

GanZhi BaZi Calendar

The DunHuang 敦煌 star map, the world's oldest complete star atlas to date (dated to the Tang Dynasty, 618–907 CE), suggests that the Chinese have long been “thinking in oceans,” engrossed by the mysterious yet tangible inner workings of outer space for perhaps longer than any other culture on earth. In *Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches*,¹ Master Zhongxian Wu and I showed the connection between the patterns of the stars and the 22 ancient GanZhi 干支 characters (the term “GanZhi” is the accepted shorthand of TianGan 天干, Heavenly Stems, and DiZhi 地支, Earthly Branches). Together, the GanZhi represent cyclical patterns of the interactions between and among cosmic and earthly energies. These 22 characters, the Heavenly Stems (of which there are ten) and Earthly Branches (of which there are 12), are the “alphabet” of all traditional Chinese wisdom traditions—from astrology to cosmology, from medicine to music.

GanZhi has been widely used throughout China for at least 4000 years—archeological evidence from the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties depicting the GanZhi characters provides us with historical evidence of Chinese astrology as a complex science drawing on the sophisticated understandings of cosmology, astronomy, and “big picture” scholarly philosophies. It comes as no great surprise that the Chinese long ago created an all-encompassing, multidimensional calendar that systemized the mysterious yet tangible outer influences of the heavens and earth on the inner worlds of our human experience.

This calendar, the WanNianLi 萬年曆 (10,000-year calendar), is a lunisolar calendar that tracks the cyclical movements and energetic patterns of Daoism's most fundamental philosophies: unity (Dao 道), duality (YinYang 陰陽), the pentad (WuXing 五行), and the octad (BaGua 八卦). The WanNianLi is also the GanZhi calendar, by which I mean it is the one we use in our Chinese astrology practice. As it contains layers of significance, capturing the movements of several things at once, grasping the basics of the calendar can feel a little confusing at first.

1 Master Zhongxian Wu and Dr Karin Taylor Wu (2016) *Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches—TianGan DiZhi: The Heart of Chinese Wisdom Traditions*. London: Singing Dragon.

甲寅年 公元 1974 年

八月小逢癸酉宿鸡月

秋分初八日十七时五十九分
节气：寒露廿四日零时十五分

公历	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	十月	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
农历	一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九	十	十一	十二	十三	十四	十五	十六	十七	十八	十九	二十	廿一	廿二	廿三	廿四	廿五	廿六	廿七	廿八	廿九
星期	一	二	三	四	五	六	日	一	二	三	四	五	六	日	一	二	三	四	五	六	日	一	二	三	四	五	六	日	一
干支	庚申	辛酉	壬戌	癸亥	甲子	乙丑	丙寅	丁卯	戊辰	己巳	庚午	辛未	壬申	癸酉	甲戌	乙亥	丙子	丁丑	戊寅	己卯	庚辰	辛巳	壬午	癸未	甲申	乙酉	丙戌	丁亥	戊子
五行	木	木	水	水	金	金	火	火	木	土	土	金	金	火	火	水	水	土	土	金	金	木	木	水	水	土	土	火	
时辰	丙子	戊子	庚子	壬子	甲子	丙子	戊子	庚子	壬子	甲子	丙子	戊子	庚子	壬子	甲子	丙子	戊子	庚子	壬子	甲子	丙子	戊子	庚子	壬子	甲子	丙子	戊子	庚子	壬子
奇门 节元					秋分上7				【秋分酉				秋分中1			秋分下4					寒露上6				【寒露子	寒露中9			
宿	毕	觜	参	井	鬼	柳	星	张	翼	轸	角	亢	氐	房	心	尾	箕	斗	牛	女	虚	危	室	壁	奎	娄	胃	昂	毕
建星	闭	建	除	满	平	定	执	破	危	成	收	开	闭	建	除	满	平	定	执	破	危	成	收	开	闭	建	除	满	平

A section from the WanNianLi 万年曆 (10,000-year calendar)

On that note, here is a very brief overview of the philosophies upon which the calendar was built, specifically as they relate to Chinese astrology.

Dao 道

The Dao is the momentum of life and the source of everything, that which is without beginning and without end. As LaoZi states in the *DaoDeJing* 道德經, there are no words that can adequately describe what the Dao truly is. With that caveat, I will simply say that the Dao expresses herself as both the great oneness as well as the path towards unity.

