

The Eight Houses

A preliminary survey

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Introduction

At the end of Wilhelm's Yijing there is an appendix with the name 'The hexagrams arranged by Houses'. Ever since I was introduced to the Yijing this system had my interest. Where did it come from, what was its purpose, who designed it? For years I could not find any information about it. But in 1996 I ran into the dissertation of Paul George Fendos, *Fei Chih's place in the development of "I Ching" studies*, and there it was: a basic introduction to the Eight Houses. To him I owe great debt. In the years that followed I collected more information about the Eight Houses, part which can be found in this article, part which will be added later. Consider this article as an intro to the system of the Eight Houses. This system, known as *bā gōng* 八宮, which translates better as 'Eight Palaces', consists of eight groups of each eight hexagrams. The system itself contains several sub-systems, which provide material for use in divination. This article deals with the technical contents of the Eight Palaces system; it mentions the system and its sub-systems, but doesn't give information on how to use these systems, because that is beyond my knowledge at this time.

The designer: Jīng Fáng 京房

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

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

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

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

^b Omens in the nature of "When locusts swarm, when walls collapse, this means a king who doesn't care about virtue, or subjects who want to rebel".

Chronologically, the *Jīng Fáng Yì Chuán* appears to be older than the *Jīng-shì Yì Chuán*. The *Han Shu* dates from the first century. This implies that the *Jīng Fáng Yì Chuán* quotes found in it probably date around or before that time. As mentioned above, the earliest reference to the *Jīng-shì Yì Chuán* goes back only to the Song dynasty. This suggests that the *Jīng-shì Yì Chuán* was compiled sometime before the Song dynasty, perhaps as late as the Tang dynasty.

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

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

Jīng Fáng the Younger, style *Jūnmíng* 君明, of Dongjun, had changed his surname from *Lǐ* 李 to *Jīng* after consultation of the pitch-pipes (*Lǜ* 律). He specialized in what was perhaps a somewhat exceptional type of interpretation of the *Changes* (*Yì* 易), his predecessors and contemporaries being largely concerned with textual exegesis, while he applied that esoteric work to events of natural, human and dynastic history whether of the past or the present. As an early advocate of regular means of examining the qualities of officials he courted opposition from a number of men in high places, falling a victim to their animosities.

Jīng Fáng adopted the interpretative methods of his teacher *Jiāo Yánshòu* 焦延壽, but the claim that these could be traced back to *Mèng Xǐ* 孟喜 was denied by some of *Mèng Xǐ*'s own pupils. He explained unusual phenomena and disastrous events in terms of the hexagrams, applied such principles to contemporary problems and took climatic conditions as indicators of the future.

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

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

memorial in which he invoked climatic changes to show how Yuándì had been open to deception. In a further submission he referred to certain hexagrams in protest against attempts made to frustrate his direct communication with the throne.

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

Little is known about the first Jīng Fáng:

Jīng Fáng the Elder had been trained in the *Changes* (*Yi* 易) by Yáng Hé of Zichuan. As Grand Counsellor of the Palace (*Tàizhōng Dàfū* 太中大夫) he had been the instructor of Liángqiū Hè 梁丘賀 and was appointed Governor (*Tàishǒu*) of Qì jun.³

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

Jīng Fáng's is the name associated with the earliest appearance of numerous other explanatory and integrative devices, among them the systematic application of a hexagram's "nuclear trigrams (hùtǐ 互體 or zhōngyáo 中爻)" – lines two through four and three through five separately considered – to expound the hexagram's verbal properties; the "Eight Palaces (*bā gōng* 八宮)" system of arranging hexagrams (...); and incorporation of the Five Phases (*wǔxíng* 五行), the "heavenly stems (*tiāngān* 天干)", and the "earthly branches (*dìzhī* 地支)" designations to amplify the Change's linear figures in what is called the "*nàjiǎ* 納甲" theory.⁴

