

### GUA QI

### 卦氣

### The hexagrams and the vital material force

I find really interesting the possibility to read Yijing according to seasonal changes. And facing to this interest, the 'discovery' of the *Guà qì* system, give me the occasion. Here is my little knowledge. [I apologize for my english language, my intention is to share, and to get corrections about -either on the article and its language-]

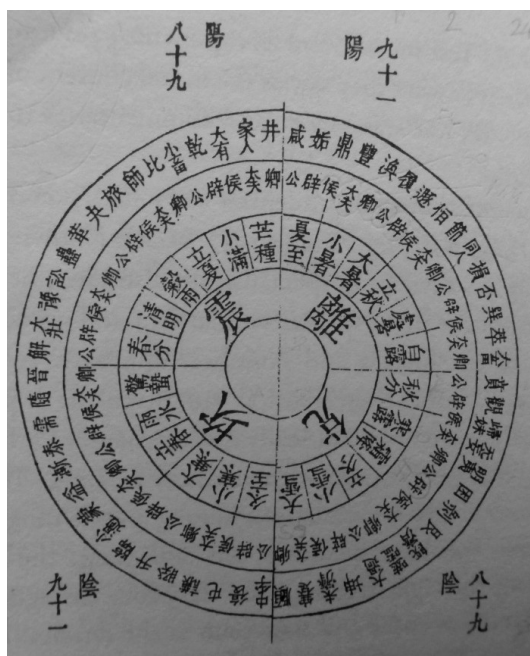


At page 80 of Richard Smith's "The I Ching – A Biography" there's an interesting 'Qing Dynasty' diagram<sup>1</sup> arranging the hexagrams on the principles of correlation with the so called 'solar terms', 節氣 *jié qì*<sup>2</sup>.

It correspond to the sequence of the hexagram depicted in Bent Nielsen's "A Companion to Yijing Numerology", p. 78, he call as "The Five Noble Ranks of The Yi wei ji lan tu"<sup>3</sup> [*Yì wéi jī lán tú Wú jué wèi guà*, 易緯稽覽圖五爵位卦].

I've searched a lot a diagram like this without great results on internet. This because the diagram Bent Nielsen give in his book (plate 8) is hardly readable.

Now that I've found it, I desire to share and describe what I've understood.



The hexagrams (clockwise) Zhen, Li, Dui and Kan, [四正卦 *sì zhèng guà*, the four principal hexagrams] «located in the innermost circle, are correlated with the four compass points and the four season [respectively: east, south, west, north; spring, summer, autumn, winter].»

The twenty-four lines of the *sì zhēng guà* are correlated (from the bottom) with the twenty-four 'solar terms' (the second ring from the middle) and 'govern' each solar terms.

As indicated in note 2, starting with vernal equinox, here are the chinese characters reproduced in the Qing diagram and the correlations with the lines of the four hexagrams (correlations attributed in the *Yì wěi jī lǎn tú* from another Apocripha, *the Yì wěi shì lèi móu*):

ve	bc	cr	sc	cf	ce	ss	mh	gh	ac	eh	wd	ae	cd	f	wc	ls	hs	ws	mc	sc	sc	ss	iw
春分	清明	穀雨	立夏	小滿	芒種	夏至	小暑	大暑	立秋	處暑	白露	秋分	寒露	霜降	立冬	小雪	大雪	冬至	小寒	大寒	立春	雨水	驚蟄
1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Zhen 51						Li 30						Dui 58						Kan 29					

tab.1 [solar terms abbreviated]

Each solar term is 15 days in length and it is divided in three 5-days periods [候 hòu] so to form a sub-cycle of three periods in each solar term and seventy-two periods [七十二候 qī shí èr hòu] in the 360 'canonical' division of the year. To each of these 5-days periods in the *Guà qì* system correspond a hexagram or a part of a hexagram.

I.e.:

vernal equinox (ve) - 春分			bright & clear (bc)- 清明		
40 解	34 大壯	16 豫	16 豫	6 訟	18 蠱

tab.2

Hexagrams dominates affairs beginning in each of these sub-sets.

The *Yì wěi jī lǎn tú* give the following titles to the individual hexagrams within each group i.e.: 40 – the Duke; 34 – sovereign (in Nielsen it is 'Son of Heaven'); 16 – the (feudal) lords; 6 – (great) officials; 18 – (lower/nine) ministers.

This is the sequence of 'five noble ranks' we can see in the third ring of the diagram.

