

# Bagua Zhang

Baguazhang is based on the theory of the Bagua (Eight Trigrams), whose source was the Yi Jing (Book of Changes). It would therefore be wise to first learn about this ancient book to gain a clear picture of how Baguazhang is related to the Buagua both in its theory and applications. It is impossible to explain the entire Yi Jing theory in this short article. After all, the Chinese people have studied and applied it for more than four thousand years. However, our aim is not to explain the Yi Jing and its uses, but rather to merely demonstrate the link between Baguazhan and the Bagua.

Hopefully, an understanding of this will enable the reader to grasp the root and essence of Baguazhan practice.

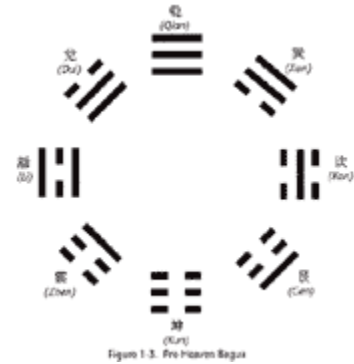


Figure 1-3. The Eight Trigrams Bagua

It is said that the Bagua was first formulated in China by Fu Xi (also called Bao Xi) during The Age of the Five Rulers (2852 B.C.). Later, the Yi Jing was explained by the first ruler of Zhou, Wen Wang (1122 B.C.), in his book called Yi Xi Ci (Yi's Related Metrical Composition) or Yi Da Zhuan (Great Biography of Yi), the first written explanation of the relationship between the Yi Jing's Bagua and nature. This book is also commonly called Zhou Yi (Zhou's Book of Changes).

In this book it states: "Ancestor Bao Xi (i.e., Fu Xi) as a king under the heavens, looked upward to observe the phases of the heavens. He looked downward to perceive the rules of the earth. He viewed the inhabiting birds and animal and their connection with the earth. Close adopt our bodies and far adopt various objects (i.e., he carefully observed our body's change, which is near, and closely inspected various natural phenomenon, which are far away from us, in order to figure out the rules or patterns of nature). He then began to create the Bagua, which is to be used to collaborate the decency of the divine enlightenment and to be used to classify the effects of ten thousand objects (i.e., the Bagua he created, could be used to draw the relationship between the heavenly nature and the millions of objects)". The Yi Jing is actually a scientific treatise based on detailed observations and careful contemplations, which produced an understanding of the patterns and rules of nature. Since nature is always repeating itself, it is possible through careful observation to deduce the rules of the natural patterns.



Figure 1-4. Yin and Yang derived from Taiji (Lai's Taiji Diagram)

The Zhou Yi says: "There is a Taiji (extremity) in the Yi (i.e., Yi Jing). It produces Two Poles (Liang Yi, i.e., Yin and Yang). Two Poles yield Four Phases (Si Xiang). Four Phases generate Eight Trigrams (Bagua). It was believed that Taiji was the root and foundation of the universe. In the Xingyiquan martial style there is song about Taiji: "Taiji was originally misty and turbid, no shape, no Yi (i.e., intention of change). But there is one Qi within. (When) this

Qi circulates in the universe, all places are reached.

Living things then originated. Named 'One Qi', it is also called heaven and the earth began to divide. Since then, Yin and Yang were distinguished. This concept of how the Two Poles derive from the Taiji was later expressed in the diagram by Lai Zhi-De (1525 - 1604 A.D.). The Two Poles are used to represent opposites such as heaven and earth, or any other pair of relative opposites.

The Four Phases are represented by Metal, Wood, Water, and Fire. They also assume the manifestation of four strengths: Greater Yang (Taiyang), Lesser Yang (Shaoyang), Greater Yin (Taiyin), and Lesser Yin (Shaoyin). The four Phases yield the Eight Trigrams: Qian (Heaven), Kun (Earth), Zhen (Thunder), Xun (Wind), Kan (Water), Li (Fire), Gen (Mountain), and Dui (Lake, Ocean). The Zhou Yi also represented the above derivation with symbols, using a straight line (Yang Yao) to represent the Yang phase, and a broken line (Yin Yao) to represent the Yin phase. The Four Phases are then expressed as follows:

The Bagua is a theory (expressed in a diagram) which was used by the ancient Chinese to analyze directions, locations, causes and effects, and all the natural changes of the universe. Since nature always repeats

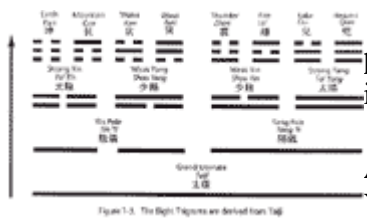


Figure 1-3. The Eight Trigrams are derived from Taiji

itself, the Chinese believe that Bagua theory can be used to predict natural disasters, a country's destiny, or even an individual's fortune.

According to the Yi Jing, natural universal energy (Qi) is Yin, while the manifestation of this energy is Yang. These manifestations, whether in objects such as plants and animals, or in occurrences such as wind, earthquakes, or snow, are all produced by the universal Qi. Therefore, in order to comprehend the natural predilections of living things and forces, we must first study and understand natural Qi. Once we understand natural Qi, we can bring our lives into harmony with it. This will also enable us to stay healthy and even lengthen our lives.

As martial artists, if we understand and follow the natural patterns of the Qi circulating in our bodies and around us in nature, we will be able to manifest our own Qi as strength more efficiently and powerfully. If you truly understand this natural theory, then you have grasped the key to the Dao.

By [Grandmaster Shou-Yu Liang](#)