From Meng Xi's effort to correlate hexagrams and natural phenomena it is said that Jīng Fáng developed the concept of "twelve accumulation and dispersion hexagrams (*shí'èr xiāo-xī guà* 十二消息卦)", which assigns that number of hexagrams to the twelve months and became stock-in-trade for exegetes thenceforward. Beginning with the hexagram RETURN (hex. 24 ䷿) at approximately the winter solstice, the twelve accumulation and dispersion hexagrams present a graphic illustration of the ascent of *yang qi* over the first six months and its displacement by *yin qi* during the remainder of the year: ䷿ ䷗ ䷘ ䷙ ䷚ ䷛ ䷜ ䷝ ䷞ ䷟ ䷠ ䷡.⁵

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

The system

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

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

Father	1st	2nd	3rd	Mother	1st	2nd	3rd
	Sons				Daughters		

Table 1. King Wen's sequence of the trigrams

We will maintain this sequence here.

	<i>gōng guà</i> 宮卦	<i>yí shì guà</i> 一世卦	<i>èr shì guà</i> 二世卦	<i>sān shì guà</i> 三世卦	<i>sì shì guà</i> 四世卦	<i>wǔ shì guà</i> 五世卦	<i>yóu hún</i> 遊魂	<i>guī hún</i> 歸魂
The Palace of Qián 乾								
	1	44	33	12	20	23	35	14
The Palace of Zhèn 震								
	51	16	40	32	46	48	28	17
The Palace of Kǎn 坎								
	29	60	3	63	49	55	36	7
The Palace of Gèn 艮								
	52	22	26	41	38	10	61	53
The Palace of Kūn 坤								
	2	24	19	11	34	43	5	8
The Palace of Xùn 巽								
	57	9	37	42	25	21	27	18
The Palace of Lí 離								
	30	56	50	64	4	59	6	13
The Palace of Duì 兌								
	58	47	45	31	39	15	62	54

Table 2. The Eight Palaces

Every Palace begins with one of the main hexagrams (1 ☰, 2 ☷, 29 ☵, 30 ☲, 51 ☳, 52 ☶, 57 ☴ and 58 ☱); the first hexagram is called *gōng guà* 宮卦 'Palace Hexagram' or *chún guà* 純卦 'Pure Hexagram'. In later centuries it is also called *shǒu guà* 首卦 'head hexagram'.

The names of the hexagrams

Within each Palace every hexagram has a name:

- The first hexagram is called ... *gōng* ... 宮, with ... being the name of the first hexagram in the Palace.
- The second hexagram is called *yí shì guà* 一世卦, 'first generation hexagram'
- The third is called *èr shì guà* 二世卦, 'second generation hexagram'

- The fourth is called *sān shì guà* 三世卦, 'third generation hexagram'
- The fifth is called *sì shì guà* 四世卦, 'fourth generation hexagram'
- The sixth is called *wǔ shì guà* 五世卦, 'fifth generation hexagram'
- The seventh hexagram is called *yóu hún* 遊魂, 'wandering soul'
- The eighth hexagram is called *guī hún* 歸魂, 'returning soul'.

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

The *yóu hún* 遊魂 and the *guī hún* 歸魂

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

The soul in Chinese society

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

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

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

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

The *yáng* spirit of the sun is the *hún*,
 The *yīn* spirit of the moon is the *pò*,
 The *hún* and *pò* join together
 And link in accord to set up home.⁷

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

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

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

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

Except for 回煞 *huī shà*, 'the return of the soul, which is said to take place several days after death', and 回西方 *huí xī fāng*, 'to return to the west - to die', I could not find similar words or phrases using *huí* or *fù*. Therefore I assume that a *guī hún* is a soul that has, despite some effort, not returned to its body and that the person may be pronounced dead.

There is not much to say about *yóu* 遊 (Mathews 7524), except that it is often exchanged with *yóu* 游 (Mathews 7522); both mean 'to wander, to travel'. Maybe the *yóu hún* is the condition of the soul just before it is irreversibly detached from his body, wandering disorientated, not knowing which way to go.

These are just speculations, and I am sure there are sources which deal with this matter far better than here. However, I do believe that the words *yóu hún* and *guī hún* are important to grasp the original meaning of the Eight Palaces.