So, the 60 hexagrams on the external ring -represented with their 'name' [卦名 guà míng]- are divided into this (cyclical) 'five noble ranks', starting from Zhen/vernal equinox:

three dukes 三公	sovereign 辟	feudal lords 諸侯	great officials 大夫	nine ministers 九卿
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tab.3

Here, once again, table 2 rearranged with 'ranks':

40 解	34 大壯	16 豫	16 豫	6 訟	18 蠱
公	辟	侯	侯	夫	卿
vernal equinox - 春分			bright & clear - 清明		

tab.4

Now pay attention to the table below, built like Nielsen one, organizing the whole relation with months and 'branches' too.

M.	branch	solar terms	feudal lords	great officials	nine ministers	three dukes	son of Heaven
1	寅	SC-SS	62	4	42	53	11
2	卯	IW-VE	5	17	35	40	34
3	辰	BC-CR	16	6	18	49	43
4	巳	SC-CF	56	7	8	9	1
5	午	CE-SS	14	37	48	31	44
6	未	MH-GH	50	55	59	10	33
7	申	AC-EH	32	60	13	41	12
8	酉	WD-AE	57	45	26	22	20
9	戌	CD-F	54	25	36	47	23
10	亥	WC-LS	52	63	21	28	2
11	子	HS-WS	64	39	27	61	24
12	丑	MC-SC	3	15	38	46	19

tab. 5

As you can see, in the table above, the sequence of the 'solar terms' and ranks are different, but this sequence is so arranged also for a better hexagram line identifying as I point afterwards.

First hexagrams (or part of them as indicated above) of each solar terms are those of the 'three dukes' (for major terms) and upper trigrams of 'feudal lords' (minor terms) columns.

They correspond to the first five days of the solar term. They are known as 始卦 *shǐ guà*.

The middle hexagrams are those of 'great officials' and the 'sovereign' (son of Heaven) columns. They correspond to the second five-days division of the solar term. They are known as 中卦 *zhōng guà*.

The last hexagrams are those of 'nine ministers' and the lower trigrams of the 'feudal lords' columns. They correspond to the last and third five-days division of the solar term. They are known as 終卦 *zhōng guà*.

'Sovereign' column is what is known also as 'the waning and waxing hexagrams' [消息卦 *xiāo xī guà*]. They are connected each with the proper solar month and each of their lines is connected again with the 5-days sections (this is not represented in the Qing diagram) of two solar terms.

As rulers of the month to which they are attached, each 'sovereign' line 'govern' the solar terms of the months section.

Moving from Nielsen arrangement:

Hexagram n°11 – 'sovereign' of first month:

M.	solar terms	feudal lords	'ruling' line	great officials	'ruling' line	nine ministers	'ruling' line	three dukes	'ruling' line	sovereign	'ruling' line
1	SC - SS	62 outer	11.1	4	11.2	42	11.3	53	11.4	11	11.5
		62 inner									
2	IW - VE	5 outer									
		5 inner	11.6								

tab. 6

Till now we have seen five kind of 'time' relations:

1. The *sì zhēng guà* as a whole and the 'Season';
2. Lines of the *sì zhēng guà* and a solar term;
3. Single hexagrams and *qī shí èr hòu*;
4. The 'sovereign' hexagram and the solar month;
5. Lines of the 'sovereign' and *qī shí èr hòu*;

I need to call this list **'TERS'**

Really useful now is the method to identify a line of a hexagram with a day of the month.

Bent Nielsen create a table as below:

hex. lines	feudal lords	great officials	nine ministers	three dukes	Son of Heaven
6	26	27	28	29	30
5	21	22	23	24	25
4	16	17	18	19	20
3	11	12	13	14	15
2	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	2	3	4	5

tab. 7

Italic numbers refers to the day in the month.

The problems with this last procedure, on which I haven't find solutions, are: a) days here are counted in horizontal way, without taking care of correspondences with the 'vertical' progression of solar terms throughout the hexagram, as seen above; b) day-count start from the first line of Feudal Lords hexagrams which not correspond to the beginning of solar term (I remember the latter start with the superior trigram of Feudal Lords hexagrams); c) I treat it as a solar-based table but...

The difficult about this system seems to me that it is based on the solar month, and not on the lunar month. That's means that 'months' here, have differents points of beginning from which of 陰曆 yīn lì, the lunar calendar.

You can see the above differences, represented in follows 'Hong Kong Observatory' tables:

A) their Gregorian-Lunar Calendar [Conversion Table](#)

B) [Monthly almanac](#), with useful and specific info.

