loss. If the water were the officer star, the child would be injured, fall ill or self-harm in the course of breaking the addiction — and children do jump from buildings when they cannot stop. This is why I call

gaming a scourge. If the water were the sibling star, the child would turn delinquent. Then you choose: break the addiction first, deal with the delinquency after.

This is medicine, and medicine has side effects. No drug treats every disease at once; no drug is free of effects. Our methods are drugs. When we advise a family, we tell them what the side effects will be, and let them decide.

5. Questions

If the day stem is unfavourable, can you still travel in the direction that clashes with the day master?

Yes. The method has nothing to do with useful and unfavourable gods. If you treat a hunchback, the question is whether the hunchback is straightened; the rest is not my concern. Wealth, office, romance — all of it is gain with loss attached. If you ask me to straighten the hunchback, I will choose the method that does not kill the patient. That is a good practitioner. The poor one straightens the hunchback and the patient dies.

Does drug addiction fall under this method? No. Drugs are not a gaming addiction, and the method differs.

Does gambling? No. Gambling does not require sitting still — some gamblers travel the world to do it.

Once the feng shui at *zi* is auspicious, does *zi* stop clashing with the hour branch *wu*? In the context of breaking this addiction, it does not clash.

Then if *geng* clashes *jia* and the day master is *jia*, making *geng*'s direction auspicious would stop the clash and the addiction could not be broken — would it not?

No. The rule is whether the thing being clashed **is the day master**. If the *jia* being clashed is the day master, then making *geng*'s direction auspicious does not stop the clash. If it is not the day master, the clash stops. Day master, clash; year stem, month stem, day branch, year branch, hour stem, hour branch, no clash. But note: this belongs to the remedial art, not to prediction. It is not the "clash" of predictive theory; "clash" is only a manner of speaking.

Do novel-reading and autism fall under this? Reading novels is close — a boy motionless in a wuxia novel is in the same category. Anything that consists of sitting still and being absorbed can be treated this way. Autism is not an addiction; it is an illness. Gaming is not an illness. Autism has its own method.

6. Why qimen cannot treat anything

A hexagram reading does not change with repeated casting, but the remedy designed from it changes completely with each cast. Which tells you that the six-line method is an instrument for prediction and not an instrument for treatment. The same is true of qimen dunjia.

No one understood qimen more deeply than Zhuge Liang and Liu Bowen. Neither of them achieved a real remedial result with it. So qimen, properly speaking, is a predictive instrument without therapeutic function.

Yet people in this field, to make money, adjust feng shui with the six-ren methods, with qimen, with palm and face reading. They are all applying their own system to other people's problems, and after all these years the results are mostly worse, not better — because none of these theories can be checked backwards. Qimen cannot be run in reverse.

A theory is true only if its proposition and its converse both hold. A proposition that can be run forwards but not backwards is one-directional,

and a one-directional theory is a defective theory. Any theory worth the name must work in both directions. That is my view of this field.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Adjusting Marriage and Romance

2021-06-25 · 2,592 words

> **Translator's note.** A full worked remedy, from chart to directions to diet, and the best single illustration of how the method is built: read the structure, find what will disturb it in the coming year, adjust those directions, then decide whether you are fixing one year or a lifetime. Two things are worth carrying away. First, the refusal to promise that a separated couple will reunite — the argument is that a marriage involves two people and the remedy can only be applied to one. Second, the "rotten peach blossom" section, which concedes that calling up romance can be dangerous. (On one question, about homosexuality, the author writes in the idiom of Chinese popular writing of the period; the archive reproduces it without endorsing it.)

For a man: the day branch is fundamental; the wealth star is secondary. Together they represent wife and lover.

For a woman: the day branch is fundamental; the officer star is secondary. Together they represent husband and lover.

1. The ordinary method

For a man, adjust the day branch and the stems and branches of the wealth star. For a woman, adjust the day branch and the stems and branches of the officer star.



2. One thing must be said first

Where a couple is already in crisis, separated or divorced, **the remedy may not bring them back together.**

Wealth, office, study — those are one person's business. Adjust his energy and the matter is settled. **A marriage is two people's business.** You can adjust one person's energy; you cannot necessarily adjust the other's. And even if you adjusted both to excellent energy, that would not mean the two of them belong together. It might mean they reunite — but it is more likely to mean each of them finds someone he or she loves more than the person they separated from.

Only a fraud, in order to be paid, will guarantee a reconciliation.

Stated properly: **the remedy can guarantee a happy married and romantic life. It cannot guarantee that the happiness will be with this particular person.** When you advise a client, do not promise that the

husband or wife will come back. Promise that someone you love, and who loves you, will appear. Who that is may not be the person you loved before.

3. The principle

The day branch is the root of the adjustment. The wealth star or officer star is secondary. Which is why we keep insisting: **the positional ten god matters far more than the surface ten god.**

4. A worked case

Female: *wuwu / yimao / jiashen / xinwei*. Luck cycle *xinhai*; year *gengzi*.

Note first that you cannot fix the target in advance. In antiquity, or twenty years ago, one could guarantee a husband. Not now. Multiple partners are common in practice even where the law forbids it, so the remedy cannot name the role. And in this field, what is a spouse? **Anyone with whom a sexual relationship is maintained over a long period.** That is the operational definition. The law defines a husband; fate does not follow the law. Fate is the way of heaven and earth; law is what people have agreed. They are not the same thing.

So: adjust for a good partner, not a bad one. The day branch first, the officer star second.

The day branch (fundamental): *shen*. Note that *shen* metal is also the officer star.

The officer star (secondary): *shen*, *xin*, *geng*.

The feng shui:

1. *Shen* must be strong and auspicious — good sand.
2. *Xin* and *geng* must be kept auspicious — good water.

To move this woman's romantic life in a good direction next year, all three must be brought to auspicious.

We can also run it backwards. Why is her romantic life poor now? Because her prenatal feng shui and her present dwelling must be, one hundred per cent, bad water at *shen*. With bad energy at the day branch's position there is no possibility of meeting a partner who satisfies her, and no possibility of a happy marriage.

If *shen* carried strong auspicious sand, she might have a husband who is rich, honoured, handsome and kind to her — and how much of that depends on how strong the sand is. Which is why people with identical charts have different fates. Reading from the time system alone whether another person's husband is capable: accurate is possible, inaccurate is normal.

So: *shen* strong auspicious sand, *xin* and *geng* auspicious. That is the minimum.

And what appears may not be a husband. It may well be a married man who treats her very well, and whom she loves. We can guarantee what people call **a peach blossom**. A peach blossom and a husband are not the same thing.

5. The non-standard part

Who disturbs the relation between day branch and day master next year: *zi*.

In the coming *gengzi* year, the year branch *zi* combines with the day branch *shen* metal, the officer star — and the officer star leaves the day master *jia*. Setting aside the feng shui at *shen*, *zi* must be made auspicious.

- ***Zi*: good sand.** With good sand at *zi*, even if that energy enters her body it will not disrupt the officer star's relation to the day master.
- ***Shen*: good sand**, as above.

Who disturbs the relation between day master and the officer star next year: *geng*.

In the *gengzi* year the year stem *geng* clashes the day master *jia* out of the chart. So *geng* must be good water, or it will disrupt.

Only when *zi* and *geng* are quiet, and *shen* is auspicious, does her romantic life move in a good direction next year.

And within the natal chart itself, who disturbs the relation between day master and officer star: *yi*.