Jou Tsung Hwa and Miki Shima

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

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

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

<i>Qúihún</i>	<i>Pure</i>	<i>Yóuhùn</i>
 8	 2	 5
 7	 29	 36
 14	 1	 35
 13	 30	 6
 17	 51	 28
 18	 57	 27
 53	 52	 61
 54	 58	 62

Table 3. Jou Tsung Hwa's *Quihun* and *Youhun*

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

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

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

And, at hexagram 35 :

Jìn or *Advancing* is a *Yóuhún* hexagram of *Dáyóu* [14] or great possession. If a patient consults *Yìjīng* and gets *Jìn*, he is in a very serious condition.¹¹

At more hexagrams he warns of the dangers of *guihún* and *youhún*.

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

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

The Generation Line: *shì yáo* 世爻

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

Line relationships: *shì yīng* 世應

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

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

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

- *Yuánshì* is the lowest rank, and means nothing else than 'administrator in service'.
- *Dàfū* is the highest noble of the court, they have a rank in nobility and a position in court; in later time the nobility aspect disappears.
- *Sān gōng* is the collective name for the three highest ministers who assist a sovereign.
- *Zhūhóu* is the name for all feudal princes, those who stood a step lower than the Emperor, who is designated by the name

- *Tiānzǐ*, the Son of Heaven. Above the Emperor we find his ancestors, who were honoured in the
- *Zōngmiào*, the royal ancestral temple.

Fendos gives an example which shows how Jīng Fáng applied *shì yīng* in combination with these names:

The *shì yáo* of [the hexagram *Kan* ䷜] stands in the position of the ancestral temple. It resides in a yin position. It is adjacent to line 5. It is complete in the way of *Kan*. It is far from disaster and harm. The three nobles reside in [the position of] response. They are also yin and dark...¹³

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

The *shì yīng* rule is mentioned in Sherril and Chu's *An Anthology of Yijing*, where it is used for, as they call it, 'advanced divination'. Here they call the *shì yáo* the 'self' line, and the *yīng yáo* the 'other'. They make no mention of the different names of the lines as Jīng Fáng used them.¹⁴

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

The Palace of Qián 乾								
	1	44	33	12	20	23	35	14
The Palace of Zhèn 震								
	51	16	40	32	46	48	28	17
The Palace of Kǎn 坎								
	29	60	3	63	49	55	36	7
The Palace of Gèn 艮								
	52	22	26	41	38	10	61	53
The Palace of Kūn 坤								
	2	24	19	11	34	43	5	8
The Palace of Xùn 巽								
	57	9	37	42	25	21	27	18
The Palace of Lí 離								
	30	56	50	64	4	59	6	13
The Palace of Duì 兌								
	58	47	45	31	39	15	62	54

Table 4. *Shì* and *yīng* lines

Hidden hexagrams: *fēifú* 飛伏

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

1. The hidden hexagram is always one of the Palace Hexagrams (*gōng guà*, 1 ☰, 2 ☷, 29 ☵, 30 ☲, 51 ☳, 52 ☱, 57 ☴ or 58 ☶).
2. The hidden hexagram of a Palace Hexagram is always the Palace Hexagram with the opposite polarity.
3. The hidden hexagrams of a *yí shì guà*, *èr shì guà*, and *sān shì guà* (see p. 5) are obtained by doubling the lower trigram of the hexagram.
4. The hidden hexagrams of a *sì shì guà* and *wǔ shì guà* are obtained by doubling the upper trigram of the hexagram.
5. A *yóu hún* hexagram has the same hidden hexagram as the *wǔ shì guà* in the same Palace.
6. A *guī hún* has the same hidden hexagram as the Palace Hexagram in the same Palace does.

