

THE CHINESE SCIENCE OF FATE-CALCULATION

by

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"Fate-calculation" is the literal translation of the Chinese term *t'uei-ming* 推命. It is also called *lu-ming* 祿命, which means "official emolument and limit of life", because it is supposed to be an art to forecast the official rank one will get and how long one will live. It is one branch of Chinese fate-telling.

It is a common belief of some old peoples that the heavenly bodies are of influence over the destinies of human beings. There is no doubt the Chinese fate-calculation took its root in this conception, but it grew up in the field of the doctrine of *yin-yang* and the 5 elements, and consequently it became a science quite different from astrology.

The doctrine of the 5 elements is of great importance in Chinese folklore. Nearly everywhere we can find its application. The present paper is the first attempt of the author to investigate its manifestations in the various aspects of Chinese life.

I. HISTORY OF CHINESE FATE-CALCULATION

1. The Origin

Some scholars, past and present, have given their respective answers as to when the Chinese fate-calculation system originated. Most

* The author is indebted to Mr. Li Hsin-wu 李鑫午, an assistant of the Department of Sociology of the Fu-jen University, for the explanation of some difficult points in the books of Chinese fate-calculation.

of them are inclined to push its origin to a very remote period, but their arguments are not conclusive. First, Lü Ts'ai 呂才 of the T'ang dynasty said that the fate-calculation idea had been very flourishing during the West Han period¹. He pointed out that Sung Chung 宋忠 and Chia I 賈誼 at the beginning of the Hans ridiculed the deceit of fate-tellers and that Wang Ch'ung 王充 during the East Han period expounded the theory of physiognomy. In fact what Sung Chung and Chia I ridiculed was fate-telling in the general meaning of the word; it cannot prove the existence of the fate-calculation based on the principles of the 5 elements in the Han dynasty. In Wang Ch'ung's *Lun Heng* 論衡 the problem of fate is surely much discussed and physiognomy is often referred to but fate-calculation is never mentioned. Contrary to the idea of Lü Ts'ai, this fact can be taken as negative evidence of the existence of fate-calculation in the Han dynasty. If it had existed, Wang Ch'ung would have mentioned it in his discussions.

Secondly, Ch'ao Kung-wu 晁公武 of the Sung dynasty pushed the origin to a more ancient period². He pointed out as argument that the names of the 5 elements and those of the heavenly stems had existed at the times of the Hsia and Shang dynasties and that Chêng Hsüan 鄭玄 of the Han dynasty in his commentary to the *Shih Ching* mentioned the auspiciousness or un auspiciousness of the six things, viz. the years, seasons, months, days, stars and lunar conjunctions. There is no doubt that the 10 stems and 12 branches originated very early, and the doctrine of the 5 elements arose, though comparatively later, not later than the period of the Warring States. But their existence cannot prove that they were used then for fate-calculation. What Chêng Hsüan says can only be taken as evidence of the existence of the idea that one's fate, good or bad, is connected with the time when one is born. It cannot prove the existence of the method of fate-calculation.

Thirdly, Sung Lien 宋濂, a scholar of the Ming dynasty, wrote an essay, *Discussions on Fate-telling* 祿命辨³; he copied all that Ch'ao Kung-wu had said and did not attribute the origin of the method of fate-calculation to any definite time.

Lastly, Wu Chin-fang 吳震方⁴, a scholar of the Ch'ing dynasty, contrary to the above-mentioned three, dated the origin to too late a period. According to him Chinese fate-calculation was invented by Li Hsü-chung 李虛中 of the T'ang dynasty. The scholar Chao I 趙翼⁵, a

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- 1) Chiu T'ang Shu 舊唐書, chüan 79.
 - 2) Chün-chai Tu-shu Chih 郡齋讀書志, chüan 14.
 - 3) Sung Hsüeh-shih Wen Chi 宋學士文集, chüan 16.
 - 4) Tu-shu Chih-i 讀書質疑, in the Shuo-ling 說鈴.
 - 5) Hai-yü Ts'ung K'ao 陔餘叢考, chüan 34.

little later, criticized Wu Chin-fang, pointing out that the method of fate-calculation developed to a very complicated system in the time of Li Hsü-chung but it was not invented by him. Prof. Têng Chih-ch'êng 鄧之誠⁶ of the Yenching University has held the same opinion as Wu Chin-fang and says that Hsü-chung was the *tzü* of Li Mi-ch'ien 李彌乾. In fact Li Mi-ch'ien was a Buddhist astronomer and was not one and the same person as the famous fate-calculator Li Hsü-chung.

Surely the belief in fate existed in China from very early times⁷. On one hand it was believed that fate was determined or given by Heaven; on the other hand that one's fate, good or bad, was connected with the time, auspicious or inauspicious, in which one was born. From the *Shih Ching* we can quote a few lines expressing this idea:

"O Heaven who gave me birth!

Why was it such an inauspicious time?"⁸

"I was born at an inauspicious time.

It happened that Heaven was in great anger."⁹

But it was in the Han dynasty that the problem of fate was most discussed by scholars. The prevailing theory of that time was the doctrine of the three kinds of fate 三命說 advanced by Confucianists. According to it there are three kinds of fate: 1) The normal fate 正命, that is also called great fate 大命, fate of longevity 壽命 or fate received (from Heaven) 受命. 2) The fate following behaviour 隨命. It means that if one behaves well, good luck and happiness will come; otherwise misfortune must arrive. 3) The third kind includes those who meet with great disasters or misfortunes, although they show good behaviours. It is called fate suffered 遭命. In such a classification, the second and third kind of fate are in fact exceptions from fate in the real sense of the word. Such a doctrine seems to have originated in an atmosphere of extreme belief in fate. It was an antithesis to the thought of the time.

The belief in fate, especially the belief in the connection between fate and the time of birth, was only the ideological background of the origin of fate-calculation. The center of fate-calculation is the time in which one is born as designated by the system of the 10 heavenly stems and 12 earthly branches. Therefore in order to know its origin we must first make an inquiry into the development of the system.

6) Ku-tung Suo Chi 骨董瑣記, chüan 5. p. 22.

7) The etymological evolution of the character ming 命 in ancient times is discussed in detail by Fu Ssü-nien 傅斯年 in his *Hsing Ming Ku Hsün Pien-chêng* 性命古訓辨證, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1940.

8) Shih Ching, Hsiao-ya, Hsiao-pien 小牟.

9) Shih Ching, Ta-ya, Jou-sang 柔桑.

According to Ts'ai Yung's 蔡邕 *Yüeh-ling Chang-chü* 月令章句, the invention of this system is due to Ta Nao 大撓, a minister of Huang-ti, who "studied the properties of the 5 elements and calculated the revolving motions of the constellation (Ursa Major)", and thereupon devised the 10 stems to designate the days and the 12 branches to designate the months¹⁰. Huang-ti is a mythological emperor; the invention of the stems and branches by his minister is of course not believable. But it is probably true that the 10 stems were originally names of a cycle of 10 days. The Yin people, as we can see in the oracle inscriptions, counted days by *hsün* 旬, i.e. a cycle of 10 days. In the *Tso Chuan* 左傳¹¹ it is also said that there were 10 suns in the sky; and an ancient legend says that Hou I 后羿, the famous archer, had shot down 9 suns and only one was left¹². The Chinese call the sun and the day by the same name. It may be because in ancient times the people counted days by ten and called them by ten different names, then they said there were ten suns in the sky. However, it must be in a very remote time that the 10 stems were used to denote the cycle of 10 days, because in the oracle inscriptions of the Yin period, the most ancient document preserved, the sexagenary cycle, which is formed by combining the 10 stems with the 12 branches, had been used in designating the days.

The 12 branches were originally called 12 *ch'en* 辰 or lunar conjunctions. They are equal in number to the 12 months of the year, therefore they are used to designate the months. The Chinese hours are also designated by the 12 branches; and most recent of all, the day was divided into 12 hours designated by the branches. According to Ku Yèn-wu 顧炎武¹³, it is first found in the annotation by Tu Yü 杜預 of the Chin dynasty to the *Tso Chuan*.

The year is generally designated by a stem-branch. According to Liu Shu 劉樞¹⁴ and Ku Yen-wu¹⁵ this began from the 5th year of Wang Mang (13 A.D.).

From the above consideration we see that the days were designated by the 60 stem-branches and the months by the 12 earthly branches from very early times, but that the designation of years by the stem-branches are comparatively later facts. The fate-calculators use the day, month and year, in which one is born, as designated by the stem-branches to represent one's fate. (At first the hour was not used.) And the stem-

10) Wu-hsing Ta-i, chapter I, section 2.

11) Chao-kung, 5th and 7th year.

12) Huai-nan Tzū 淮南子, Pien-ching Hsün 本經訓.

13) Jih-chih Lu 月知錄, chüan 20.

14) T'ung-chien Wai Chi 通鑑外紀, Preface to the Table of Contents.

15) Jih-chih Lu, chüan 20.

branch of the year is held to be more important than that of the day in the older system of fate-calculation. Hence, the origin of the Chinese fate-calculation cannot be very early. It cannot be earlier than the time when the years were first designated by the 60 stem-branches, viz. the period of Wang Mang. We have said, in the *Lun Heng*, a book written in the Later Han dynasty, the problem of fate is much discussed but fate-calculation is never mentioned.¹⁶ Moreover, the corresponding element of the stem-branch of the birth-year is taken as the most important factor in the fate-calculating.¹⁷ The system that each stem-branch has a corresponding element is not found in any book of the Han dynasty, though its invention is traditionally held to be due to Kuei-ku Tzū 鬼谷子, who is said to have lived in the Chou dynasty. The earliest book in which it is mentioned, as far as we know, was written by Kuan Lo 管輅 in the period of the Three Kingdoms¹⁸. Therefore, in most probability the fate-calculation originated in the later years of the Later Han dynasty.