The hour stem *xin* metal is the husband, but the month stem *yi* wood clashes it, so *xin* and the day master *jia* cannot hold a good relation to each other. Read on the time system alone, **every woman with this chart has an unhappy marriage and makes a mess of her romantic life.**

And yet some women with this chart have very happy marriages. Why? Because their environment has *yi* sand and *xin* water. Those with marriage problems have *yi* water and *xin* sand — and often bad water at *shen* as well. A woman with this chart, with bad water at *yi*, bad sand at *xin* and bad water at *shen*, has no possibility whatever of a lifetime of happy marriage.

So: to secure her happiness you must ensure ***shen*, *zi*, *geng*, *yi*, *xin*.** Five characters.

But you need not adjust *yi* and *xin* this year. Adjust *shen*, *zi*, *geng* and next year's romance is fine. ***Shen*, *yi*, *xin* is the lifetime problem.** What we are solving now is next year.

This is a point worth generalising: **when you call up wealth, office, study or romance, you must think about what happens after the result arrives.** Aim only at next year and you fix only next year. Aim at the rest of her life and that is a different, larger adjustment.

6. Direction of movement

The ***mao* direction** is best for romance — for good peach blossom.

Note: for *good* peach blossom. Not for the rotten kind, which costs people their lives and their liberty. Do not assume that calling up romance is a favour.

In China more people are killed, and kill, over romantic entanglement than over money; half the murderers in Chinese prisons killed over a bad peach blossom, and the other half over everything else. Which makes romantic entanglement the single largest motive. **The peach blossom is poisonous.** Do not touch it casually. To fall into one young and foolish and ignorant of the art is understandable; to face one at a mature age should be done rationally, and after fifty with some care. Even the young would do well to establish whether the thing is harmful before going looking for it.

Directions that produce bad peach blossom: *shen*, *xin*, *geng* — the unfavourable directions. *Shen* first, *xin* second, *geng* third.

Metal is unfavourable this year, and for a woman the officer star being unfavourable means rotten peach blossom. **So she must not go to *shen*, *xin* or *geng* looking for a partner.** However much she loves him, however much he loves her, if he comes from those three directions it is a bad peach blossom and will give her a painful episode. To go looking for a partner in an unfavourable direction — especially in a year when the officer star is unfavourable — is to go looking for trouble. Not looking is the better choice.

The direction that produces good peach blossom: *mao*, a favourable direction.

The positional ten god for lover is the month branch. A lover can certainly be promoted to husband. So with the metal officer direction ruled out, the second favourable direction is the month branch's *mao* wood — favourable this year. Her best partner, her best peach blossom, comes from *mao*.

That does not mean no one comes from elsewhere. It means that for a happy second half of life, only *mao* will do. Let her work, travel, live in the *mao* direction, and she will somehow acquire good romantic energy; she will absorb what the universe delivers along that axis.

So: *mao* is where the best man comes from next year.

7. Diet

Favourable: foods belonging to *mao* — rabbit, and things of that class.

Unfavourable: birds — chicken, duck, goose, pigeon, quail.

And the inference runs backwards. When we learn that this woman's romantic life is poor, and she is not a vegetarian, we can generally infer that she likes poultry: drumsticks, duck wings, goose, eggs, quail eggs. What she likes to eat is affecting her marriage.

If her romantic life is very poor indeed, you can infer with some confidence that she eats eggs or poultry daily.

8. Temperament

That she has come to ask for help with romance tells us her romantic life is bad, which tells us the officer star is acting badly in her body. **The officer star governs temperament.** So her temperament is difficult — a woman with this chart and an unhappy marriage is almost certainly a woman of peculiar temper.

And temperament can be worked on. Force a change of temperament and the romantic life changes with it.

But do not read the chart and pronounce the woman difficult. Some women with this chart are gentle and charming — those whose officer star energy is

strong **auspicious** sand and water. Strong **inauspicious** sand and water at the same position produces the unreasonable, shrewish woman.

So: adjust the wife's officer-star position to good sand and water and her temperament improves. Adjust it to bad sand and water and you will fight with her daily. You can test this. Put a mobile phone, standing in for bad sand, at your wife's officer-star position and watch whether you quarrel within three days. Hang your coat there and she will find fault with you — because at that moment her body holds a quantity of the officer star's bad energy.

9. Body

Mao corresponds to the back. The month branch is *mao*; the month branch represents the back.

Wood is favourable this year and *mao* wood is weak. If this woman's back is thin and undeveloped, the adjustment at *mao*, or a move to *mao*, will produce a poorer result for her than for another woman with the same chart whose back is well developed.

Individual variation. You cannot understand it without the model theory.

10. People

Favourable: those born in a *mao* year — the rabbit. Keep close to them and a peach blossom is drawn out, and a good one.

Unfavourable: those born in a *you* year — the rooster. *You* clashes *mao*. Do not be close to them: a good peach blossom will be talked down by a rooster-born friend, who will find fault with the man until she gives him up. **If this woman's closest friend was born in a rooster year, she has no prospect of a happy marriage.** Distance yourself.

11. Questions

In the *gengzi* year the year stem *geng* clashes the day master *jia*. Does adjusting the sand and water remove that effect?

After adjustment the effect is gone. The remedy is nutrition restored. Leave it unadjusted and you are short of nutrition in a year that demands more — as eating good food when hungry satisfies, while drinking a bowl of vinegar when hungry leaves you hungrier and may make you sick.

Is it best to adjust both the inside and the outside of the dwelling?

Yes. The more adjustment, the more energy, the better the result.

Does a same-sex partner count as a lover?

Yes. What the adjustment produces need not be an opposite-sex partner. In the features of a fate, same-sex and opposite-sex attraction present identically; which way a person goes is decided mainly by his or her own values. (The author goes on to discuss "breaking" the pattern, which belongs to a different subject from the one treated here.)

Where is the origin for measuring direction?

First, the ancestor's grave. Second, any dwelling lived in for more than half a year. Adjusting grave and dwelling together gives the best result; if only one can be done, do one; if neither, then direction of movement and diet. In practice the grave is often impossible — siblings will not agree — while your own dwelling is always adjustable.

Is the bedroom the focus? Where is the body's origin?

Not necessarily the bedroom. The adjustment is made from **the point where you actually sleep** — on a double bed you may sleep left, right or centre. For this woman, the origin is the point on the mattress where she lies, and the centre is taken at the chest or abdomen. The origin need only be approximate.

But do not tell the client it is approximate, because he will conclude you are working inaccurately.

What if she moves to the *yi* direction?

Entirely bad for her marriage. She would go there to work or live and the husband would be clashed away, because *yi* clashes the hour stem *xin* metal, the officer star. **No woman with this chart who works and lives in the *yi* direction has a happy marriage** — she would not be happy even with a husband, because in that direction her body absorbs, all day, the energy that kicks the husband out.

If the dwelling and the grave are in different places, how is direction measured?

By how long you have lived where you live. Ten years or more and the grave is irrelevant: take the dwelling as the origin.

Must both the surface ten god and the positional ten god at the day branch be adjusted? And if the day branch is not an officer star, is adjustment still needed?

The positional ten god sometimes matters and sometimes does not. In this chart *shen* metal at the day branch is both surface and positional. **The day branch must always be adjusted; the officer or wealth star is secondary** — adjusting it only adds a margin. If your day branch is strong and auspicious, the romantic life will not be bad. If your romantic life is very bad, look at the feng shui at your day branch and you will find bad sand and bad water.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Four Tests for a Remedy

2021-06-29 · 1,048 words

> **Translator's note.** In most systems of this kind, the evidence arrives after the fact — the client confirms it, the consultant interprets it, and nothing has been tested. This piece does something rarer: it states, in advance, four things that will happen within a fixed window if the adjustment has worked, and treats them as the standard the method should be judged by. One need not accept that the standard is met to see that it is a standard — specific, dated, and capable of failing. The last section, on what "scientific" should mean here, is the most quotable paragraph in the archive.