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

	<i>gōng guà</i> 宮卦	<i>yí shì guà</i> 一世卦	<i>èr shì guà</i> 二世卦	<i>sān shì guà</i> 三世卦	<i>sì shì guà</i> 四世卦	<i>wǔ shì guà</i> 五世卦	<i>yóu hún</i> 遊魂	<i>guī hún</i> 歸魂
The Palace of Qián 乾								
	1	44	33	12	20	23	35	14
The Palace of Zhèn 震								
	51	16	40	32	46	48	28	17
The Palace of Kǎn 坎								
	29	60	3	63	49	55	36	7
The Palace of Gèn 艮								
	52	22	26	41	38	10	61	53
The Palace of Kūn 坤								
	2	24	19	11	34	43	5	8
The Palace of Xùn 巽								
	57	9	37	42	25	21	27	18

	<i>gōng guà</i> 宮卦	<i>yí shì guà</i> 一世卦	<i>Èr shì guà</i> 二世卦	<i>sān shì guà</i> 三世卦	<i>sì shì guà</i> 四世卦	<i>wǔ shì guà</i> 五世卦	<i>yóu hún</i> 遊魂	<i>guī hún</i> 歸魂
The Palace of Lí 離								
	30	56	50	64	4	59	6	13
The Palace of Dui 兌								
	58	47	45	31	39	15	62	54

Table 5. Hidden hexagrams

Just as with the *shì yáo*, Jīng Fáng uses the hidden hexagram to explain the significance of a hexagram obtained through divination.

Stems, Branches and Elements

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

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

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

Table 6. The Ten Stems

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

Table 7. The Twelve Branches

E.	土	tǔ
M.	金	jīn
Wa.	水	shuǐ
Wo.	木	mù
F.	火	huǒ

Table 8. The Five Phases

Jīng Fáng links them to the lines of the Pure Hexagrams as follows:

Line ↓	 1 M 金	 51 Wo 木	 29 Wa 水	 52 E 土	 2 E 土	 57 Wo 木	 30 F 火	 58 M 金	
6	I 11 壬戌 E 土	G 11 庚戌 E 土	E 1 戊子 Wa 水	C 3 丙寅 Wo 木	J 10 癸酉 M 金	H 4 辛卯 Wo 木	F 6 己巳 F 火	D 8 丁未 E 土	stem branch 干支 Phase 行
5	I 9 壬申 M 金	G 9 庚申 M 金	E 11 戊戌 E 土	C 1 丙子 Wa 水	J 12 癸亥 Wa 水	H 6 辛巳 F 火	F 8 己未 E 土	D 10 丁酉 M 金	
4	I 7 壬午 F 火	G 7 庚午 F 火	E 9 戊申 M 金	C 11 丙戌 E 土	J 2 癸丑 E 土	H 8 辛未 E 土	F 10 己酉 M 金	D 12 丁亥 Wa 水	
3	A 5 甲辰 E 土	G 5 庚辰 E 土	E 7 戊午 F 火	C 9 丙申 M 金	B 4 乙卯 Wo 木	H 10 辛酉 M 金	F 11 己亥 Wa 水	D 2 丁丑 E 土	
2	A 3 甲寅 Wo 木	G 3 庚寅 Wo 木	E 5 戊辰 E 土	C 7 丙午 F 火	B 6 乙巳 F 火	H 12 辛亥 Wa 水	F 2 己丑 E 土	D 4 丁卯 Wo 木	
1	A 1 甲子 Wa 水	G 1 庚子 Wa 水	E 3 戊寅 Wo 木	C 5 丙辰 E 土	B 8 乙未 E 土	H 2 辛丑 E 土	F 4 己卯 Wo 木	D 6 丁巳 F 火	

Table 9. Stems, Branches and Phases associations with the lines of the Pure Hexagrams

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

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

 需	6	^{E 1} 戊子 Wa 水
	5	^{E 11} 戊戌 E 土
	4	^{E 9} 戊申 M 金
	3	^{A 5} 甲辰 E 土
	2	^{A 3} 甲寅 Wo 木
	1	^{A 1} 甲子 Wa 水

The *liùqīn* 六親 Six Relationships

Every Phase stems from another Phase:

- Wood gives birth to Fire,
- Fire gives birth to Earth,
- Earth gives birth to Metal,
- Metal gives birth to Water, and
- Water gives birth to Wood.



Also a Phase suppresses another Phase:

- Wood suppresses Earth,
- Earth suppresses Water,
- Water suppresses Fire,
- Fire suppresses Metal, and
- Metal suppresses Wood.