To the best of our ability, we follow the Dao when calculating and analyzing anyone's personal birth information. We always strive to approach the task from a heart-centered place of wholism, trying our best to coalesce masses of patterns into one unifying picture that allows us to provide guidance and support to the very best of our ability.

YinYang 陰陽

YinYang is the central, most basic tenet of all Chinese wisdom traditions. Although Yin and Yang have distinguishable qualities (Yin 陰 quite literally means “shady side of the hill” and is often described as dark, feminine, hidden, passive, and lunar, whereas Yang 陽, which means “sunny side of the hill,” is seen as bright, masculine, outward, active, and solar), in truth YinYang is an interconnected, inseparable, fluid, and fluctuating union. YinYang interact with and transform each other at all times, and are the driving force behind the creation of all phenomena, those of human being, the natural world, and the cosmos.

The Stems and Branches each have Yin and Yang manifestations—five Yin and five Yang Stems, six Yin and six Yang Branches—which provide deeper insight into the dynamics of the astrology chart. A few examples of how knowing these patterns becomes useful in your chart reading include the ability to: identify underlying organs and meridian systems which are out of balance (so that you may pinpoint the root cause of dysfunction rather than chase after the symptoms); provide targeted advice for food and lifestyle modification; and recognize strengths and weaknesses in interpersonal relationships, career paths, finances, etc.

WuXing 五行

WuXing is the other core philosophy of traditional Chinese culture. Commonly translated as “Five Elements,” the etymology of these Chinese characters reveals a principle that is vastly complex and conceptually translates more accurately as the interaction between and among the myriad of energies of heaven and earth, intertwined in an eternal cosmic dance. The Elements—Water, Wood, Fire, Earth, and Metal—describe qualities of all phenomena within the known universe and are also in themselves symbols representing time, space, color, flavor, odor, vital organ of the body, acupuncture meridian, musical tone, emotion, and more!

The Stems and Branches individually represent the Five Elements and the incredible dynamism of the chart—elemental energies combine with and transform one another in a beautiful alchemical process. This alchemical process is largely driven by the so-called “Hidden Stems,” which document the subsurface relationships of the Stems and Branches. Your skill in reading a chart accurately grows exponentially as your understanding of WuXing deepens. In the chapters to come, I will discuss only the primary elemental relationships, as the more intricate elemental subtleties of the BaZi practice are beyond the scope of this book.

Briefly, here are two quick reference charts correlating the Heavenly Stems and the Earthly Branches with their YinYang and Five Element qualities. Please understand that more in-depth study of the information presented in these charts will enrich your mastery of Chinese astrology.

**Heavenly Stems—YinYang and
Five Element Qualities**

甲 Jia	Yang Wood
乙 Yi	Yin Wood
丙 Bing	Yang Fire
丁 Ding	Yin Fire
戊 Wu	Yang Earth
己 Ji	Yin Earth
庚 Geng	Yang Metal
辛 Xin	Yin Metal
壬 Ren	Yang Water
癸 Gui	Yin Water

Earthly Branches—YinYang and Five Element Relationships

子 Zi	Yin Water
丑 Chou	Yin Earth
寅 Yin	Yang Wood
卯 Mao	Yin Wood
辰 Chen	Yang Earth
巳 Si	Yang Fire
午 Wu	Yin Fire
未 Wei	Yin Earth
申 Shen	Yang Metal
酉 You	Yin Metal
戌 Xu	Yang Earth
亥 Hai	Yang Water

BaGua 八卦

The BaGua (Eight Symbols) are the building blocks of Daoist philosophy, internal martial arts, and classical Chinese medicine. They are most commonly recognized in the form of eight trigrams (three-lined drawings), which serve as written symbols that represent the fundamental principles of the universe and the essence of reality. The aforementioned concepts of Dao, YinYang, and WuXing are incorporated within each trigram.

Understanding the symbolism of the BaGua (i.e. everything in existence) is obviously quite an endeavor. Although advanced BaZi analysis will necessarily incorporate the wisdom of the BaGua, I will not be discussing this aspect of Chinese astrology in the context of this book. To learn more about the BaGua in both theory and practice, please refer to *Seeking the Spirit of The Book of Change* by Master Zhongxian Wu.²

BaZi 八字

The BaZi (Eight Characters) are the building blocks of the human being. At the moment of our birth, each of us is imprinted with a unique combination of universal energies, as codified by the 22 GanZhi characters.