2. Famous Fate-calculators before the T'ang Dynasty

The first expert fate-calculator we know in Chinese history is Kuan Lo. He was able to fore-tell that he would not live beyond 47 or 48 years. He said, "My fate is with *yin* 寅; I was born at night during a lunar eclipse. Heaven has a fixed number, which can be known; but the [common] people do not know it."¹⁹ We do not know how he calculated the limit of his life. His book is entitled *T'ien Yang Chiieh* 天陽訣. It is lost, but we find in the *Wu-Hsing T'ai* 五行大義 one sentence which might be quoted from it²⁰. It reads, "By the containing note 納音 (i.e. the element representing the stem-branch of one's birth-year) judge one's fate."²¹

In the time of the South and North States (420-589) fate-calculation was especially flourishing in North China. From the Dynastic Histories we can find the following fate-calculators:

T'ao Hung-ching 陶宏景, a Taoist, who wrote the *San-ming Ch'ao-lieh* 三命抄略 and the *San-ming Li-cheng Suan-ching* 三命立成算經²².

16) Cf. p.

17) Cf. p.

18) Cf. next section.

19) *San Kuo Chih* 三國志, chüan 29.

20) Chapter III, section 4.

21) About the containing note see page 292.

22) *Liang Shu* 梁書, chüan 51. His works are mentioned in the *T'ung Chih* 通志, I-wen Lüeh 藝文略.

Sun Sêng-hua 孫僧化, who wrote the *Lu-ming Shu* 祿命書, 2 *chüan*²³.

Hsü Tsun 許遵, an expert diviner and fate-teller in the period of the Emperor Shen-wu 神武帝 of Ch'i. He was able to fore-tell that he would not become rich and noble, nor suffer an untimely death²⁴.

Wei Ning 魏寧, high adviser of Emperor Wu-ch'êng 武成帝 of Ch'i. Once the Emperor gave him the day, month and year of his birth but said that they were those of another man, and asked him to tell the fate of the man. He said, "This man is rich and noble to the utmost extent, but he will enter his grave this year." In point of fact the Emperor died that year²⁵.

In the Sui dynasty Hsiao Chi 蕭吉, *tzü* Wen-hsiu 文休, was a scholar of wide knowledge and expert in fate-calculation. In the 4th year of K'ai-huang 開皇 (A.D. 594) he presented a memorial to the Emperor to praise him according to the principles of fate-calculation. He wrote the *Wu-hsing Ta-i*, 5 *chüan*, and some other works²⁶. Another expert fate-calculator of the Sui dynasty was Lin Hsiao-kung 臨孝恭, whose work on fate-calculation was entitled *Lu-ming Shu* 祿命書, 20 *chüan*²⁷.

All the books of fate-calculation before the T'ang dynasty have been lost except Hsiao Chi's *Wu-hsing Ta-i*, which chiefly deals with the general principles of the 5 elements but only occasionally with fate-calculation. But in the *Chiu T'ang Shu* 舊唐書 we can find a paragraph of Lü Ts'ai's criticism on fate-calculation.²⁸ It makes reference several times to the *Lu-ming Shu*, which is probably a book written by Sun Sêng-hua or by Lin Hsiao-kung. From it we see that fate-calculation had developed to a very complicated stage before the T'angs and it was not different in essentials from the calculation of the later day schools.

3. Li Hsü-chung

The famous fate-calculators of the T'ang dynasty were Monk I-Hsing 僧一行, Sang Tao-mao 桑道茂 and Li Hsü-chung. Monk I-hsing, whose family name was Chang, a native of Ch'ang-lo 昌樂, Wei-chou 魏州, wrote the *Lu-ming Shih* 祿命詩, 1 *chüan*. Sang Tao-mao

23) Pei Shih 北史, *chüan* 89. His work is mentioned in the Hsin T'ang Shu 新唐書, I-wen Chih.

24) Pei Shih, *chüan* 89.

25) *ibid.*

26) *ibid.*

27) *ibid.*

28) *chüan* 79.

was a famous diviner and fate-teller in Ch'ang-an 安長 in the period of Ta-lin 大麟 (767-779); he wrote the *Lu-ming Yao-chieh* 祿命要訣, 1 *chüan*. Their books are now lost²⁹.

The most famous fate-calculator of the T'ang dynasty was Li Hsü-chung, *tzü* Ch'ang-jung 常容, who got the *chin-shih* degree in the 11th year of Chêng-yüan 貞元 (795) and was an imperial censor in the period of Yüan-ho 元和 (827-835). It is said in his *Epitaph* written by Han Yü 韓愈, a famous essayist of the T'ang dynasty, that he had deep knowledge in every subject, especially in the doctrine of the 5 elements. From the reciprocal actions of the stems and branches of the day, month and year in which one was born he considered and inferred the length or shortness, dignity or humbleness of one's life, and foretold that a certain time or year would be favourable or unfavourable to one; then one tried to use the favourable and avoid the unfavourable. He never failed. But his method was so complicated that no one could follow it.³⁰ According to the *San-ming T'ung-huei* 三命通會 he learned the method of fate-calculation from Li Mi 李泌 and Li Mi from Monk I-hsing³¹.

Li Hsü-chung's *Ming Shu* 李虛中命書 is the oldest book of fate-calculation existing now. Its text is now ascribed to Kuei-ku Tzū but only its notes to Li Hsü-chung. According to the *Ssü-ku Ch'uan Shu Tsung Mu* 四庫全書總目 it probably was originally a book of the T'ang dynasty, but it seems to have interpolations from later times, because the term "four pillars" 四柱³², which originated in the Sung dynasty, and some official titles of the Sung are found in the second part; it is ascribed to Kuei-ku Tzū in order to dazzle the reader³³. It may be true that the *Ming Shu* was originally written by Li Hsü-chung. Of all the bibliographies compiled under the Sung no one assigns its authorship to Kuei-ku Tzū but all to Li Hsü-chung³⁴.

29) Chiu T'ang Shu, *chüan* 191. Their works are mentioned in the T'ung Chih, I-wen Lüeh.

30) Wu-pai-chia Chu Han Ch'ang-li Wen-chi 五百家注韓昌黎文集, *chüan* 28.

31) *chüan* 3, Tzū-p'ing Shuo-pien 子平說辨.

32) Cf. p. 294.

33) *chüan* 109, tzü-pu 子部, shu-shu 數術 2.

34) In the bibliographies compiled in the Sung dynasty Li Hsü-chung's *Ming Shu* is mentioned under different titles; In the I-wen Chih of the Sung Shih 宋史藝文志 it is mentioned as Li Hsü-chung Min Shu Ko-chü 李虛中命書格局, 2 *chüan*; in the I-wen Lüeh of the T'ung Chih it is entitled Li Hsü-chung Ming Shu 李虛中命術, 1 *chüan*, and Ming Shu Pu-i 命書補遺, 1 *chüan*; in Ch'ao Kung-wu's Tu-shu Chih 晁公武讀書志 it is Li Hsü-chung's Ming Shu 李虛中命書 3 *chüan*.

Li Hsü-chung held a prominent position in the history of Chinese fate-calculation. It is a pity that the present edition of the *Ming Shu*³⁵ is incomplete and with later interpolations. We have no way of reconstructing his method. According to the *San-ming T'ung-huei* the ancient fate-calculators used the stem-branch of the year in which one was born, but Li Hsü-chung used that of one's birth-day, as the leading factor, and thus he made a change in the method of fate-calculation³⁶. However, as the *Ming Shu* shows, he belonged to the old school.

4. Hsü Tzū-p'ing and Hsü Ta-shêng

Another prominent fate-calculator after Li Hsü-chung was Hsü Tzū-p'ing 徐子平. About his life we know very little. It is said that his name was Hsü Chü-i 徐居易, Tzū-p'ing was his *tzū*, and he was a hermit in Hua-shan 華山 in the period of the Five Dynasties (908-960)³⁷. He is so famous in fate-calculating that his name has become a common term for fate-calculation from the Ming dynasty. The *Chi-niao P'ien* 己癮編 says, "At the present time there are different schools of fate-tellers: the school of Tzū-p'ing, the school of the five stars, etc. The scholars and officials are glad to consult with the Tzū-p'ing school, because it is reasonable and often hits right in fore-telling one's life, rich or poor, honourable or humble. It is said that in the Sung dynasty a man, whose name was Hsü Tzū-p'ing, was expert in fate-calculating; the fate-calculators of later generations who followed his method were simply called Tzū-p'ing."³⁸ The invention of the new method of fate-calculation is generally ascribed to him.

Hsü Tzū-p'ing wrote a Commentary to the *Lao-lu Tzū San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu* 洛子三命消息賦, a book of fate-calculation prevailing very much in the Sung dynasty. The author of this book is unknown. The *Chih-chai Shu-lu Chieh-t'i* 直齋書錄解題 says about it, "The present book is considered by the fate-calculators as their proper canon. Its style is vulgar. Probably it is written by a man who for money calculates fate for people in the street."³⁹ The *Sshü-k'u Ch'uan Shu Tsung Mu* says, "This books is first mentioned in the *I-wen Chih* 藝文志 of the *Sung Shih* 宋史, and according to Ch'ao Kung-wu's *Tu-shu Chih*

35) The present editions, the *Mo-hai Chin Hu* 墨海金龜 edition and the *Shou-shan-ko Ts'ung-shu* 守山閣叢書 edition, of the *Ming Shu* are reprints of the *Ssü-k'u Ch'uan Shu* 四庫全書 edition, which copied the text from the *Yung-lo Ta Tien* 永樂大典. It is composed of 3 chüan.

36) chüan 3, Tzū-p'ing Shuo-pien.