Any claim to change a person's fate has to answer one question: how would you know if you were wrong?

The answer offered here is unusually concrete. After an adjustment, four things are said to occur, and they occur within a fixed window: **three days at the earliest, fifteen at the latest.** Not eventually. Not within the year. Inside two weeks.

The four tests

1. The person themselves. Within that window, some event in the person's life occurs of the kind the consultant named beforehand — favourable or unfavourable, in the specific category predicted.

2. Their family. Within the same window, something occurs to a close relative, again of the category named in advance.

3. The body. A specific part of the body begins to react. The author's example: a woman who has never had a spot on her forehead develops spots there, one after another. Or a forehead that has never been struck gets struck repeatedly — she bumps it on a doorframe, and then a child she is holding knocks into it. The point is the location. An arbitrary symptom proves nothing; a symptom in the place the chart indicated, does.

4. The hands and the face. Lines appear, or lines disappear. Two kinds are distinguished:

- **Colour lines** — changes in complexion and tone along a region of the palm or face.
- **Physical lines** — creases and wrinkles, the kind you can see and feel.

The part that makes it a test

Anyone can explain a result after it happens. What makes this falsifiable is the requirement that the prediction be made **before** the adjustment, and in detail.

> The consultant tells the client in advance: after this, a line will appear in this part of your palm, or a line will fade from this part of your face. Within two weeks, this will happen to you. Within two weeks, this will happen to your mother.

Then it either happens or it does not. Nothing in between, and no room to reinterpret afterwards.

The author's claim is consequently very strong — he calls it one hundred per cent — and it is worth being clear about what that claim rests on. It does not rest on the adjustment always producing a good outcome. It rests on the adjustment always producing a *detectable* one: some event, somewhere in the four channels, that was named in advance. A method that only produces

results when they are flattering is not being tested. This one is being asked to produce a signature, and the signature can be unflattering.

The worked illustration

The case is small and specific, which is what makes it useful.

A woman was advised to wear a fish — the 子 element — for a fertility problem. (The case itself belongs elsewhere in this archive; what matters here is the verification.)

子 clashes 午. In her chart, 午 carries the **seal star** (印), and the seal star governs documents, papers — and clothing, since clothing is what covers the body. If 子 moves against 午, the seal star is displaced. Something in the category of documents or clothing must leave her.

So the prediction, made in advance: within two weeks, she would lose or misplace a document, or give clothing away.

What happened: she bought new clothes and gave them away. Not as a plan — the consultant had soiled his own shirt during the session, and she went out and bought him a replacement. The thought arrived in the moment. She had never done such a thing before.

The author's reading of this is worth noting, because it shows how the system handles an event that a sceptic would call ordinary. A client buying a shirt for a consultant is not common. It happened, it was in the predicted category, it was inside the window, and it required the seal star to move. The event was small, but the channel was the right channel.

On the word “scientific”

The closing argument is the one to keep, whether or not one accepts the four tests.

The author's claim is not that the method is validated by a laboratory. It is that the method has the *shape* of a science — a prediction made before the fact, a fixed window, a stated channel, and a result that can be checked by anyone present.

> Science is not a single success. **Science is a result that survives being tested over and over.**

This is the right criterion, and it applies to the method itself as much as to its rivals. On that standard, the burden is not discharged by one good case, and the archive's own habit of recording cases is not the same as proving the rule. But it is the correct thing to ask for, and the piece is unusual in this literature for asking it.

What the standard costs

One consequence follows, and it is the reason this piece sits where it does in the layer.

If the claim is that a named event will occur in a named place within a fixed window, then **the consultant must be able to derive the event in advance.** That requires the feng shui theory and the chart theory both, working together. It is not available to someone who has learned a set of correspondences and applies them by association. Which is the author's answer to the obvious question — if this works, why doesn't everyone do it — and also the reason he insists that the verification is not a marketing device but a filter: whoever cannot make the prediction in advance cannot make the claim.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

The Ceiling of Adjustment

2021-05-09 · 824 words

> **Translator's note.** The shortest piece in this layer and the most important one to read alongside the promise. It states the ceiling: an adjustment moves a person *within* the band their chart allows, never across it. A clerk can become a section chief; a section chief cannot become a minister, and the author says why he would not be writing this if they could. It is the strongest self-limitation in the archive, and the best evidence that the archive knows where its claims stop.

Before the method, the limit.

An adjustment has a band. Inside the band it works reliably; at the edge of the band nothing happens at all, and the consultant who implies otherwise is lying to a customer who will eventually find out.

The distinction is between **improvement within a level** and **movement between levels.** Only the first is claimed.

What a level is

The chart sets a frame. Not a script — the frame does not decide whether you will be happy, or when you will marry, or what you will do on a Tuesday. It sets the order of magnitude available: the rough height of the ceiling.

Call it a band. A man whose band runs from clerk to county-level official may spend his whole career as a section chief doing a county official's work — carrying the responsibility, not holding the post. That is not the band being denied. It is the band being occupied badly.

What the remedy can do inside the band

This is the list of real effects, and it is more substantial than it sounds to a reader expecting miraculous claims:

- **From a nominal post to a real one.** The title without the authority becomes the title with it.
- **From a small jurisdiction to a large one.** The same rank, in a bigger county.
- **From a poor region to a prosperous one.** Same grade, different economy, different life.
- **From a marginal department to a central one.** Same seniority, different distance from the decisions.
- **From deputy to principal.** Within the band, the last step is often the one the remedy is asked for.

None of these are small. A man who moves from a nominal post in a poor peripheral county to a real post in a prosperous central one has changed his income, his children's schooling, his marriage prospects and his standing for the rest of his life — and every one of those moves happens inside the same band. An adjustment that reliably delivers them would be worth a great deal.

What it cannot do

Cross the band.

The author's illustration is deliberately blunt. If the band runs to county level, then no adjustment produces a provincial or ministerial post. Not a difficult case, not an expensive case, not a case that requires more sessions. Not possible.

> If it were possible, I would not be spending my life teaching it. **I would have adjusted myself first.**

That is the argument, and it is a good one, because it does not depend on any theory. It depends on the observable behaviour of people who claim unlimited power: they are not, themselves, in possession of what they sell. The person selling a method that crosses levels is the first person who should have used it, and has not.

There is a second, quieter consequence. A consultant who promises the crossing is not merely overselling — he is guaranteeing a failure that the client will attribute to the consultant's competence rather than to the frame. Which is why the author's instruction to practitioners is unusually direct for a commercial document: **do not let the customer believe you can do this**, because the disappointment, when it arrives, will be worse than the sale was good.

Why the limit is stated so loudly

Three reasons, and the third is the one that matters.

Because it is true. The frame is the frame; a method that cannot move it should not pretend to.

Because a truthful promise is a better sale. A customer told he can be moved to the top of his band, and moved there, becomes a customer for twenty years. A customer told he can be moved to the top of the country, and moved nowhere, becomes an enemy with a story.

Because the limit is what makes the claim testable. A promise with no ceiling cannot be checked — every outcome is compatible with it. A promise with a ceiling can be: put the adjustment in front of a band edge and see whether the person crosses. They will not. And the same test can then be applied inside the band, where the claims are, and where they can be checked one at a time.