From this are the *liùqīn* 六親, the Six Relationships are derived:

- *fùmǔ* 父母, 'Parents'
- *xiōngdì* 兄弟, 'Brothers'
- *zǐsūn* 子孫, 'Descendants'
- *qīcái* 妻財, 'Wife and Wealth'
- *guānguǐ* 官鬼, 'Officials and Ghosts'.

These titles are applied to the six lines of a hexagram. As shown above, every line in a hexagram has a Phase assigned to it.

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

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

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

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

***Wén Wáng bāguà* 文王八卦 divination**

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

Hidden hexagrams in *Wén Wáng bāguà*

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

Let's take hexagram 44 as an example. Hexagram 44 belongs to the Palace of Qian 乾.

<i>Line Phases & Relationships in the original hexagram</i>			<i>Line Phases & Relationships in the Palace Hexagram</i>		
 44	E 土	6. 父母 Parents	 1	E 土	6. 父母 Parents
	M 金	5. 兄弟 Brothers		M 金	5. 兄弟 Brothers
	F 火	4. 官鬼 Officials and Ghosts		F 火	4. 官鬼 Officials and Ghosts
	M 金	3. 兄弟 Brothers		E 土	3. 父母 Parents
	Wa 水	2. 子孫 Descendants		Wo 木	2. 妻財 <u>Wife and Wealth</u>
	E 土	1. 父母 Parents		Wa 水	1. 子孫 Descendants
妻財 <i>Wife and Wealth is missing</i>			The 2 nd line is 妻財 <i>Wife and Wealth</i>		
The 2 nd line of 1 is the Hidden Spirit					
The 2 nd line of 44 is the Flying Spirit					

The Duànyì-tiānjī 斷易天機

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

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

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

Another interesting feature of the DYTJ is the fact that the hexagrams are arranged in the sequence of the Eight Palaces.

雷出於地開蟄
鼓翼天地順
動日時不忒
先王制禮殷
薦崇德九事
無疑上悅懌

雷地豫
震木 一世外
現卦
評曰 豫者
悅也

震上地下
六親
○煖土
○申庚
○金庚
○火卯
○木巳
○火未
○土

應
世

五月卦
伏水
子庚
冬凶

飛土
未乙
春平

此卦諸葛孔明討南蠻卜得
之便知必勝也

解曰 兩重山也乃出
官人在中
一綠一馬 乃祿馬
運動也 金
銀數錠錢一堆者 乃夏獲
錢鈔无
數也 占者得之
求才 遇貴之兆



鳳凰生雛之象
萬物發生之象

- a. the upper and lower trigram
- b. 'six relationships', below it the Stem, Branch and Phase of every line
- c. the lines - •• for a yin line, • for a yang line, and the 'self' 世 and 'other' 應 lines marked
- d. the relation for each line (see b.)
- e. *fei* 飛 Stem, Branch and Phase
- f. the month this hexagram belongs to
- g. *fu* 伏 Stem, Branch and Phase
- h. The favorability of this hexagram for each season (also in Jou, Tsung Hwa)
- i. explanation and interpretation of the picture (also in Jou, Tsung Hwa)
- j. 'image and symbol' (also in Jou, Tsung Hwa)

Hidden hexagrams in the Duànyì-tiānjī

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

For instance, at hexagram 19  we find:

伏	飛
巳乙	卯丁
火	木

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

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

	<i>gōng guà</i>	<i>yí shì guà</i>	<i>èr shì guà</i>	<i>sān shì guà</i>	<i>sì shì guà</i>	<i>wǔ shì guà</i>	<i>yóu hún</i>	<i>guī hún</i>
	宮卦	一世卦	二世卦	三世卦	四世卦	五世卦	遊魂	歸魂
The Palace of Qián 乾 								
	1	44	33	12	20	23	35	14
The Palace of Zhèn 震 								
	51	16	40	32	46	48	28	17
The Palace of Kǎn 坎 								
	29	60	3	63	49	55	36	7
The Palace of Gèn 艮 								
	52	22	26	41	38	10	61	53