37) Liu Yü 劉玉, *Chi-niao P'ien*, in the *Shuo Fu* 說郛, chiu 17.

38) *ibid.*

39) chüan 12.

it began to circulate in the period of Hsüan-ho 宣和 and Chien-yen 建炎 (1119-1131). Hence we consider it was written by a man of the North Sung dynasty".⁴⁰

The *San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu* had, besides Hsü Tzū-p'ing, four commentators in the Sung dynasty: 1) Li T'ung 李全 from I-ch'un 宜春 (Kiangsi), who wrote his commentary in the 4th year of Chia-yu 嘉祐 (1037). 2) Wang T'ing-Kuang 王廷光, whose book was offered to the emperor in the 5th year of Hsüan-ho (1123). 3) Monk T'an-Ying 曇瑩, native of Chia-ho 嘉禾 (Chekiang), and a monk at the temple T'uei-chu An 退居菴 in Lin-an 臨安. He had deep knowledge in the theory of the *I Ching* and he interpreted the *San-min Hsiao-hsi Fu* from the point of view of this theory. He finished his commentary in the 1st year of Chien-yen (1127). 4) Tung-fang Ming 東方明, whose commentary was entitled *San-ming Fu Shu* 三命賦疏.⁴¹

A similar book to the above is the *San-ming Chi-mi Fu* 三命指迷賦. Its author is also unknown; its commentary is said to have been added by Yao K'o 岳珂 of the Sung dynasty. According to the *Ssü-k'ü Ch'uan Shu Tsung Mu*,⁴² it is really a book written under the Sung, because it was quoted by some Yüan and Ming authors; but it is questionable to ascribe its comments to Yao K'o, though he was definitely a man who knew the method of fate-calculation. A third Sung dynasty book of fate-calculation that still exists is the *Yü-chao Ting Chin Ching* 玉照定真經, 1 *chüan*. It is said to have been written by Kuo P'u 郭璞, a scholar of the Chin dynasty and to have been commented on by Chang Yüng 張顥. In fact it is not mentioned in any bibliography compiled during the Sung but a few Yüan and Ming authors quoted it. Therefore the *Ssü-k'ü Ch'uan Shu Tsung Mu*⁴³ says that probably both the text and comments were written Chang Yüng, about whose life we know nothing.

A famous fate-calculator at the end of the Sung dynasty was Hsü Ta-shêng 徐大升, a native of Ch'ien-t'ang 錢塘. According to the *San-ming T'ung-huei*, after Hsü Tzū-p'ing an expert fate-calculator was named Ch'ung-hsü Tzū 冲虛子; he taught his method to Monk Tao-hung 道洪 and Tao-hung went to Ch'ien-t'ang and taught it to Hsü

40) *chüan* 109, *tzü-pu, shu-shu* 2.

41) A Sung edition of this book with the above four men's commentaries still exists. It is entitled *Hsin-pien Ssü-chia Chu-chieh Ching-chin Lo-lu Tzu Hsiao-hsi Fu* 新編四家註解經進路子消息賦. In the present paper this book is quoted as *San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu*.

42) *chüan* 109, *tzü-pu, shu-shu* 2.

43) *ibid.*

Ta-shêng⁴⁴. It is the method employed by the fate-calculators of the present time. The *San-ming T'ung-huei* ascribes the authorship of the *San-ming Yüan-yüan* 三命淵源 and the *Ting Chin Lun* 定真論 to Hsü Ta-shêng. But in the *Ssü-k'u Ch'uan Shu Tsung Mu*⁴⁵ a book entitled *Tzū-p'ing San-ming Yuan-yüan Chu* 子平三命淵源註, 1 *chüan*, is said to have been written by Hsü Tzū-p'ing and annotated by Li Ch'in-fu 李欽夫, a Taoist priest of the Yüan dynasty. This is probably the same book as the *San-ming Yüan-yüan* mentioned in the *San-ming T'ung-huei*, and probably the *T'ung-huei* is right, because if Hsü Tzū-p'ing had written such a book, some earlier bibliographies would have mentioned it. A book with a similar title, *Yüan-hai Tzū-p'ing* 淵海子平, which is the most popular book of fate-calculation at the present time, claims to be a book of Hsü Ta-shêng. Some chapters of it are noted "to be taken out of" or "to be the same as" the *Yüan-yüan*. In most probability this is the *San-ming Yüan-yüan* enlarged and re-edited by a Ming fate-calculator.

In the Ming dynasty no famous fate-calculator can be compared with Li Hsü-chung of T'ang and Hsü Tzū-p'ing of Sung. But a book on the method of fate-calculation, including nearly every detail of it, was written in the Ming dynasty by Wan Min-ying 萬民英. It is the *San-ming T'ung-huei*, 12 *chüan*. Since the Ming dynasty it has been considered as the encyclopedia of fate-calculation and was very popular.

II. THE DOCTRINE OF THE 5 ELEMENTS AND SYSTEM OF THE 10 STEMS AND 12 BRANCHES

Before we deal with the method of fate-calculation we must first explain the general principles of the 5 elements and their application to the 10 stems, 12 branches and 60 stem-branches. The doctrine of 5 elements was first systematically expounded and applied to the successive changes of dynasties in the history by Chou Yen 鄒衍, a scholar during the period of the Warring States.⁴⁶ Thence it was also applied to other phenomena. The two fundamental principles of the doctrine are:

1) The 5 elements overcome one another 五行相勝. The order is: water → fire → metal → wood → earth → [water]. This principle is later generally stated as follows: "the 5 elements destroy one another" 五行相尅.

2) The 5 elements produce one another 五行相生. The order is: wood → fire → earth → metal → water → [wood].

44) *chüan* 3, Tzū-p'ing Shuo-pien.

45) *chüan* 110, tzū-pu, shu-shu lei ts'un-mu.

46) Shih Chi 史記, *chüan* 74.

From the above two principles are derived two secondary principles:

3) The principle of control 相制. In the case that element A is destroyed by B but C destroys B, then it is said that C can control B and that A is not destroyed. This relation is shown below:

| | | | | | |
|-------|----------|--------|-------|----------|-----|
| Wood | destroys | earth; | metal | controls | it. |
| Metal | „ | wood; | fire | „ | „. |
| Fire | „ | metal; | water | „ | „. |
| Water | „ | fire; | earth | „ | „. |
| Earth | „ | water; | wood | „ | „. |

In this connection the controlling element is always produced by the element to be destroyed. According to some fate-calculators an element to be produced by another is said to be the offspring of the other. Hence the controlling element is the son of the destroyed and it can control the destroyer of its father. This is often compared to the fact that the son can take revenge for the father.

4) The principle of dissolution 相化. In the case that element A is destroyed by B but C produces A, then it is said that C can dissolve the destruction.

| | | | | | |
|-------|----------|--------|-------|-----------|-----|
| Wood | destroys | earth; | fire | dissolves | it. |
| Fire | „ | metal; | earth | „ | „. |
| Earth | „ | water; | metal | „ | „. |
| Metal | „ | wood; | water | „ | „. |
| Water | „ | fire; | wood | „ | „. |

Fire can produce earth, earth is increased, therefore wood cannot destroy it. The others are explained similarly⁴⁷.

The doctrine of the 5 elements was probably brought into connection with the 10 stems and 12 branches through its application to the changes of the weather in the course of the year. In ancient books we find this application in three different ways. Firstly, the year is divided into 5 equal parts, each consisting of 72 days and belonging to one element. From the day *chia-tzŭ* 甲子 after the winter solstice the element wood begins to govern for 72 days, then from the day *ping-tzŭ* 丙子 fire begins, from *wu-tzŭ* 戊子 earth, from *kêng-tzŭ* 庚子 metal and from *jen-tzŭ* 壬子 water⁴⁸. By such an application of the 5 elements according to the order of producing one another, as a result, the stems *chia*, *ping*, *wu*, *kêng* and *jen* are connected with the 5 elements. The other 5 stems, *i* 乙, *ting* 丁, *chi* 己, *hsin* 辛, and *kuei* 癸 might be inserted then accordingly into this arrangement.

47) Concerning the general principles of the 5 elements see Hsiao Chi's *Wu-hsing Ta-i*.

48) Kuan Tzŭ 管子, *Wu-hsing p'ien* 五行篇.

To apply the principle of the 5 elements to the course of the year as mentioned above is quite regular, but it does not correspond to the four seasons and 12 months. In order to adjust the arrangement the second and third way arose. The second way is: each season belongs to one element but the last month of summer, i.e. the 6th month, belongs by itself to one element. In spring the plants begin to grow, therefore spring is supposed to belong to the element wood; in summer weather is hot, therefore summer belongs to fire. According to the order of the 5 elements producing one another, after fire is earth and after earth is metal, but because in autumn the leaves fall from the trees and most vegetables die, it should belong to metal of which the cutting and killing instruments are made, therefore the last month of summer is put under the control of earth. The winter is considered to belong to water, only because it comes after autumn and water is next to metal in the order of production.⁴⁹ The third way is the same as the second, but, instead of the sixth month, the 18 days at the end of each season belong to earth.⁵⁰ We have said that from very early times the Chinese used the 12 branches to designate the 12 months. As a result of applying the principle of the 5 elements to the course of the year in the third way, the 12 branches were also brought into connection with the 5 elements. The corresponding relationship of the 5 elements with the 4 seasons, 12 months, 10 stems and 12 branches is shown below:⁵¹