The distinction is not modesty. It is the difference between a claim that could be wrong and a claim that has been arranged so that it cannot be.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Eight Directions, Not Eight Hours

2021-05-17 · 1,079 words

> **Translator's note.** A short, argumentative piece about a definition. Most treatments of the four pillars call them a time system — eight characters recording the hour of birth. This one refuses, and the refusal is the foundation of everything else in this archive. The argument is a piece of logic, not a doctrine: time has no element, the stems and branches do, therefore the stems and branches are not time. If that step holds, the rest of the method follows; if it fails, the rest of the method has nothing to stand on. It is the most direct statement of the system's premises in the archive, and the shortest route into it for a reader who wants to know what is actually being claimed.

Almost everyone who studies the four pillars begins from the same premise: the eight characters are a **timestamp.** They record the year, month, day and hour of a birth, and the whole art consists of reading that timestamp.

This archive rejects the premise. Not as a quibble about terminology — as the thing that decides whether the method works.

The argument

The stems and branches carry the five elements. 甲 is wood, 丙 is fire, 壬 is water. That is not disputed by anyone in the tradition.

Time does not carry the five elements.

Time has no mass, no quality, no texture, no direction. It is not a substance and cannot be one; nobody who has tried to say what time is *made of* has produced an answer, because time is not made of anything. If the stems and

branches are elements — things with qualities — then they cannot be time. They may be *used to mark* time, in the way a name is used to mark a person, but the name is not the person.

The classical reply is that 甲 乙 丙 丁 *represent* time. They do represent it. But representation is not identity, and the moment you treat a representation as the thing itself, you have accepted a category error and then built a system on top of it. **The ordinary reading treats a substance as a timestamp and then wonders why the reading is unreliable.**

What the eight characters are

If they are not a clock, what are they?

Each stem and branch carries four properties at once:

1. **A time** — the year, month, day or hour it marks.
2. **A direction** — one of twenty-four, or a half of one.
3. **An environmental character** — sand or water, high or low, at that direction.
4. **A body location** — a part of the body.

A chart, therefore, is not a record of when someone was born. It is a description of **what is inside them**: eight energies, arriving from eight directions, held in a body.

This is the sentence on which the entire system turns. A person is alive, on this account, because those eight energies are moving inside them in their proper order. Health is the order; disaster is a disturbance. When one of the eight stops moving as it should and begins to move somewhere it should not, the person suffers — and which disaster, and how bad, depends on which energy has moved, to where, and how violently.

Two illustrations

The author uses two, and both are worth keeping because they do the work that doctrine cannot.

The glass

Take the body as a glass. The chart tells you what is already in it: not just water, but sugar, vinegar, apple, banana juice — eight ingredients in particular proportions.

Then a year arrives. The year's 庚 energy is peach juice. Pour peach juice into a glass that already holds vinegar and wait three hours, and the glass smells of alcohol. Nothing was added that was not already accounted for; the taste changed anyway, because two substances met.

Now read a year without this picture. Read it as a timestamp and you have a date and no ingredients, and you will be reduced to guessing. **This is why chart-only fortune-telling produces confident answers and poor ones.**

The porridge

The second illustration answers the strongest objection to the whole tradition: if the chart is a timestamp, why do two people born in the same hour have different lives?

Because the timestamp is not the porridge.

On the eighth day of the twelfth month, every household in a town cooks the same dish at the same hour. Every pot is different. One family's has more red dates, another's more green beans; one is sweet, one is thin. Same time, different contents — and the contents are what you taste. A chart with more wood is a pot with more of one thing, not a clock reading.

The illustration goes further, and this is the part that matters. Take one pot — your mother's. Is the first spoonful the same as the last? No. Same pot, same hour, different bowl. **Which is why even the same chart, born into the same household, does not produce the same person.**

What follows

Three consequences, and they are the reason this piece sits at the front of the remedy layer rather than the back.

First, an environment adjustment must be made against a chart. If a chart were only a timestamp, adjusting a house would be a separate operation from reading a person, and the two would meet only by convention. Because the chart is a description of which directions' energies are already inside the body, the house is not a separate subject: it is where the incoming energy is coming from. You cannot adjust a direction without knowing what it will meet when it arrives.

Second, the same house is not the same house for two people. Two families in identical flats, with identical furniture in identical corners, are not in identical conditions, because the flats are being read against different bodies. This is the answer to the observation that feng shui "works for some people and not others" — the house did not change; the occupant did.

Third, a year is not an event but an addition. The year does not *cause* an outcome from outside. It adds an ingredient to a mixture that is already reacting, and the outcome is the reaction. Which is why the same year is a good year for one person and a ruinous one for another, and why the calendar cannot be read on its own.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Adjusting for a Child: A Worked Case

2021-06-28 · 2,159 words

> **Translator's note.** A complete worked case in the remedy layer: a woman who had not conceived in thirty years, a chart, and four levers — the hour pillar, the day master, the direction of travel, and food. Two things make it worth reading even for a sceptic. The first is the precondition: nothing here is claimed for a body with a physical fault. The second is the story of the woman herself, who conceived at fifty after a divorce moved her several hundred kilometres — the case that the author uses to argue that a change of place can matter more than a change of medicine.

Every method in this archive has a precondition, and this one states it bluntly. Before anything is adjusted, the machinery on both sides — the reproductive system, in plain language — has to be in working order. If the machinery is faulty, no adjustment will produce a child. Everything that follows applies only to couples whose machinery is sound and who are nonetheless not conceiving.

The two targets

The primary target is the **hour pillar**, because the hour pillar is the children's palace. The secondary target is the **output star** (食伤, *shishang*) — the eating god and the wounding officer — which is where children are positioned in the ten-god scheme.

The order matters, and the author is emphatic about why. If you attend only to the output star and never to the hour pillar, no child appears; or a child appears and dies. Producing a pregnancy is not the goal. Producing a healthy

child — at the very least an ordinary, functioning person — is the only outcome that counts. A child who is born disabled or impaired would have been better not born, and the author says so directly, while conceding that the final choice belongs to the parents. Hence: hour pillar first, output star second.

For a woman there is a third requirement, and it outranks the other two. **The day master itself must be sound.** If the day master is not carrying strong favourable energy, there is no reliable pregnancy and no protection against miscarriage. A woman can have a perfectly adjusted hour pillar and still lose the child, because the vessel that has to hold the pregnancy was never strengthened.

Whose chart is read

The woman's. The man's is consulted and may be set aside entirely. The reasoning is not metaphysical: a child is carried and delivered by the mother, and the question the remedy sets out to answer is whether *this woman* will bear a child — not whose child it is. Where the woman conceives, the adjustment has done its work.

So the full prescription for a woman is: day master made favourable, hour pillar made favourable, and — where the means allow — the output star as well. That is the ordinary method.

Does an adjusted hour pillar always produce a child?

No, and the reason is a matter of accounting. The hour pillar carries a fixed quantity of energy. If that energy has already been spent — if the favourable element in the hour pillar has been drawn down over a lifetime of use — the result of adjustment will be modest. If it has not been spent, a small adjustment produces a pregnancy quickly. This is why a change of residence

or a change of direction can make a woman conceive who had not conceived in decades: the pillar did not change, but what was left of it did.

The woman who conceived at fifty

In the county town where the author then worked, a businessman's wife had married at seventeen or eighteen and had never conceived. By fifty the marriage had ended — the husband had kept another woman and had a son by her. The wife left, and became the companion of a company manager in a different city.