The GanZhi BaZi calendar, the traditional tool used for puzzling out a person's astrology (BaZi) chart, provides us with a map of the specific cyclical energies of each year, month, day, and hour. Historically, only a small, select group of Chinese astronomers and astrologers were given the secrets of formulating the GanZhi calendar. In days of yore, an even smaller subset of practitioners, the very finest men from the blind Yijing 易經 (I Ching or Book of Change) community, passed on an even more secret calculation method by way of an oral tradition which involved memorizing a series of highly complex and lengthy poems (and no doubt looking quite mysterious, reciting verses and using the finger creases of their hands as arcane mudra-abaci). Amazingly, these blind astrologers

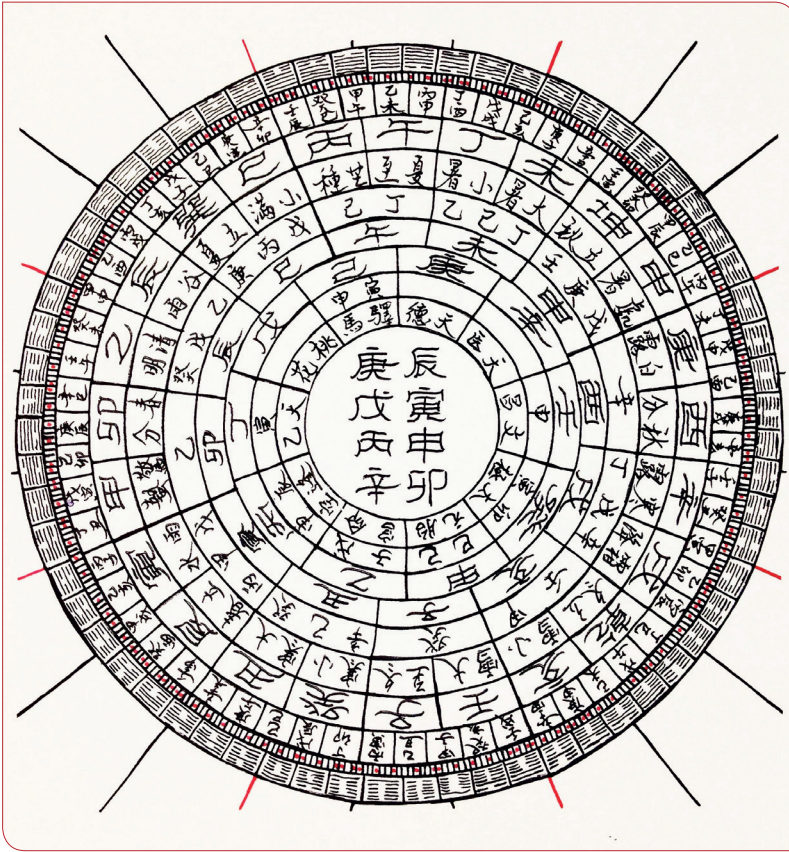
2 Master Zhongxian Wu (2017) *Seeking the Spirit of The Book of Change: 8 Days to Mastering a Shamanic Yijing (I Ching) Prediction System*. London: Singing Dragon.

were able to calculate the entire (10,000-year!) calendar in their minds, create astrological charts, and cast fortunes accordingly.

Today, interest in the GanZhi calendar is still reserved to an exclusive group of like-minded individuals. The modern trend, of course, is to forego any understanding of how the chart is created and instead install an app on your smart phone. Bucking that ever-growing trend toward instant gratification, in this book I will introduce a remarkable and complete calculation method that will allow you, the serious practitioner, to access all of the essential information contained within the GanZhi calendar so that you may puzzle out BaZi chart after BaZi chart...even if you do not happen to carry the WanNianLi, or, dare I suggest, a mobile device, with you at all times. A note of forewarning: As the process involves some elaborate calculating methods, it can prove to be quite a challenge for many of us to learn how to create a BaZi chart from scratch. Take heart! Over the years, I have seen a properly analyzed BaZi chart act as a catalyst for significant change and meaningful transformation umpteen times. People may find great confidence, encouragement, motivation, possibility, and solace through a BaZi chart reading. I hope you find yourself inspired by the task!