Table I

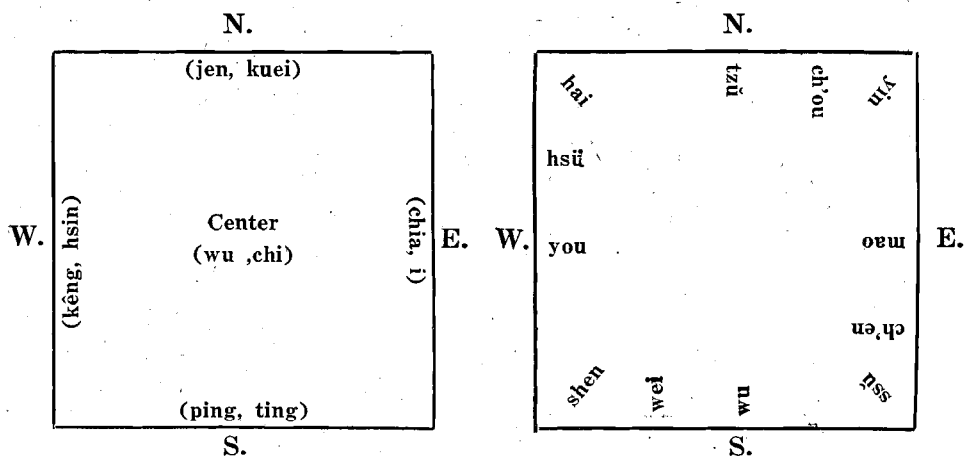
| 5 elements | 4 seasons 12 months | 10 stems | 12 branches |
|------------|------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| wood | spring (months 1-3) | chia 甲 i 乙 | yin 寅 mao 卯 |
| fire | summer (months 4-6) | ping 丙 ting 丁 | ssü 巳 wu 戊 |
| earth | the last 18 days of each season | wu 戊 chi 己 | ch'en 辰 wei 未 hsü 戌 ch'ou 丑 |
| metal | autumn (months 7-9) | kêng 庚 hsin 辛 | shen 申 you 酉 |
| water | winter (months 10-12) | jen 壬 kuei 癸 | hai 亥 tzü 子 |

49) Huai-nan Tzū, Shih-tso Hsün 時則訓.

50) Li Chi, Yüeh-ling 月令.

51) The corresponding relationship of the 5 elements with the 10 stems and 12 branches is formulated as follows in the Huai-nan Tzū, T'ien-wen Hsün 天文訓: 甲乙寅卯木也。丙巳丁午火也。戊己四季土也。庚辛申酉金也。壬癸亥子水也。

The doctrine of the 5 elements also includes the 5 points of the compass in its system. East belongs to wood, South to fire, Center to earth, West to metal and North to water. As soon as the 10 stems are connected respectively with the 5 elements, they are consequently also brought into connection with the 5 points. However, the 12 branches are only divided into 4 parts and connected with 4 points (no center). The connections of the 5 or 4 points with the 10 stems and 12 branches are shown below:



The stems and branches are originally only names and bear no meaning at all. But as soon as they are connected with the 5 elements, each is considered to have the same nature as the element with which it is related. The stem *chia*, for instance, is supposed to have the same nature as wood, and it is said in the terminology of the doctrine of the 5 elements that *chia* belongs to wood in nature. Similarly the stem *ping* is said to belong to fire. Furthermore, the stems and branches are considered to produce and destroy one another as the 5 elements. For instance, according to the principle of production, fire is produced by wood; then *chia* is supposed to be able to produce *ping*. Similarly the branch *ssü* which belongs to fire is supposed to destroy *shen* which belongs to metal. In the same way the principles of control and dissolution can be applied to the stems and branches.

Besides the four fundamental principles directly borrowed from the doctrine of the 5 elements, there are still some derivative principles.

1) The harmonies among stems 天干相合. It is shown in Table I that the 10 stems are grouped into 5 pairs, each pair belonging to one element. But of each pair the first stem is said to be a *yang* one and the second a *yin* one. A *yang* stem is considered as the husband of

the *yin* stem which, according to the principle of destruction, is destroyed by it. For example, *chia* is a *yang* stem, belonging to wood, and *chi* is a *yin* stem belonging to earth; wood destroys earth; then *chia* is the husband of *chi*. Husband and wife are harmonious. Similarly *i* is harmonious with *kêng*, *ping* with *hsin*, *ting* with *jen*, and *wu* with *kuei*.

2) The harmonies among branches. The 6 pairs of harmonious branches are formed according to the 12 divisions of the ecliptic. They are as follows: *Tzū* is harmonious with *ch'ou*, *yin* with *hai*, *mao* with *hsü*, *ch'en* with *you*, *wu* with *wei*, and *ssü* with *shen*. They are called the 6 harmonies of the branches 支元六合.

3) The 6 collisions of branches 六衝. This is formed according to the 12 points of the compass indicated by the 12 branches. The branches in opposition (in the diagram on page 15) collide with each other, viz. *tzū* with *wu*, *ch'ou* with *wei*, *yin* with *shen*, *mao* with *you*, *ch'en* with *hsü* and *ssü* with *hai*.

4) The 6 injuries of branches 六害. *Tzū* and *wei*, *ch'ou* and *wu*, *yin* and *ssü*, *mao* and *ch'en*, *shen* and *hai*, *you* and *hsü* injure each other. In fate-calculation harmony is good, injury is bad, and collision is sometimes good and sometimes bad.⁵²

By combining the 10 stems and 12 branches the Chinese sexagenary cycle is formed. Each combination of a stem and a branch (which is designated as stem-branch in the present article) has a corresponding element. This connection was made through the application of the principle of the 5 elements to the 5 musical notes 五音. There are 12 regulators of music 十二律, each containing 5 notes; altogether there are 60 notes. They are represented by the 60 stem-branches. Each of the 5 notes belongs to one element. Consequently, each of the 60 notes, and also each of the 60 combinations of stem and branch, belongs to one element. The element to which a stem-branch belongs is called the "containing note" 納音 of the stem-branch. Then each stem-branch is supposed to bear the same nature as its containing note and to have the power of producing or destroying another.

Of the 60 containing notes 12 belong to one and the same element, but they are said to bear different natures and are symbolized by different objects of the same kind. The 60 concrete objects symbolizing the 60 notes are called "symbols of the containing notes" 納音象. Traditionally the invention of these symbols is held to be due to Tung-fang Sho 東方朔 of the Han dynasty, but in truth it cannot be so early. As far as we know, one of them is mentioned in the *Ying Shih* 程史, a book of the Sung dynasty, and they are all mentioned for the first time

52) The explanation of all these principles is found in the Wu-hsing Ta-i.

53) chüan 15, Yang Ken I-ming 楊良議命.

in the *Ch'o-keng Lu* 輟耕錄⁵⁴ by T'ao Tsung-i 陶宗儀 at the end of the Yuans. In view of the fact that no book of fate-calculation of the Sung dynasty makes mention of them, it seems probable that they were invented in the last years of the Sung. The 60 containing notes and their symbols are as follows:

Table II

| stem-branches | containing notes | symbols |
|-----------------------|------------------|--|
| chia-tzũ i-ch'ou | metal | the gold in the sea 海中金 |
| jen-shen kuei-you | metal | the steel on the sword-blade 劍鋒金 |
| keng-shen hsin-ssũ | metal | the gold on the white candle 白蠟金 |
| chia-wu i-wei | metal | the gold in the sand 沙中金 |
| jen-yin kuei-mao | metal | the gold on the paper money 金箔金 |
| keng-hsũ hsin-hai | metal | the gold of the hairpin 釵釧金 |
| ping-yen ting-mao | fire | the fire in the stove 爐中火 |
| chia-hsũ i-hai | fire | the fire on the hill-top 山頭火 |
| wu-tzũ chi-ch'ou | fire | the thundering fire 霹靂火 |
| ping-shen ting-you | fire | the fire at the foot of a hill 山下火 |
| chia-shen i-ssũ | fire | the fire of a lamp under cover 覆燈火 |
| wu-wu chi-wei | fire | the heavenly fire 天上火 |
| wu-ch'en chi-ssũ | wood | the wood of a great forest 大林木 |
| jen-wu kuei-wei | wood | the willow wood 楊柳木 |
| keng-yin hsin-mao | wood | the wood of the pine or cypress 松柏木 |

54) chüan 20.

55) In his *Wu Tsa-tsu* 五雜俎, chüan 6.56) *Jih-chih Lu*, chüan 21.57) In the *T'ung-su Pien* 通俗編, chüan 10.

Table II (Continued)

| stem-branches | containing notes | symbols |
|------------------------|------------------|---|
| wu-hsü chi-hai | wood | the wood on a plain 平地木 |
| jen-tzū kuei-ch'ou | wood | the wood of the mulberry tree 桑柘木 |
| keng-shen hsin-you | wood | the wood of the pomegranate 石榴木 |
| keng-wu hsin-wei | earth | the wayside earth 路傍土 |
| wu-yin chi-mao | earth | the earth on the city-wall 城頭土 |
| ping-hsü ting-hai | earth | the earth on the roof of a house 屋上土 |
| keng-tzū hsin-ch'ou | earth | the earth on the wall 壁上土 |
| wu-shen chi-you | earth | the earth of the highway station 大驛土 |
| ping-ch'en ting-ssü | earth | the earth in the sands 沙中土 |
| ping-tzū ting-ch'ou | water | the brook water 澗下水 |
| chia-shen i-you | water | the spring water in a well 井泉水 |
| jen-ch'en kuei-ssü | water | the flowing water 長流水 |
| ping-wu ting-wei | water | the water of the heavenly river 天河水 |
| chia-yin i-mao | water | the water of a great stream 大溪水 |
| jen-hsü kuei-hai | water | the water of the sea 大海水 |

III. THE FOUR PILLARS AND FATAL PERIODS

The hour, day, month and year in which one is born are called the "four pillars" 四柱 of one's fate by the fate-calculators. Each of the four pillars is designated by a stem-branch, a combination of one heavenly stem and one earthly branch. Altogether the four pillars consist of eight characters, 4 stems and 4 branches. Therefore, they are also called "eight characters" 八字 and the art of fate-calculation is hence sometimes called "judgment of eight characters" 批八字.