Within a short time people noticed she was gaining weight. She assumed a tumour and went for a scan. She was pregnant, at fifty, after thirty years of not conceiving.

Two things had changed, and neither was medical. Her **direction of travel** had changed: she had lived west of the ancestral grave and now lived to its south-east. Her **dwelling** had changed. Under this system neither is a coincidence; both are the same variable measured two ways. A couple who do not conceive in one house may conceive within a year in another. Where the machinery is sound, the author insists, conception is a simple problem, and it does not require medication or any of the other things people spend money on.

The mechanism he proposes is stark: a woman whose body is full of the energy of children will conceive; a woman whose body is not will not. Every woman has an hour pillar and an output star, but by the time she wants a child that energy may be spent — too little to carry a pregnancy to term, hence miscarriage, or a child born impaired, or a child who dies. **Energy is the root of every outcome in a life; strip the energy out and no account of a fate means anything.**

The worked case

> **Female: 庚午 庚辰 戊申 庚申**
>
> Luck pillar: 丁丑
>
> Year: 庚子

Reading: hour pillar 庚申. Day master 戊, which contains 辰 and 戌.

To produce a child, the hour pillar and the day master must both be made favourable. From the failure to conceive — or the miscarriages, or the children who died — one can work backwards to the environment: the 辰 and 戌 directions must have held hostile sand or hostile water, and the 庚 direction must have held hostile sand rather than favourable water. Every woman with this chart and that configuration either fails to bear children or bears a child who brings trouble. Hence the proverb the author quotes: better no child than a disaster of a child.

Planning the pregnancy year

Before conception the woman should choose the feng shui of the pregnancy itself: strong favourable energy in the 庚 direction and strong favourable energy in the 辰 and 戌 directions.

There is a fine distinction inside the hour pillar. The **hour stem 庚 stands for the first child; the hour branch 申 stands for the second or the last.** Where no first child exists there can be no second, so 申 is irrelevant for a first pregnancy — but it becomes equally important if twins or a second child are intended.

This also explains why twins differ so sharply. If the 庚 direction holds favourable water and the 申 direction holds hostile water, the first twin will be fine and the second will fare badly. Reverse the two and the woman may not conceive at all — but if she does, the second twin will be the good one and the first will be poor. One does not need to meet the twins to say which is which;

the mother's chart and environment already say it. And once the correspondence between chart and environment is established, the adjustment stops being a guess.

For this woman, four characters must be brought into favourable condition: **庚, 申, 辰, 戌.** At minimum, 庚 must be dealt with in the coming year, because the first pregnancy depends on the hour stem. Adding 申 covers the twin case.

The four levers

1. Feng shui. Bring 庚, 申, 辰 and 戌 into strong favourable condition.

庚 is the first priority: in the 庚子 year it is an unfavourable element (忌神, *jishen*), and the more unfavourable it is, the more thoroughly it must be converted into strong favourable energy. 戌 — that is, 辰 and 戌 — is the second priority, because the day master must be sound.

In this year nothing else obstructs conception. Both the output star and the hour stem are unfavourable, and both directions hold hostile sand or hostile water. Two outcomes follow: no child, or a child who is a liability.

2. Direction of travel. 乙 and 丑 are the only choices for a good child this year.

The reasoning is the standard pair of moves for an unfavourable element: **combine it, or store it.** 乙 combines with 庚, and because the energy of a direction exceeds the energy of a time, one 乙 direction can neutralise four 庚. Whether she moves a hundred kilometres or several thousand, the single 乙 covers all of them. 丑 is the metal storehouse: it takes 庚 in and locks it away. Move to 丑 for a year and conception follows.

Go anywhere else and a child may still arrive — with trouble attached. This is why women with identical charts bear children of entirely different quality, and why twins, once grown, do not produce comparable families: their directions of travel diverge.

The other directions are worse than neutral. 甲 is hostile to conception outright. This is not a matter of "avoid the north"; it is one specific direction that fails and two that work.

3. Diet. Favour 子 foods. Avoid metal-element foods, avoid 辰 foods (shellfish), and keep 丑 foods (beef) to a minimum.

- **Metal-element foods: avoid.** Metal is the unfavourable element; all of it goes.
- **Shellfish (辰): avoid.** 辰 is earth and generates metal — it feeds the element you are trying to suppress.
- **Fish (子): recommended.** 子 water drains the metal.
- **Beef (丑): sparing.** 丑 stores the metal away, which is useful, but 丑 also combines with 子 and weakens water's control over 辰 and 申. Useful, therefore, but not in quantity.

This is where the method becomes falsifiable in an everyday way. If a woman truly cannot conceive, the author argues, one can infer her diet: she must eat shellfish and metal-element foods often. Had she not, she would have conceived long ago — even a troubled child would have arrived. That she cannot conceive even a troubled child is evidence about her table.

4. Clothing. Water element only.

- **Metal: no.** It is the unfavourable element.
- **Fire: no — although it is favourable.** This is the counter-intuitive one. Fire controls metal, so wearing fire means constantly provoking the metal, and provoked metal moves. Moving metal is precisely what prevents conception. A favourable element can still be the wrong tool.
- **Earth: no.** Earth generates metal.
- **Wood: no.** Wood is the officer star here; it predicts illness during pregnancy, or injury to mother or child at delivery.
- **Water: yes.** The single best choice for a good child.

5. Zodiac ornaments. Only 子 is favourable — and it carries a cost.

The rat is the only ornament that helps conception. The ox must not be worn: 丑 gathers the metal away, but it gathers the *children* away with it, into the ornament rather than into the body.

The rat works, and it strikes at the mother. 子 clashes with 午 in the year pillar, and 午 governs the mother. Wear a rat for a year and the mother begins to suffer inexplicable harms: a father who never raised his voice begins to bully her; a mother who never cut herself while cooking starts cutting her hands.

The author does not soften this. **The world is not arranged so that a gain is free.** To reach one target you pay somewhere else — and the payment is itself the proof that the ornament is working.

Questions

Can the sex of the child be adjusted? Not the question to ask first. Whether there is a child at all is the problem; sex selection is a deeper layer of analysis.

Is the origin point the woman's natal home? No. The origin is where she lives now.

She has had miscarriages. Does that change the calculation? It does not. The hour pillar governs the first child and the last child; once a first child is born there is always a last. Which is why, in the author's account, more children is often better than fewer.

Why the second child tends to do best

There is a coda here that is worth carrying away, because it is the kind of claim this system makes constantly: an explanation of a social pattern that costs nothing to check.

The hour stem aims its energy directly at the eldest; the hour branch aims at the youngest. Where the parents' hour pillar is unfavourable, that unfavourable energy is delivered to the two ends of the family and missed by whoever stands in the middle. **Hence the second child escapes the bad transmission.** Among high achievers, the author says, the second-born is over-represented — not because of birth order psychology, but because of which seat in the family the energy misses.

Whether or not one accepts the mechanism, the claim is at least of the right shape: specific, checkable, and wrong in an obvious way if the pattern does not hold.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Winning the Contract: Direction and the Right Gift

2021-06-27 · 1,636 words

> **Translator's note.** The most practical piece in this layer, and the one with the sharpest single idea: that a gift is not a bribe but a key, and only one key fits. The parable is a truckload of hare meat that won nothing and four roast ducks that closed the deal. The technical premise — that a corner direction has to be worked as two separate mountains — is set out in this archive's piece on the twenty-four directions; here it is only what the case requires.

Getting rich and winning a particular piece of business are not the same problem, and this is the first thing the method separates.