A) i.e.: while the first lunar month, start on 23.1.2012, *new moon*, first solar month, start on 4.2.2012, in correspondence with the minor solar term called '*Spring commences*'.

As you can see, in table 5, Spring Commences – Spring Showers, are connected with the first month.<sup>4</sup>

Cause I finished to 'write' today, 26 november 2012, I make an exemple about a lecture of this 'seasonal changing time':

This date is in the 10<sup>th</sup> solar month. It is its 19<sup>th</sup> day.

So month section is the 10<sup>th</sup> (table 5).

The ruler of the 10<sup>th</sup> month is hexagram n.2, 坤 Kūn. (point 4. list TERS)

As 19<sup>th</sup> day, its correspondent line is 28.4 (tab. 7 and tab.5).

As 19<sup>th</sup> day of 10<sup>th</sup> month, it is also the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the major solar term called 'light snow' (LS):

M.	solar terms	<i>feudal lords</i>	<i>great officials</i>	<i>nine ministers</i>	<i>three dukes</i>	<i>son of Heaven</i>
10	WC - LS	52	63	21	28	2

Each major solar term of the month start in 'three dukes' column.

So, as 4<sup>th</sup> day, it's in the first period of 5-days , where hexagrams are called 始卦 *shǐ guà*. Here it correspond to 'three dukes' column, Hexagram n.28. This is the relation between single hexagrams and *qī shí èr hòu*.(point 3 list TERS).

In respect of the relation between lines of the 'sovereign' and *qī shí èr hòu* (point 5 list TERS), 4<sup>th</sup> line of Kūn is selected.

Last connection, (point 1 and 2, list TERS): the *sì zhēng guà* as a whole and the 'Season': DUI, N°58, (west), Autumn; Lines of the *sì zhēng guà* and the solar term (as a whole): 58.5, linked with 'Light Snow' [LS].

26.12.2012

...solar connections...:

58 (season)

2 (month)

58.5 (solar term)

28 + 2.4

(5day division of the solar term)

28.4

(line of the day)

Naturally what you have just read is my and only understanding about this system.

There isn't truth here.

notes:

1. Smith give no further information about this manuscript.
2. The 24 solar terms is a gross name of the system that comprises of 12 major solar terms and 12 minor solar terms interlaced with each other. Starting from "vernal equinox", the 24 solar terms are:

Major solar term	Vernal Equinox		Corn Rain		Corn Forms		Summer Solstice	
Minor solar term		Bright and Clear		Summer Commences		Corn on Ear		Moderate Heat
Sun's longitude	0 deg.	15 deg.	30 deg.	45 deg.	60 deg.	75 deg.	90 deg.	105 deg.
Major solar term	Great Heat		End of Heat		Autumnal Equinox		Frost	
Minor solar term		Autumn Commences		White Dew		Cold Dew		Winter Commences
Sun's longitude	120 deg.	135 deg.	150 deg.	165 deg.	180 deg.	195 deg.	210 deg.	225 deg.
Major solar term	Light Snow		Winter Solstice		Severe Cold		Spring Showers	
Minor solar term		Heavy Snow		Moderate Cold		Spring Commences		Insects Waken
Sun's longitude	240 deg.	255 deg.	270 deg.	285 deg.	300 deg.	315 deg.	330 deg.	345 deg.

Each major solar term falls on one of the 12 lunar months designated by the 12 earthly branches. from [HKObservatory](#)

3. *Yì wěi jī lǎn tú*, one of the eight surviving Apocrypha of the Changes «These texts were part of a larger body of literature which was used for political purposes during the Eastern Han (25-220) and the following centuries[...] A great variety of topics, in the *Yì wěi jī lǎn tú*, related to divination and various correlations of the hexagrams with directions, numbers, etc. is discussed to determine the fate of dynasties.»

4. You can make use of the HKO A) table, simply by putting months' numbers near solar term cell, on the right: you have to start with the 'first' month by as said, Spring Commences – Spring showers, and 12<sup>th</sup> month on the 2013 conversion table cell of the solar terms, called 'Moderated cold – severe cold'. Solar months commence ever in 'minor terms'.

#### Bibliography

- Bent Nielsen, *A companion to Yijing*, Routledge Curzon;
- Richard Smith, *The I Ching – A biography*, Princeton University Press;
- Fung Yu Lan, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol.2, Princeton University Press;
- Bradford Hatcher, *Yijing word by word*, vol.2, hermetica.info.