Han Yü of the T'ang dynasty said that Li Hsü-chung used the stems and branches of the day, month and year in which one was born to judge one's fate. He did not mention the hour. Hence scholars of later times, such as Hsieh Chao-chih 謝肇淛⁵⁵, Ku Yen-wu⁵⁶, etc., said that Li Hsü-chung and his predecessors did not use the hour in fate-calculation. But Chai Hao 翟灝⁵⁷ pointed out that in the following line of a T'ang poem the term eight characters was found: 八字如相許. 終辭尺組尋. (If the eight characters permit, I will at last give up the pursuing of the one foot long ribbon of the seal). This line is quoted from a poem written to a Buddhist monk by Wu Jung 吳融⁵⁸. It may be that the term 'eight characters' used here was a term of Buddhism, nothing to do with fate-calculation, because in Buddhism the characters 生滅滅已 寂滅爲樂 are called 'eight characters'.⁵⁹ In another poem written to a monk by the same author the term is also found: 別來如夢亦如雲, 八字微言不復聞. (Since we parted, it is like a dream and a cloud; the delicate talks on Buddhism are heard no more.) It is definite that 八字微言 here means the delicate talks on Buddhism. Hence, what Ch'ai Hao says cannot prove the existence of the fate-calculating term 'eight characters' and the use of the hour in the calculation in the T'ang dynasty.

However, in the present edition of Li Hsü-chung's *Ming Shu* the hour, day, month and the month of pregnancy are called the four pillars,⁶⁰ and in the *San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu* and the *San-ming Chih-mi Fu* the month of pregnancy is also used as a factor in the calculation. The science of fate-calculation is also called *San-ming* or three fates 三命, which takes its origin from the classification of fate into three kinds in the Han dynasty, but some fate-calculators say that it means the three pillars, day, month and year. Furthermore, some calculators call the science "five fates" 五命, because they include the hour and the month of pregnancy.⁶⁰

It seems probable that in the earlier period the fate-calculators worked with only the day, month and year, from the Sung dynasty they worked with the hour also and some even included the month of pregnancy, but after the Sung dynasty the latter was not considered so important.

As we have said, the Chinese generally designate the day and year by stem-branches, but the month and hour only by earthly branches.⁶¹ But the fate-calculators can easily know the stems of the month and hour

58) This poem is found in the *Ch'uan T'ang Shih* 全唐詩, chüan 25.

59) *San Chiao Chih-kuei* 三教指歸, chüan 2.

60) *Chun-chai Tu-shu Chih*, chüan 14.

61) In case the stem-branches of the birth day and year are unknown, they can be found in the *Wan Nien Li* 萬年曆 or Calendar of Ten Thousand Years.

according to two verses. These verses are said to be old verses even in the *San-ming T'ung-huei*⁶² of the Ming dynasty. The verse to know the stem of the month from that of the year is:

| | |
|---------|---------|
| 甲己之年丙作首 | 乙庚之歲戊爲頭 |
| 丙辛之歲尋庚上 | 丁壬壬位順行流 |
| 更有戊癸何處起 | 甲寅之上好追求 |

Explanation: In the Chinese calendar the first month is always designated by the branch *yin*, the second month by *mao*, and so on. According to the first sentence of this verse in the years of *chia* (*chia-tzū*, *chia-hsü*, *chia-shen*, etc.) or *chi* (*chi-ssü*, *chi-mao*, *chi-ch'ou*, etc.) the stem of the first month is *ping*, in other words, the stem-branch of the first month is *ping-yin*, and accordingly the second month *ting-mao*, and so on. The other sentences say that in the years of *i* or *kêng* the stem of the first month is *wu*, in the years of *ping* or *hsin* that of the first month is *kêng*, in the years of *ting* or *jen* that of the first month is *jen*, and in the years of *wu* or *kuei* that of the first month is *chia*.

The verse to know the stem of the hour from that of the day is:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| 甲己還作甲 | 乙庚丙作初 |
| 丙辛從戊起 | 丁壬庚子居 |
| 戊癸何方發 | 壬子是直途 |

Explanation: The Chinese divide the day into 12 hours (each equals two western hours) and the first hour 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. is always denoted by the branch *tzū*, the second by *ch'ou*, and so on. According to this verse, in the days of the stem *chia* or *chi* the stem of the first hour is also *chia*, in the days of *i* or *kêng* that of the first hour is *ping*; in the days of *ping* or *hsin* that of the first hour is *wu*; in the days of *ting* or *jen* that of the first hour is *kêng* and in the days of *wu* or *kuei* that of the first hour is *jen*.

The fate-calculators tell one's destiny using as a base, besides the four pillars, the decennial periods of fate known as *yün* 運. The character *yün* literally means revolution; it refers to the revolution of the sun along the ecliptic as the Chinese thinks. The ecliptic is divided into 12 divisions; one's life is compared to the ecliptic, its full number of years is supposed to be 120, and 10 years make one period.

62) *chüan* 2, *Lun Tun Yüeh Shih* 論通月時.

The fatal periods of one man are different from those of another; they are formed in the following way: For a man with a *yang* stem in his birth year or a woman with a *yin* stem, the number of days from the birth-day to the next monthly festival 月節⁶³ is divided by 3; the quotient is the number of years from which age he or she will begin the first decennial period of fate; the first period is represented by the stem-branch which, according to the sexagenary cycle, follows that of the birth-month. For example, a man is born in the hour *ssü* of the 24th day of the 12th month of the year *chia-tzū*. The first monthly festival after his birth is the beginning of spring in the hour *shen* of the 29th day of the same month. It is 5 days and 3 hours or 63 hours from his birth to the festival. $63 \div 3 = 21$. Every 3 years represents one year, then every 3 hours represents one month. 21 months makes one year and 9 months. Then the first fatal period of this man will begin when he is one year and 9 months old. (According to the Chinese reckoning of age he is said then to be three years old.) The stem-branch of his birth-month is *ting-ch'ou*, then his first decennial period of fate will be *wu-yin*, the second period *chi-mao*, and so on. For a man with a *yin* stem in his birth-year or a woman with a *yang* stem the method is a little different. The number of days from the birth-day to the last monthly festival is divided by 3; the quotient is the number of years from which age he or she will begin the first decennial period of fate, and it is represented by the stem-branch which, according to the order of the sexagenary cycle, comes before that of the birth-month. For example, a man is born in the 16th day of the 1st month of the year *i-ch'ou*. The monthly festival before his birth is the beginning of spring which occurs in the 1st day of the 1st month. It is 15 days from his birth-day to that festival. Then his first fatal period begins when he is 5 years old, and it is represented by *ting-ch'ou*, because his birth-month is *wu-yin*.⁶⁴

This method is devised probably on the basis of the comparison of one's life of 120 years to the 12 months. A decennial period is equal to one month and one year to 3 days. The Chinese thinks that a body should be in the womb for 10 full months, but in general it lasts only about 9 months, therefore the time from birth to the first festival is supposed to belong still to the time of being in the womb and the first decennial period of fate begins after the years in proportion to that time

63) Of the 24 festivals of the year 12 are called monthly festivals; each month has one. They are: Beginning of Spring; 立春, Waking of Insects 驚蟄, Ch'ing-ming 清明, Beginning of Summer 立夏, Bearded Grain 芒種, Slight Heat 小暑, Beginning of Autumn 立秋, White Dew 白露, Cold Dew 寒露, Beginning of Winter 立冬, Great Snow 大雪, Slight Cold 小寒.

64) For the method of forming one's decennial periods of fate see San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu, *chüan shang*, p. 2 or San-ming T'ung-huei, *chüan 2*, lun Ta-yün 論大運.

in the ratio of one year to 3 days. For the same reason the stem-branch of the first decennary is that which follows the stem-branch of the birth-month.

The decennial period of fate is called the "great fatal period" 大運 in contrast with the annual period of fate which is called the "small fatal period" 小運. The annual period of fate of a man begins at the first year with the stem-branch *ping-yin*, and proceeds according to the order of the sexagenary cycle; that of a woman begins at the first year with *jen-shen* and proceeds reversely. The annual period is not considered so important as the decennary.⁶⁵

The fate-calculators judge one's fate by one's 4 pillars and fatal periods. The 4 pillars forecast the destiny of the whole life but the fatal periods can modify it in the respective periods of years. The former are compared to the plants and the latter to the seasons. They say that a plant will flourish in a favourable season and will die in an unfavourable one, but, in the flourishing season, if it is a tree, it will have plenty of leaves and flowers, but, if a small herb, it cannot. Therefore, the 4 pillars are considered more important than the fatal periods.

In fate-calculation there are some general principles concerning the four pillars and the fatal periods. Here we shall explain only two important ones. The *San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu*⁶⁶ says that 'high' 崇 is precious and 'strange' 奇 is valuable. As to what is called 'high' the interpreters hold different ideas. According to Wang T'ing-kuang it means that "what is above produces what is below" 上生下. Concretely speaking, the element of year, according to the principle of production, produces that of the month, that of the month produces that of the day and that of the day produces that of the hour. According to Li T'ung it means that the element of the stem produces that of the branch. There are two groups of 'strange' stems; each consists of three stems and thus they are known as the 'three strange ones' 三奇: *i*, *ping*, *ting* and *chia*, *wu*, *k'eng*. In some later books the stems *jen*, *kuei*, *hsin* are also regarded as three strange ones.⁶⁷ A man in whose 8 characters one of the three groups of strange stems is found will get a high position and is, therefore, known as a noble. Besides these there are still some other rules such as the virtue of the heaven 天德, the virtue of the month 月德, etc., which are borrowed from Chinese astrology and beyond the scope of fate-calculation.⁶⁸

65) *San-ming T'ung-huei*, chüan 2, Lun Hsiao-yün 論小運.