	<i>gōng guà</i> 宮卦	<i>yí shì guà</i> 一世卦	<i>Èr shì guà</i> 二世卦	<i>sān shì guà</i> 三世卦	<i>sì shì guà</i> 四世卦	<i>wǔ shì guà</i> 五世卦	<i>yóu hún</i> 遊魂	<i>guī hún</i> 歸魂
The Palace of Kūn 坤								
	2	24	19	11	34	43	5	8
The Palace of Xùn 巽								
	57	9	37	42	25	21	27	18
The Palace of Lí 離								
	30	56	50	64	4	59	6	13
The Palace of Dui 兌								
	58	47	45	31	39	15	62	54

Table 10. Flying Hexagrams in the Duànyì-tiānjī

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

	<i>gōng guà</i> 宮卦	<i>yí shì guà</i> 一世卦	<i>Èr shì guà</i> 二世卦	<i>sān shì guà</i> 三世卦	<i>sì shì guà</i> 四世卦	<i>wǔ shì guà</i> 五世卦	<i>yóu hún</i> 遊魂	<i>guī hún</i> 歸魂
The Palace of Qián 乾								
	1	44	33	12	20	23	35	14
The Palace of Zhèn 震								
	51	16	40	32	46	48	28	17
The Palace of Kǎn 坎								
	29	60	3	63	49	55	36	7
The Palace of Gèn 艮								
	52	22	26	41	38	10	61	53

	<i>gōng guà</i> 宮卦	<i>yí shì guà</i> 一世卦	<i>Èr shì guà</i> 二世卦	<i>sān shì guà</i> 三世卦	<i>sì shì guà</i> 四世卦	<i>wǔ shì guà</i> 五世卦	<i>yóu hún</i> 遊魂	<i>guī hún</i> 歸魂
The Palace of Kūn 坤								
	2	24	19	11	34	43	5	8
The Palace of Xùn 巽								
	57	9	37	42	25	21	27	18
The Palace of Lí 離								
	30	56	50	64	4	59	6	13
The Palace of Dui 兌								
	58	47	45	31	39	15	62	54

Table 11. Hidden hexagrams in the Duànyì-tiānjī

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

More hypotheses

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

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

The hypothesis used on other hexagrams

The principle of the progressive changes in each Palace can also be applied with any hexagram as a starting point, sometimes giving remarkable results. Suppose a country is in the situation of hexagram 12, 'Stagnation' ䷋. The people are dissatisfied, starting to protest, the dissatisfaction moves upwards, the emperor is overthrown and the country comes at peace again. The result: hexagram 35, 'Progress' ䷗. Another example is hexagram 47, 'Oppression' ䷌. This ends in hexagram 40, 'Liberation' ䷌. A country which is in a state of 54 ䷊, a hexagram whose text sounds quite negative, ends in 58 ䷋.

These are some of the examples I found quite striking. Of course not all hexagrams give remarkable results. There are also hexagrams which, when changed, don't give a positive result. Maybe not every revolution changes things for the better. Except hexagram 5 ䷎, maybe this is because a country in a state of Waiting isn't very healthy.

Conclusion

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

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Notes

¹ Fendos, *Fei Chih*, p. 301 n. 26

² Loewe, Michael; *A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han & Xin Periods (221 BC – AD 24)*; p. 199-200

³ *id.*; p. 199

⁴ Schulz, Larry James; Lai Chih-Te, (1525-1604) and the phenomenology of the “Classic of Change”(I Ching); p. 16

⁵ *id.*; p. 14

⁶ J.C. Cooper, *Chinese Alchemy*, p. 82-83

⁷ Richard Bertschinger, *The Secret of Everlasting Live*; p. 75

⁸ Michael Loewe, *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death*; p. 115-116

⁹ Jou Tsung Hwa, *The Tao of I Ching - Way to divination*; p. 135-136

¹⁰ *id.*; p. 193

¹¹ *id.*; p. 265

¹² Miki Shima, *The Medical I Ching*; p. 25-26

¹³ Fendos, *Fei Chih*; p. 356-357

¹⁴ W.A. Sherrill and W.K. Chu, *An Anthology of I Ching*, p. 39