An ordinary wealth adjustment, of the kind described elsewhere in this archive, supports the outcome: it makes money more likely. It does not specify the route. A market stall, a construction bid, a debt collected — all may benefit, but none is aimed at. If what you need is for a specific client to sign a specific contract, the adjustment has to aim.

Three factors decide it:

1. **The direction you travel to negotiate.**
2. **The seal star** (枭印, *xiaoyin*) — the resource star that governs documents, contracts and orders.
3. **Both of them in a favourable relation with the day master, at the same time.**

All three have to line up. A favourable direction with a seal star that never reaches the day master produces nothing; a well-placed seal star with travel in the wrong direction produces nothing. The business you go out to win is not money. **It is the seal star** — a document, a signature, an order — and money is what later follows from having it.

The author extends the point to states, and it is a fair illustration: no country can manage every neighbour in all 360 degrees at once. Which neighbour it can deal with depends on which direction that neighbour lies in and whether the configuration at that moment supports it. The same person, going out on the same day to negotiate in twenty-four different directions, will close twenty-four different outcomes.

The direction, in one paragraph

The direction in the case is 巽 — the south-east corner. In this system 巽 is not an element and not a single direction. **It is half 辰 earth and half 巳 fire** — two adjacent mountains, each occupying half of the corner — and it has to be worked as two.

(The argument for this, and against the classical reading of 乾 as metal and 巽 as wood, is set out in this archive's piece on the five-element properties of the twenty-four directions. All that is needed here is the consequence: 辰 and 巳 are separate addresses, and a case that treats them as one will be right about half the time.)

The worked case

> **Male: 辛酉 乙未 甲寅 癸酉**
>
> Luck pillar: 壬辰
>
> Year: 己亥

Direction. 巽 — that is, 辰 and 巳, treated separately, because they are separate mountains.

Which seal stars reach the day master. The day master is 甲. Water is the seal star, and there are three of them: 癸, 亥, 壬.

- **癸** — reaches the day master. It sits on the hour stem, at the gate, in direct relation with 甲.
- **亥** — reaches it closely. The year branch 亥 combines with the day branch 寅, which brings 亥 under the day master.
- **壬** — does not reach it at all.

What happens without adjustment

Go south-east and the business obtained is the business of **癸** — through both halves, by different routes.

In the **辰** direction: 辰 does not relate to 甲 directly, so on its own it yields nothing. But 辰 is the water storehouse. Arriving there brings 辰's energy into the body, and the year's water stars — 癸, 亥, 壬 — enter that storehouse. 癸, already at the gate and already in relation with the day master, is drawn into play. Separately, 辰 combines with the hour branch 酉, which activates the hour stem 癸. Two paths, same result.

In the **巳** direction: 巳 does relate to 甲 — it harms the day branch 寅, which brings 巳 under the day master. But because the energy of a direction exceeds the energy of a time, 巳 also clashes away 亥, the seal star with the closest relation to the day master. The 亥 business is lost. What survives is 癸 again: 巳 combines with the hour branch 酉, activating 癸.

The lesson of the pair. Both halves deliver 癸's business, but they deliver different things alongside it. Direction and seal star have to be read together; either one alone gives half an answer, and half an answer is how most consultations go wrong.

The adjustment

If the aim is to make the business come faster and larger, the lever is 酉 — because it is 酉 that lets the energy of 辰 and 巳 act on 癸 once it is inside the body. So 癸 and 酉 become the primary pair.

Feng shui. Strong favourable condition for 癸, 酉, 辰 and 巳. 癸 and 酉 first, since they are what converts arrival into a signed contract; 辰 and 巳 next, since they are where you are going.

One boundary has to be stated. This adjustment wins the business. It does not determine whether the business makes money. Plenty of people have gone bankrupt on work they won. Whether the south-east contract is profitable is a separate question, belonging to wealth prediction, not to this remedy.

Direction of travel. 辰 and 巳 are both favourable elements in this year, so travel there is sound on that count as well. 辰 is the wealth star and 巳 the output star, which is the source of wealth; movement toward them carries the information of income.

And yet — this is the honest part — the author gives the odds. Ask whether a man will make money going south-east and you will be right about seven or eight times in ten. In the remaining cases he wins no contract and earns only a wage. **A favourable direction makes money possible; it does not manufacture the order.** Two separate links in one chain.

If the seal star were unfavourable instead, the two outcomes would be different and worse: either the business cannot be closed at all, or it closes and drags a train of disputes and litigation behind it. An unfavourable seal star that has not been subdued does not produce a clean win. It produces a win with a bill attached later.

Food. Favour 酉; avoid 卯.

酉 is the intermediary in this whole configuration, so reinforcing it at the table helps. 卯 is the opposite: entertain a client over hare and he goes home and

gradually stops taking your calls. The author's point is not that the food is magic but that a business dinner is part of the configuration, and a dinner in the 卯 direction of your own home is a different event from one in the 酉 direction.

People. Work with people born in a 癸酉 year, or at least with people of the rooster. Do not take a rabbit into a negotiation.

The gift. This is the passage worth remembering.

The man knew his client liked hare. His home district had plenty. He drove a truckload of hare meat to the client — and did not get the contract. The client may not even have liked duck. He sent four roast ducks — and got it. Because 酉 metal was the element that solved his problem, not the element the client preferred.

The general principle is a screw. **A gift is not valued by its price; it is valued by whether it fits.** When a wheel comes off, a gold bolt is useless and a rusty one of the right thread will get you home. Gift-giving works the same way, and the author is pointed about the alternative: pleasing the recipient is psychology, and psychology is a technique for persuasion, not for fit. A hundred roses may fail where a stalk of grass succeeds, because on that day one of them is the element that closes the gap and the other is not.

Clothing and flowers follow the same rule: white, metal element. If white flowers look thin, add white lilies among other colours — the point is the white, not the bouquet.

Which direction to go. Where the direction is still open, 癸 is the year's easiest direction for winning work and 丁 is the worst: no orders, and the travel and the entertaining are simply spent. This is not only for the man himself. Send fifty salesmen out in the morning and the direction each one travels decides whether the day produces fifty signed orders or fifty wasted trips.

Ornament. A wooden tiger. 寅 is the day branch; 寅 combines with 亥 and softens the clash that 巳 would otherwise deliver to the 亥 seal star. Small hinge, but the whole configuration turns on it.

The realistic promise

The author closes with the appropriate modesty, and it is worth quoting for its shape rather than its size.

After a full adjustment, there is almost no negotiation that produces nothing. A hundred-million contract may come back as five million. Grow one hundred *jin* of scallions for a restaurant and, unadjusted, the restaurant may take none; adjusted, it may take fifteen. **The remedy's meaning is that there is business, and some of it closes.** How much closes depends on the strength of the adjustment, not on the consultant's confidence.

Even a cabbage seller should carry the cabbages in the right direction. Go the right way and they sell quickly; go the wrong way and they do not sell.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Adjusting for Study: What Can Be Promised

2021-06-23 · 1,910 words

> **Translator's note.** The most useful piece in this layer for anyone who has ever bought a Wen Chang pagoda the night before an exam. Two things carry it. The first is a distinction the system takes seriously — the output star produces *cleverness*, the officer star produces *judgement*, and they are not the same gift. The second is an honest statement of the remedy's time constant: five years can be promised, one month cannot, and the pagoda sold at the door of the examination hall can only add a few marks.

Study is adjusted through two things, and the order matters: the **seal star**, which governs examination results, and the **output star**, which governs the ability to learn. Results first, capacity second.