66) *Hsiao-hsi Fu*, chüan shang, p. 7.

67) *San-ming T'ung-huei*, chüan 3, Lun San-ch'i 論三奇.

68) About the virtue of the heaven and the virtue of the month see *San-ming T'ung-huei*, chüan 3.

The fate-calculators may be divided into two groups according to how they use the 4 pillars. First, those who take the year as the chief factor and draw their conclusions from the reciprocal actions between it and the other three pillars. This method is used by fate-calculators of earlier times and it is generally called the old method 古法. Secondly, those who take the day as the chief factor. Their method is called the new or modern method 今法. It is used by the Hzū-p'ing school. These two methods will be explained in detail in the following chapters.

IV. THE OLD METHOD

The old method takes the birth year as the chief factor. In the fate-calculator's terminology the heavenly stem of the year is called the heavenly *yüan* 天元 or heavenly element, the earthly branch is called the earthly *yüan* 地元 and the containing note of the stem-branch is called the human *yüan* 人元. Together they are called the three *yüan* 三元⁶⁹. The heavenly *yüan* predicts the 'official emolument' 祿 of the man. In other words, the calculators judge from it whether the man will become a governmental official or not. The earthly *yüan* predicts the 'fate' 命 which signifies the limit of life. The human *yüan* predicts the 'body' 身 which signifies the character and ability of the man.

1. Birth and Death of the 5 Elements

In order to explain how the fate-calculators judge one's emolument, fate and body from the three *yüan*, we must first explain the birth and death of the 5 elements and that of the 10 stems in the course of the year. This is evolved from the relation between the 5 elements and the 4 seasons. According to Table I on page 290 each season belongs to one element. Conversely it is said that in each season one element is flourishing and then the 4 other elements appear in other four phases. Altogether in each season the 5 elements assume five different phases: to be flourishing 王, to help 相, to retire 休, to be imprisoned 囚 and to die 死. For example, in the spring the element wood is said to be flourishing. Fire is said to help wood, because, according to the principle of production, fire is produced by wood, fire is considered to be the son of wood and the son helps the father. Then water retires, because water produces wood and it is the father of wood; while the son is in vigour, the father retires. Metal destroys wood, but the fire which helps wood can destroy metal;

69) The designation of the 3 *yüan* varies in different books. The above system is that of Li Hsü-chung's *Ming Shu*, chüan chung, p. 5. The stem of the birth-year is always called the heavenly *yüan*, but in the *San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu* (chüan hsia p. 4, 9.) the branch is called the human *yüan* and the containing note is called the earthly *yüan*. But this variation does not change the whole system; they agree in assigning the functions of the branch and the containing note in the calculation.

therefore it is said that in spring metal is imprisoned. Wood destroys earth; while wood is flourishing earth dies⁷⁰. The phases of the 5 elements in the other seasons are explained similarly. They are shown in Table III.

Table III

| 4 seasons 5 phases 5 elements | spring | summer | 6th month | autumn | winter |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| wood | flourishes | retires | is imprisoned | dies | helps |
| fire | helps | flourishes | retires | is imprisoned | dies |
| water | retires | is imprisoned | dies | helps | flourishes |
| metal | is imprisoned | dies | helps | flourishes | retires |
| earth | dies | helps | flourishes | retires | is imprisoned |

It can be seen in the above table that each element has five phases in the year. The order is: to help, to be flourishing, to retire, to be imprisoned and at last to die. It seems that each element is supposed to be a man who lives his life in the four seasons. When he is young he can only help his father; then he grows up and flourishes; afterwards he retires and is imprisoned and at last dies. This idea is more concretely expressed in the 12 phases which the 5 elements assume in the course of the 12 months. The 12 phases are: to receive breath 受氣, to be in the womb 胎, to be nourished 養, to be born 生, to bathe 沐浴, to wear cap and girdle 冠帶, to become an official 臨官, to flourish 王, to become weak 衰, to get sick 病 and to die 死. To receive breath means to receive breath from the parents; it is the supposed beginning of a child in the womb. To be nourished means to be nourished in the womb. To bathe perhaps refers to a custom of washing a child three days after birth, and to wear cap and girdle refers to the old ceremony of capping 冠禮 which is held for a young man of twenty years old. For the other items no explanation is necessary. The 5 elements begin this cycle in different months. The 12 months are generally denoted by the 12 branches. Hence the fate-calculators generally do not say that a certain element assumes a certain phase in a certain month but at a certain branch. This is shown in Table IV.

Table IV is made according to the *Wu-hsing Ta-i* (Chapter IV), but the fate-calculators of later times changed it in some points⁷¹. First,

70) *Wu-hsing Ta-i*, chapter IV, Lun Ssü-shih Hsiu-wang 論四時休王.

71) *Yüan-hai Tzū-p'ing*, chüan 1.

Table IV

| 12 phases 5 elements | to receive breath | to be in the womb | to be nourish- ed | to be born | to bathe | to wear cap and girdle | to be- come an official | to flourish | to be- come weak | to get sick | to die | to be buried |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|--------|-----------------|
| wood | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei |
| fire | hai | tzü | ch'ou | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü |
| metal | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou |
| water | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou | yin | mao | ch'en |
| earth | hai | tzü | ch'ou | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei | shen | | you | ch'en |

according to this table the cycle begins with the receiving of breath, but according to some calculators of later times it begins with the item 'to be born', which is sometimes designated as 'to grow up' 長生 by them. Secondly, the item 'to be buried' is sometimes designated as 'to be stored up' 庫 and 'to receive breath' changes to 'to be extinct' 絕. Thirdly, according to later books the element earth lives its cycle of life in a different way from the above. They say that its cycle of life is the same as that of the element fire which produces earth. Table V is made according to the explanations of later fate-calculators.

Table V

| 12 phases 5 elements | to be born | to bathe | to wear cap and girdle | to be- come an official | to flourish | to be- come weak | to get sick | to die | to be buried | to be extinct | to be in the womb | to be nourish- ed |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|--------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| wood | hai | tzü | ch'ou | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü |
| fire | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou |
| water | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou | yin | mao | ch'en |
| earth | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei |
| metal | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou |

We have said in the last chapter that the 10 stems are grouped into 5 pairs; each pair belongs to one element and is supposed to have the same nature as that element. By combining this with Table V each stem is said to undergo the same changes through the course of 12 months as the element to which it belongs. In other words, each stem is compared to a man and is supposed to live its life from birth to death in the course of 12 months. But the two stems which belong to one element are not completely the same in nature. The first one belongs to the *yang* principle and the second belongs to the *yin* principle. According to the *yin-yang* theory, *yang* is contrary to *yin* in nature. Therefore, the *yang* stem is said to be born at the time when the *yin* stem is dead, and vice versa. Moreover, in the course of the 12 months the *yang* stem lives its life according to the natural order of the months (i.e. from 1st month to 12th month), while the *yin* stem reversely⁷². The birth and death of the 10 stems is shown in Table VI.

72) San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu, chüan shang, p. 1.

Table VI

| <i>12 Phases 10 stems</i> | to be born | to bathe | to wear cap and girdle | to be- come an official | to flourish | to be- come weak | to get sick | to die | to be buried | to be extinct | to be in the womb | to be nourish- ed |
|-------------------------------|---------------|----------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|--------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| chia | hai | tzü | ch'ou | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü |
| i | wu | ssü | ch'en | mao | yin | ch'ou | tzü | hai | hsü | you | shen | wei |
| ping | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou |
| ting | you | shen | wei | wu | ssü | ch'en | mao | yin | ch'ou | tzü | hai | hsü |
| wu | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou |
| chi | you | shen | wei | wu | ssü | ch'en | mao | yin | ch'ou | tzü | hai | hsü |
| keng | ssü | wu | wei | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou | yin | mao | ch'en |
| hsin | tzü | hai | hsü | you | shen | wei | wu | ssü | ch'en | mao | yin | ch'ou |
| jen | shen | you | hsü | hai | tzü | ch'ou | yin | mao | ch'en | ssü | wu | wei |
| kuei | mao | yin | ch'ou | tzü | hai | hsü | you | shen | wei | wu | ssü | ch'en |

2. The Official Emolument

Now we may return to our question as to how the fate-calculators judge one's fate from the three *yüan*. First, how they judge one's official emolument from the heavenly *yüan* or the heavenly stem of the birth-year. The rule is: The earthly branch at which, according to Table VI, the stem becomes an official, is its emolument⁷³. For example, if a man is born in the year *chia-tzū*, then the branch *yin* represents his emolument. If he is born in the first month, he is said to have emolument and to become a governmental official in the future, because the stem *chia* becomes official at *yin* and the first month is designated by *yin*. In the fate-calculator's usage it is said that the emolument of *chia* is at *yin* 甲祿在寅, the emolument of *i* is at *mao*, etc. In judging whether a man has emolument or not, the month is most important; it seems that most fate-calculators do not take the branch of the day and hour into consideration.

Besides the above rule there are some secondary rules. If a man is born in a month which is in order before the month of his emolument, he is said 'to be facing towards emolument' 向祿, that is also a prediction of his becoming honourable and rich in the future but it is not so good as to have the emolument. Contrarily, if the month in which one is born is in order after the month of emolument, one is said 'to have the emolument behind his back' 背祿, which is a bad indication⁷⁴. If one has in his eight characters both the branch before the emolument branch and that after it, this is called the 'emolument upheld' 拱祿 and is also a sign of becoming a high official⁷⁵. For example, for a man whose heavenly *yüan* is *chia*, *yin* is his emolument; if he is born in the month *ch'ou* (i.e. 12th month), he is facing towards his emolument; if in *mao* (i.e. 2nd month), he has his emolument behind him; if he has in his 8 characters both *ch'ou* and *mao*, then it is said that he has the upheld emolument. Moreover, the branch which destroys the emolument branch is a bad indication. For example, the branch *shen* destroys the emolument branch *yin* of *chia*. In such case, it is said that the emolument is destroyed 破祿⁷⁶.