Chinese Astrology: BaZi 八字 and SiZhu 四柱

The basic Chinese astrological chart is made of up eight characters and is often referred to simply as BaZi. These characters map the sui generis imprint of the natural world on the baby at the moment he or she makes the profound transition from the reality of prenatal unity to the delusion of postnatal separation. It is from that instant (the year, month, day, and hour of birth) that the SiZhu or “Four Pillars” are calculated. The SiZhu form the bedrock of the astrological chart. Each Pillar is itself a pair of Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches—hence, the eight central GanZhi characters, or BaZi, of the astrology chart.



*The BaZi, in a circular arrangement based on traditional
Daoist alchemy drawings, as designed by the author
Calligraphy by Master Zhongxian Wu*

The ability to read this star map provides opportunity for the Chinese astrology practitioner to compare a person's energetic patterns with past, present, or future patterns in nature. As all of the energetic patterns of the natural world move in cycles (24-hour cycles, 60-day cycles, 12-month cycles, 10-year cycles, 12-year cycles, 60-year cycles, and so on), we can become adept at predicting how circumgyrating natural patterns assert their influence on the core and fluctuating patterns of the individual. Daoists assert that the guidance of a skilled Chinese astrologer provides opportunity for each individual to work

toward actualizing his or her greatest potential and illuminates the path towards inner peace.³

“If you truly understand the patterns of the past, you directly see their influence on patterns of the present and in the future.”

Master Zhongxian Wu, *Vital Breath of the Dao*

For better or for worse, the ability to calculate a Chinese astrology chart is no longer limited to a modest, specialized subset of Chinese astrologer. In our current digital era, access to the information within the WanNianLi is all but a mouse click or a finger tap away. For those of you who are drawn to the ancient oral tradition of BaZi calculation, or who, at least on some level, are stirred by the possibility that tapping into the universality of mathematics, ancient patterns, and symbolism may well be a way to connect your own intuition and insight to a greater collective consciousness and then channel it toward the well-being of others, get your paper and pencil ready! In this book, I have the honor of proffering a traditional method of SuanBaZi 算八字, calculating the BaZi, to the general public. The calculation method I present in this book was given to me (for the purpose of sharing) by my husband, Master Zhongxian Wu, a lifelong Daoist practitioner and teacher, and brilliant astrologer (who, lest I digress, also happens to possess a very clever mathematical mind, along with a series of other remarkable gifts). The analysis method that I have introduced is one that has been passed down through the centuries via an oral lineage of Daoist masters (again, to me from my husband) and from the DiTianSui 滴天髓—a BaZi classic.⁴ With a little practice, you will be able to hone your computational skills and compile anyone’s BaZi chart without having to lug around a thousand-page calendar book or rely on a questionably accurate website or smart phone app. I will also offer you a few tools for basic chart analysis and provide case studies so that

3 Master Zhongxian Wu (2008) *Vital Breath of the Dao: Chinese Shamanic Tiger Qigong—Laohu Gong*. London: Singing Dragon.

4 The DiTianSui 滴天髓, or “One Drop of Heavenly Marrow,” is a Chinese astrology classic written by Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE) Yijing Master JingTu 京圖.

you can get a small taste of just how much information can be gleaned from the BaZi. If the bug catches, you even may find yourself devoted to cultivating the true art of Chinese astrology, which is of course the masterful skill of interpreting the chart, and is the subject of another much more complicated and yet-to-be-written book.

Things you will need for each chart:

- ✓ A willing participant (it is only polite to ask permission before you start delving into someone's personal life) and their precise birth information
- ✓ Pen(cil) and paper
- ✓ A notebook, preferably with dividers, for working the maths exercises
- ✓ Grade-school-level arithmetic skills
- ✓ Fundamental BaZi calculation formulas—yearly, monthly, daily, and hourly pillars (see Appendix)
- ✓ Supplementary ShenSha calculation formulas (see Chapter 5 and Appendix)
- ✓ Heavenly Ring diagram (see Chapter 1)
- ✓ Earthly Ring diagram (see Chapter 1)
- ✓ Sexagenary Cycle Chart (see Chapter 1)
- ✓ JieQi Tables 1–12 (see Appendix)
- ✓ Using the Gregorian Calendar in Day Pillar Calculations table (see Chapter 1)