But before the method, a distinction that the author spends several pages establishing, because it decides what the adjustment can be aimed at.

Cleverness is not judgement

Take a homely illustration. A woman can be clever enough to catch her husband in an affair — clever enough to arrange it, follow him, collect the evidence. That takes real ability. And then the question: to what end? To prove it? To divide the property? To stay married afterwards? To weigh what the children and the grandparents will feel? To consider, honestly, what happens if he decides she has become a problem?

Catching him is cleverness. Knowing what to do next is judgement.

In the ten-god scheme, the output star is the first and the officer star is the second. **The output star governs reading, examinations, technical mastery — the ability to become a good engineer, a good technician, a good research scientist.** All of that is cleverness. The officer star governs the capacity to face a crisis and resolve it by the best available route. It is judgement.

The two are not allies. In this reading they are close to opposites: the more purely clever a person is, the less judgement they tend to have, and the wiser a person is, the more their wisdom contains cleverness as a subordinate part. Cleverness is a partial and low-order expression of judgement; judgement is what includes it.

There is a consequence the author draws that is worth stating plainly, because it is sociological rather than technical. A person with the output star in close relation to the day master is clever and tends toward the self. A person with the officer star in close relation to the day master will show responsibility at the decisive moment — and may be found anywhere in the social scale, including the bottom of it. Rank and income do not follow from this. Conduct does.

The author's example is deliberately unglamorous: soldiers who were never officers, who in a moment of crisis did what the situation required while their cleverer comrades did not. Whether or not one accepts the metaphysics, the observation is not empty — the correlation between examination success and conduct under pressure is loose enough to be worth explaining, and no one has explained it well.

(Much of the surrounding material — about eggs, milk, and what modern diets have done to attention — is the author's aside on why a civilisation can grow more clever while losing its grip on wholes. It is kept here in one sentence because it is a mood, not an argument.)

The method

Having separated the two, the ordinary procedure is straightforward: **make the seal star favourable first, then the output star.**

The non-ordinary procedure is where the work is. Find:

- Which stems and branches allow the seal star to reach the day master?
- Which allow the output star to reach it?
- Which allow both to reach it at once?

Adjust those specific characters, in the environment, and the child's study moves in the direction it should.

Why the chart alone cannot answer

Before the case, the argument that holds the whole system together — and the reason the adjustment can claim more than a reading can.

Take a child with this exact chart. Will he pass the postgraduate examination next year? Read the chart as a pure time system and you can say yes or no. **And you will be right about half the time.**

Then read one more character. Right about half of that half. Then another. Half of half of half.

This is why, on the author's account, chart-only divination cannot be accurate — not because the reading is poor but because the chart is one input among several, and treating it as the only input costs you fifty per cent on each additional factor. What separates two children born in the same hour of the same day is not the chart. **It is where they are.** Which direction their home lies from the ancestral grave; which direction their school lies from their home; which direction the bedroom faces. The chart says what the energy is. The environment says where it is coming from.

The worked case

> **Male: 己卯 丁卯 甲申 甲子** (preparing for the postgraduate examination)
>
> Luck pillar: 乙丑
>
> Year: 庚子

He wants to sit the postgraduate entrance examination. The adjustment can strengthen the energy available and can make him work; it cannot add knowledge he has not acquired.

The two stars. 子 water is the seal star (印, *yin*) and is favourable. 丁 fire is the output star (食伤, *shishang*) and is favourable.

Does 子 reach the day master 甲? Yes, by two routes. 子 is the hour branch, and the hour stem is also 甲 — the seal star sits directly beneath the day master. And in the 庚子 year, 子 combines with the day branch 申, bringing it under the day master again. Seal star favourable, and in close relation: good.

The feng shui adjustment. The 子 direction of both the ancestral grave and the current dwelling must be brought into strong favourable condition.

Here is the test of the whole argument. Every child with this chart is not equally likely to pass. Some will, some will not, and the chart cannot tell you which. What tells you is the 子 direction. Favourable sand there, and the examination goes well; hostile water there, and it fails. Same chart, opposite outcome, one variable.

Does 丁 reach the day master? Yes. 丁 fire, favourable.

The 丁 adjustment. Same logic, sharper illustration. Every child with this chart is not equally intelligent. Some are excellent; some are barely able to hold a pair of chopsticks, and no amount of teaching changes which hand they use. What separates them is whether the 丁 direction holds strong favourable water or strong hostile sand.

Which yields a claim that is easy to test and hard to believe: **a child educated in the 丁 direction is bright, with this chart, almost regardless of anything else.** And a child educated in the 子 direction does well in examinations. Twenty-four possible directions for a school, twenty-four different educational outcomes from one chart.

Direction of travel. Here the two answers diverge, and this is the subtlety worth taking away.

Feng shui says: make the 子 direction favourable. Travel says: **go to 丁, not to 子.** Because in the coming year wood is unfavourable, and travelling north to sit the examination invites a failure that will look inexplicable afterwards.

There is a further distinction, about credentials rather than marks. Go to 午 and the result may be the best paper in the country and no place. The author's example: second highest score nationally, one place at the institution, and the place goes to the first. 午 does not deliver the seal of a higher degree — the document cannot arrive from that direction. 丁 can.

Who blocks the connection? 庚. The year stem 庚 clashes with the day master 甲 directly, and a clashing stem does not want 甲 near its seal star or its output star. 庚 has to be handled, or the other two adjustments will be undone at the last moment: the paper is written well, the application is redirected, the place is lost to a调剂 — a reassignment to a different institution.

So the full set is **子, 丁 and 庚**, all three brought into favourable condition. Two out of three is not two-thirds of the result. It is a failure with a good excuse.

The time constant

This is the passage to keep.

Everything above describes a standing adjustment — a change to the environment that is made and then left in place. Given a year, or even six months, the author will say that the examination will be passed. **Given a month, or a week, no one can promise that** — not because the method stops working, but because a change in the configuration needs time to become a change in the person. The most that can be promised at short notice is that the candidate performs above their level on the day.

Which is not the same as passing. A candidate who scores zero and is adjusted the night before scores ten. A candidate near the cut-off who is adjusted the night before scores ten above the cut-off. **The pagoda sold outside the examination hall can add marks. It cannot add years of study.**

The author is blunt about why a consultant should say this out loud, and the reason is commercial rather than ethical: the customer who expects a guarantee and does not get one leaves; the customer who is told the truth, sees the modest improvement, and stays for ten years is worth more. Telling the truth about the size of the effect is the better business, and it happens also to be true.

> A child who scores zero at the start of senior secondary school can be brought to a university place in three years, if the adjustment begins then. The same child adjusted in June of the final year goes from zero to ten.

The rest of the prescription

Food. Avoid 丑, 午, 卯 and 子; favour 辰.

- **Beef (丑):** 丑 combines with 子 and draws down the seal star's energy. The examination is scored on the seal star, so beef works against the result.
- **Horse, donkey, mule (午):** 午 clashes 子 away. Same mechanism, more direct.

- **Hare (卯):** the day master is 甲 wood, and wood is unfavourable this year; 卯 is the peer star (比劫) and stirs it. The practical effect is restlessness — the inability to sit still and read. Half an hour less reading a day is 183 hours a year, and 183 hours is a body of knowledge. 卯 also punishes both 子 in the chart, spending the seal star twice over.
- **Fish (子):** water feeds the unfavourable wood. Not this year.
- **Shellfish (辰):** favourable. 辰 combines with 子 and with 申, bringing both under the day master; and 辰 harms both 卯, draining the unfavourable wood.