Besides the emolument another factor which is called the school 學堂 is also connected with the heavenly *yüan* and may be dealt with here. The fate-calculators say that the branch at which the heavenly *yüan* grows up in Table VI is the school⁷⁷. It is an indication of the learning of the man. For example, for a man whose heavenly *yüan* is *chia*, *hai* is the

73) San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu, chüan shang, p. 1-2.

74) *ibid.* The order of the 12 branches are: *tzü*, *ch'ou*, *yin*, *mao*, *ch'en*, *ssü*, *wu*, *wei*, *shen*, *you*, *hsü*, *hai*.

75) San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu, chüan hsia, p. 13.

76) San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu, chüan shang, p. 1-2.

77) San-ming T'ung-huei, chüan 3, Lun Hsüeh-t'ang Tzü-kuan 論學堂詞館.

school; if it is found in his 8 characters, the calculators would say that he will be a scholar.

3. The Fate, Wealth and Horse

Secondly, we explain how the fate-calculators judge the fate 命 or limit of life from the earthly *yüan*. The element to which the earthly branch of the birth-year belongs is the representative of the fate. The calculators judge of it by the month in which one is born. If the element is flourishing in that month according to Table III, it signifies that the man will live a long life; on the contrary, if it retires or is imprisoned in that month, he will die prematurely⁷⁸.

Moreover, one's fate, long or short, is also determined by the reciprocal actions between the fate branch and the other branches in the 8 characters. The branches harmonious with it are good signs; those which collide with, injure or punish it, are bad ones⁷⁹. Of the harmonious branches one kind — the 6 harmonious branches — we have explained. There is still another kind which may be dealt with here. This kind is called the 3 harmonious branches 支元三合. Let us see Table V. The element wood is born at *hai*, flourishes at *mao* and is stored up at *wei*. These 3 branches, *hai*, *mao* and *wei*, are called the 3 harmonious branches of wood. Similarly, *yin*, *wu* and *hsü* are the 3 harmonious branches of fire; *ssü*, *you* and *ch'ou* are the 3 harmonious branches of metal; and *shen*, *tzü* and *ch'en* are the 3 harmonious branches of water. There are no harmonious branches of earth⁸⁰. The 6 collisions and 6 injuries of branches have been explained in Chapter III. The 3 punishments 三刑 are closely connected with the 3 harmonious branches. *Hai*, *mao*, *wei*, the 3 harmonious branches of wood, are said to be punished by *hai*, *tzü*, *ch'ou*. The 3 punishments are very difficult to explain. It is traditionally explained as follows: *Hai*, *tzü*, *ch'ou* are the 3 branches of the North; wood is produced by water and the North belongs to water; then North produces wood and is hence considered as the root of wood. The branches and leaves of a tree fall on its root when they are cut off. Therefore when the 3 harmonious branches of wood meet with the branches of the North, it is said that the former are punished. The 3 harmonious branches of water (*shen*, *tzü*, *ch'en*) are punished by *yin*, *mao*, *ch'en*, because most rivers in China flow from the West to the East; *yin*, *mao*, *ch'en* are the 3 branches of the East; the fate-calculators think that when the 3 branches of water meet with those of the East, it signifies that the former have come to their end. The 3 harmonious branches of fire are punished by *ssü*, *wu* and *wei*, the 3 branches of the South; and the 3 harmonious

78) San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu, chüan shang, p. 1-2.

79) *ibid.*

80) Wu-hsing Ta-i, chapter II.

branches of metal are punished by *shen*, *you* and *ssü*, the 3 branches of the West. The South belongs to fire; the West belongs to metal. The fire and metal do not move, even though they are ruined. Therefore, they are said to be punished when they meet with the branches of their respective directions⁸¹. The 3 harmonious stems of each element and the branches by which they are punished are put in the following table:

Table VII

| 5 elements | 3 harmonious branches | 3 punishments |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| wood | hai, mao, wei | hai, tzü, ch'ou |
| fire | yin, wu, hsü | ssü, wu, wei |
| metal | ssü, you, ch'ou | shen, you, hsü |
| water | shen, tzü, ch'en | yin, mao, ch'en |
| earth | | |

Closely connected with the 3 harmonious branches is the 'post horse' 驛馬. To explain it we have to come back once more to Table V. The element wood is sick at *ssü*; *ssü* belongs to fire, which is produced by wood and is considered to be the son of wood. The son can help the father. Hence, when the harmonious branches of wood meet with *ssü*, it signifies that they meet with a helper while they are sick. It is just like when one comes to a posthouse and finds a horse when one is tired. Therefore, the branch *ssü* is said to be the post horse of the 3 harmonious branches of wood. If a man, whose 'fate' is *hai*, *mao* or *wei*, has *ssü* in his 8 characters, then it is said that he has the horse. The post horses of the 12 branches are as follows⁸²:

| 5 elements | 3 harmonious branches | post horse |
|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| wood | hai, mao, wei | ssü |
| fire | yin, wu, hsü | shen |
| metal | ssü, you, ch'ou | hai |
| water | shen, tzü, ch'en | yin |

81) *ibid.*82) Li Hsü-chung's *Ming Shu, chüan chung*, p. 5.

The post horse is considered very important by the fate-calculators. It is a good sign. They say that a man of nobility must have both emolument and horse.

According to many fate-calculators, one's 'wealth' 財, being rich or poor, is closely connected with one's fate. They say, "What one destroys is one's wealth." Concretely speaking, the element which, according to the principle of destruction, is destroyed by the fate element, represents the wealth. For example, a man is born in the year *chia-yin*; the element wood is his fate; wood destroys earth, then earth is wealth. If he is born in a month in which the element earth gets prosperous, then it signifies that he will possess great wealth.

4. The Body

Thirdly, the human *yüan* or the corresponding element of the stem-branch of the year represents the 'body' 身. It seems that this element was considered very important by the fate-calculators of earlier times. Kuan Lo, the earliest fate-calculator we know, said that by the containing note the fate proper was judged. But later it was not regarded as being so important. For some calculators the body means the character and ability of the man. They say that a man has an analogous character and ability to the nature of his body element. For example, the *Lu-ming Shu* says that a man of metal (i.e. the containing note of the stem-branch being metal) is strong-willed and stubborn; a man of wood is flowery and elegant; a man of water is wise and agreeable; a man of fire is selfestimated and irritable; a man of earth is faithful and open-minded.⁸³ In Li Hsü-chung's *Ming Shu* it is also said that one's character is analogous to one's body element modified by the other elements of the 4 pillars.⁸⁴

For some other fate-calculators body is also an indication of a long or a short life. They judge it, vigorous or weak, in the same way as the fate. What destroys the body is called its devil 鬼 and is a bad indication, if found in the 8 characters.⁸⁵

Some fate-calculators regard what the body destroys as the wealth.⁸⁶ Examples are given in the next paragraph.

5. The Factors Considered Together

In the *San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu* there is a discussion of the emolument, fate, wealth, horse and body taken together.⁸⁷ We may quote it here to

83) Quoted in the *Wu-hsing Ta-i*, chapter 23.

84) Li Hsü-chung's *Ming Shu*, chüan chung, p. 5.

85) *San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu*, chüan hsia, p. 11.

86) Wang T'ing-kuang held this idea.

87) *San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu*, chüan hsia, p. 9-13.

conclude this chapter. First, it says, if the fate and wealth is vigorous, the man will not be poor although he has the emolument behind his back. Wang T'ing-kuang gives an example of this. A man is born in the month *ping-hsü*, i.e. 9th month, of the year *kêng-yin*. The wealth of this man is earth, which is flourishing in the 9th month. (See Table III.) Therefore he will not be poor, though he has the emolument behind his back. Contrarily, if the fate is weak and the wealth is extinct, the man will be poor, although he has emolument. For example, a man is born in the year *chia-ch'en* and the month *ping-yin*. The containing note of *chia-ch'en* is fire, and his wealth is metal. (Wang T'ing-kuang takes what the body destroys as wealth.) Metal is extinct at *yin*. The fate of this man is earth, of which *yin* is the devil. Therefore, his wealth is extinct and his fate is weak. Though his heavenly *guan chia* has *yin* as its emolument, he will be a poor man.

Secondly, if the body is prosperous and its devil is extinct, the man will live a long life, although his fate be destroyed. For example, a man is born in the 1st month of the year *ping-shen*. The body of this man is fire; water is its devil. In the 1st month fire is born and water dies, therefore he will live a long life. Contrarily, if the devil is vigorous but the body is weak, the man will die under age, although his fate is strong. For example, a man is born in the 4th month (i.e. *ssü*) of the year *chi-ssü*. The body of this man is wood, of which metal is the devil. Wood gets sick at *ssü* but metal grows up at it. Therefore the body is weak but its devil is strong. This man will die prematurely.

Thirdly, if the emolument and the horse are at the same branch, the man will be a high official. For example, a man is born in the hour *ping-yin* of the day *chi-hai* of the month *ting-ch'ou* of the year *chia-shen*. His emolument and horse are both at *yin*. Contrarily, if a man has the emolument behind his back and runs after the horse 背祿逐馬, he will be very poor. For example, a man is born in the 4th month of the year *chia-hsü*. His emolument is at *yin* and his horse is *shen*. He is born in the month *ssü*, which is in order after *yin* and before *shen*. He is said to have the emolument behind his back and runs after the horse.

V. THE NEW METHOD

The new method of fate-calculation distinguishes itself from the old, first of all, in that it does not use the birth-year but the birth-day as the chief factor and judges the fate from the reciprocal actions of the day on one side and the year, month and hour on the other.