People. Keep distance from those born in 丑 or 午 years, and from those born in 甲, 卯, 乙 or 庚 years. A roommate from one of those years is not a small matter: 庚 clashes 甲, which removes the day master from the whole enterprise — a student with a 庚-year partner will talk about the examination and not sit it.

Release. Release hares, if releasing is your practice. 卯 is unfavourable, so releasing it is favourable. Do not release oxen: 丑 carries the seal star away.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

The Pagoda Problem: Why a Wen Chang Tower Usually Does Nothing

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> **Translator's note.** The companion to the previous piece, and the more polemical of the two. It takes the most familiar object in Chinese exam folklore — the Wen Chang pagoda, sold in every stationery shop and every temple forecourt — and argues that its position is wrong, its material matters more than its position, and that in most cases it does nothing at all. The middle section, on how much of an essay mark depends on which teacher opens the envelope, is the most uncomfortable and most convincing passage in the archive. It closes with an argument against traditional day-selection that turns on a pair of spring couplets in one southern Chinese city.

Every year, before the university entrance examination, families buy a Wen Chang pagoda — a small nine-storey tower, usually brass or blackwood — and place it in the south-east corner of a room. The tradition says the south-east is the seat of learning, and the pagoda is the god of literature's own furniture.

The objection is not that the object is powerless. It is that **the south-east is the wrong socket** — and in most houses, for most children, nothing is plugged into it.

Plug and socket

Think of the child's chart as a plug. Each stem and branch in it is a pin. Think of the compass as a wall of sockets: twenty-four of them, each wired to a different thing.

A pagoda in the south-east places a load on the 辰, 巽 and 巳 sockets. Whether anything happens depends entirely on whether that socket is wired to anything in this particular plug. For a child whose chart has no live connection there, the tower is a lamp in a socket that goes nowhere. **Nothing is broken. Nothing is powered.**

The author's example child needs 甲 and 子. A pagoda in 甲 works a thousand times better than the same pagoda in the south-east — same tower, same brass, different socket. And the general form of the error is what he objects to: the classical method prescribes one position for everyone, which is to say it does not consider the person at all, and therefore cannot be right about any particular person.

The material matters more than the position

Even granting the right corner, there is a second variable almost nobody considers: **what the pagoda is made of.**

Wood, metal, fire, earth, water — the same tower in five materials, in the same corner, produces five different results. In the author's account of this particular child:

- A **metal** pagoda causes a blunder on the day. Not a small one: the paper that would have been written well is written badly. This is the trap — the family buys the handsome brass one because it looks like the ones in the photographs.
- A **black wood** or ebony pagoda helps. Questions the child could not answer, guessed at as the papers are collected, come out right.
- A **red wood** pagoda helps differently: the paper is finished early and without obstruction.

Note what this implies. The remedy is not a symbol with a general meaning. It is an object with a specific composition, placed in a specific relation, at a

specific time — and the composition can invert the effect. **A wrongly made remedy is not a weak remedy; it is the opposite remedy.**

There is a further case, in the 子 direction: a pagoda of stone produces a marking error. The essay is good, the argument is sound, and it is marked down because the examiner disagrees with it.

The examiner

Which brings up the part of the examination that nobody wants to discuss.

An essay is not marked by a rule; it is marked by a person, and a person marking their two-hundredth script is not the same person who marked the first. Early in a batch there is patience and a rubric. Later there is fatigue, impression, and the examiner's own opinions doing the work.

The author's example is deliberately provocative. Set the essay question: *What do you think of the Yijing?* A script that is clumsy and badly written but says the Yijing is a science gets a high mark. A graceful script that calls it superstition gets a low one. **The mark was decided before the essay was read** — decided by which examiner opened the envelope.

In language subjects, therefore, there is an irreducible risk that has nothing to do with the candidate's ability: the distance between what the candidate thinks and what the marker thinks. And if that is true, then the hours around the examination — what the candidate wears, what they eat, who drives them — are not decoration. They are part of the configuration that decides which pile the script lands in. And the configuration does not end at the classroom door: it runs through the marking period, until the result is published.

Whether or not one accepts the mechanism, the observation about examiners is one that anyone who has marked a thousand essays will recognise. The method's claim is only that the mechanism is physical rather than

psychological — that the paper is *carried* to the sympathetic examiner rather than *judged* favourably by chance.

Two different jobs

A question that comes up constantly: when should the adjustment be made?

Study and examination are two different problems with two different time constants.

Study is measured in years. It is a standing condition. Some charts need one adjustment for life; some need one every few years; some need one every year. Yearly is the most effective.

An examination is measured in days. Once the date is fixed, the analysis moves from the year to the month, day and hour — six pillars become eight or nine, and the method becomes harder without changing in kind.

Which means the adjustment for a specific sitting can be very short and very specific. Suppose the examination falls on a 庚子 day. Where should the candidate sleep the night before, and which direction should they travel to the hall? A candidate living in the 癸 direction who sits in the 丁 direction has the best available arrangement, and can book a hotel on the 癸 side of the venue for the preceding nights. In those last days, the food and the conduct are narrowed to the day.

The logic is the same. Only the resolution changes.

Day-selection is folklore

The last question is whether the adjustment itself needs an auspicious date. No: any time will do. Which opens onto a broader argument, because day-selection is the most commercially successful practice in the whole tradition and the author regards it as empty.

Traditional day-selection, on this account, has **no predictive value at all** and survives as custom. The test is simple and cannot be answered: take an auspicious day and go to a hospital. Take an inauspicious day and go to the same hospital. On both days, at both hours, people die, people are revived, children are born. So which is the auspicious hour?

The illustration he prefers is a pair of spring couplets.

The white-edged couplets of Zhangzhou

In one city in Fujian — Zhangzhou — the red couplets pasted on doors at New Year have **white borders at top and bottom.** Nowhere else in China does this. To an outsider, and by the ordinary rules of the custom, a white border on a New Year couplet is a bad omen: white is the colour of mourning.

The origin is historical. In the Ming dynasty, in one year, the able-bodied men of the district were killed repelling a raid from the sea. The red couplets had already been pasted on every door. To take them down would have been worse than to leave them. So the survivors pasted white strips along the top and bottom edges — mourning added to the celebration already in place — and the practice held.

Centuries later, Zhangzhou still does it. **And Zhangzhou prospers, is promoted, and fills its houses with grandchildren at exactly the same rate as the districts that paste plain red.** Whatever the white border means, it does not mean misfortune.

The conclusion is not that symbols are meaningless. It is that **custom and efficacy are two different things**, and a practice can be universally observed, deeply felt, and completely inert. Which is the argument against reading the calendar for a good day, and for treating the whole question as one of fit rather than fortune.

One last thing, about method

Underneath the pagodas and the dates is a claim about what the accessible part of a fate is.

It is physical, not psychological. The remedy is a direction, a material, a food, a person — not a change of attitude, not a reframing, not a conversation about how you feel about your future. The author is explicit that the psychological reading of these practices is the wrong one: the objects are not placebos that work by reassuring the family, and if they worked that way, one pagoda would do as well as another.

That is the position, stated as plainly as the archive states it anywhere. It is also the position that makes the whole system vulnerable — because it can be checked, and it will be wrong sometimes.

For the particular child in these two pieces, the last prescription is the one he most needs. His problem is not intelligence but restlessness: the peer star is stirred, and a stirred peer star cannot sit still. He reads for a while and gets up. **Releasing hares is recommended** — not for the hares, but because the element that keeps him in his chair is the one the hares are made of, and the act of release is the one that brings it in.