Some fate-calculators of the new school compare the 4 pillars to a plant. The year is the root, the month is the sprout, the day is the

flower and the hour is the fruits.⁸⁸ They are also considered as the representatives of one and one's family. The year represents the ancestry, the month the parents, the day one's self and wife, and the hour the children.⁸⁹

The new method has a quite different system from the old. It is composed of four main headings: the official 官, wealth 財, seal 印 and food 食. They are founded solely on the principles of production and destruction of the 5 elements.

1. The Official

The four headings are said to have been formed by Hsü Tzū-p'ing, the founder of the new method,⁹⁰ but in his comments to the *San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu* only discussions of the first two headings are found. The official is also called 'official and seal' in his comments. To avoid confusing it is always called official in the present paper.

The definition of the official is: What destroys me is the official. According to the new method, the heavenly stem of the birth-day is the heavenly *yüan*, which is supposed to be the representative of the man himself. It belongs to one element; the element which destroys this element is regarded as the official of the man. For example, a man is born in the day of the stem *chia*, which belongs to wood, wood is destroyed by metal, then metal is his official. The stems *kêng* and *hsin*, which belong to metal, represent his official. But, according to the *yin-yang* theory, a *yang* stem and a *yin* stem are harmonious; two *yang* stems or two *yin* stems are one-sided. *Chia* and *kêng* are *yang* stems but *hsin* is a *yin* stem; therefore, *hsin* is said to be the proper official 正官 of *chia*, and *kêng* is the one-sided official 偏官 of it. On the contrary, for the man who is born in the year *i*, which belongs to wood also but is a *yin* stem, *kêng*, is the proper official but *hsin* is the one-sided official. An earthly branch which destroys the heavenly *yüan* is also considered as an official. For example, the branch *you* is the proper official of *chia*, and *shen* is the one-sided official of it.⁹¹

The proper official is an indication of becoming a governmental official in the future. But the one-sided official is a bad indication. It is also called the 'killer' or the 'seventh killer' 七煞, because it is always the seventh stem from the heavenly *yüan* in the 10 stems. It will be better

88) San-ming T'ung-huei, chüan.

89) Tzū-p'ing San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu Chu, chüan shang, p. 1-2.

90) San-ming T'ung-huei, chüan 5, Lun Ku-jen Li Yin Shih Kuan Ts'ai Ming-i 論古人立印食官財名義.

91) San-ming T'ung-huei, chüan 5, Lun Chêng-kuan and Lun P'ien-kuan.

if there is in the 8 characters a stem or branch which controls it. For example, for the man whose heavenly *yüan* is *chia*, *kêng* is the killer; if the stem *ping* is found in the 8 characters, then the killer is controled. That a controled killer meets with the seal is an indication of becoming an official.⁹²

It is better that the official is found in the stem-branch of the month. The stem-branch of the year predicts the fate before fifteen years of age, that of the hour predicts the fate after fifty. It is too early to find the official in the year and too late to find it in the hour.⁹³

If the official is helped and supported by wealth and seal, and there is no 'injurer of the official' and no killer in the 4 pillars, the man will become a high official when the stem or branch of his fatal period is also the official of his heavenly *yüan*.⁹⁴

The birth and death of the 5 elements in the course of the year plays an important rôle in the new method as explained by Hsü Tzū-p'ing. In the case of the official, he says, a man is born in the month when the element which is his official is flourishing, then he surely be a high official in the future; contrarily if the element dies, he will be a lay-man though he has official in his 8 characters. Basing himself on this reason Hsü Tzū-p'ing criticizes the emolument of the old method. An example may be quoted to illustrate this point. According to the old method the branch *shen* is the emolument of the stem *kêng*, but according to the new method *ting* is the official of *kêng*. Hsü Tzū-p'ing says that in the month *shen*, i.e. the seventh month, the fire of *ting* is sick and *kêng* has no official at all.⁹⁵

Concerning the 'facing to emolument' and 'having emolument behind one's back', Hsü Tzū-p'ing also holds a different idea from the fate-calculators of old method. He says, when a man is born in a *chia* day and in autumn, and there is no *ping* or *ting* in his 4 pillars, then he is facing to the emolument, because the official of *chia* is metal, which is flourishing in autumn. Contrarily, if a man is born on the day *jen-wu* and in the spring, then he has the emolument behind his back, because the official of *jen* is earth, which is dead in spring.⁹⁶

2. The Wealth

The definition of wealth is: What I destroy is the wealth. For instance, the wealth of a man who is born in the day with the stem *chia*,

92) *ibid.*

93) *ibid.*

94) *ibid.*

95) Tzū-p'ing, *chüan shang*, p. 18.

96) Tzū-p'ing, *chüan shang*, p. 2.

is the stem *chi*. *Chia* belongs to wood, *chi* belongs to earth, wood destroys earth, therefore *chi* is the wealth of *chia*. Similarly *wu* is the wealth of *i*. But *wu* is the one-sided wealth 偏財 of *chia* and *chi* is the one-sided wealth of *i*. The principle of differentiating the proper wealth from the one-sided wealth is the same as that differentiating the proper from the one-sided official. *Chi* is also considered as the wife of *chia*, therefore the wealth is also called 'wife and wealth' 妻財. The branches *ch'en*, *hsü*, *ch'ou*, *wei* are also the wealth of *chia* and *i*.⁹⁷ If the wealth is found in the year or month, it is an indication that the man will inherit a great property from his ancestry and parents; if it is found on the day or hour, it predicts that he will become rich after his middle age. The proper wealth is an indication of getting the wealth which one should have; the one-sided wealth is that of getting unexpected wealth. It is better to find the wealth, official and seal all in the 8 characters.⁹⁸

Closely connected with the wealth is the 'robber of wealth' 劫財. For example, for the heavenly *yüan i*, *chia* is the robber of wealth, because the wealth of *i* is *wu* and *chi* which belong to earth, and *chia* which belongs to wood can capture *wu* as its wife and destroy *chi*. Conversely, if *chia* is the heavenly *yüan*, then *i* is the robber of wealth. In one word, the two stems which belong to the same element are the robbers of wealth for each other. If a *yang* stem is the heavenly *yüan* and meets with a *yin* robber of wealth, it predicts that the wife of the man will die not long after marriage; if a *yin* heavenly *yüan* meets with a *yang* robber of wealth, it predicts loss of money.⁹⁹

3. The Seal

The third heading is the seal. Under this heading there are two items: the ribbon attached to the seal 印綬 and the one-sided seal 偏印. The fate-calculators say that what produces me is the seal. Concretely speaking, the stem of the birth-day is the representative of the man, it belongs to one of the 5 elements, and according to the principle of production it is produced by another element. The latter element is the seal. For example, for a man who is born on the day *chia*, water is the seal, because *chia* belongs to wood and water produces wood. The stems *kuei* and *hai* belong to water; *kuei*, a *yin* stem, is the seal-ribbon and *hai*, a *yang* stem, is the one-sided seal.¹⁰⁰

In his commentary to the *San-ming Hsiao-hsi Fu* Hsü Tzū-p'ing has no explanation of the seal in general but only of the importance of the

97) *San-ming T'ung-huei*, chüan 5, Lun Cheng-ts'ai and Lun P'ien-ts'ai.

98) *ibid.*

99) Tzū-p'ing, chüan shang, p. 23.

100) Tzū-p'ing, chüan shang, p. 1-2. *San-ming T'ung-huei*, chüan 5, Lun Yin-shou.

seal-ribbon. He says that, for instance, for the stem *chia*, *hsin* is the official, it belongs to metal and can be destroyed by the fire of *ting*, but *kuei* can control *ting* and save the official *hsin*. According to Chinese custom the certification of an official is the seal of his office; what keeps the seal from losing is the seal-ribbon, therefore what keeps the official from losing is known as the seal-ribbon.

An official can order and control his subjects as long as he has the seal. Hence the fate-calculators think that it is as important to the official as the soul to a man, and say that the seal in the 8 characters signifies the will and wisdom of the man. A man with the seal-ribbon will be clever and wise, merciful and kind, fat and healthy. If he is an official, either civil or military, he will be the principal and not the secondary¹⁰¹. It is better to find in one's characters the seal-ribbon co-existing with the official, but the seal may be damaged by too much wealth.¹⁰²

The one-sided seal will be explained in the next section.

4. The Food

The 'food' is also called 'god of food' 食神. The definition is: What I produce is the food. We had better explain it by an example. For the heavenly *yüan chia*, *ping* is the food, because *kêng* is its killer and *wu* is its wealth, *kêng* belongs to metal and *wu* belongs to earth, but *ping*, which belongs to fire, can control the killer and produce the wealth. Similarly, the branch *ssü* is also its food. *Ping* and *ssü* belong to fire, *chia* belongs to wood, wood produces fire, therefore it is said that what the heavenly *yüan* produces is the food.¹⁰³

The stem *ting* belongs to the same element as *ping*, but it is not considered as the food of *chia*. It is called the 'injurer of the official' 傷官. The official of *chia* is *hsin*, which belongs to metal, and the fire to which *ting* belongs can destroy it, therefore *ting* is said to be the injurer of the official of *chia*. *Ping* and *ting* belong to the same element but they are different in their relation to *chia*, because the former is a *yin* stem and the later a *yang* one.¹⁰⁴

Now we may explain the second item of the third heading, the one-sided seal, which is also called the 'upsetter of food' 倒食. As we have just explained, the food of *chia* is *ping*, which belongs to fire; *jen*, the one-sided seal of *chia*, belongs to water and destroys *ping*, therefore

101) San-ming T'ung-huei, chüan 5, Lun Yin-shou.

102) *ibid.*

103) San-ming T'ung-huei, chüan 5, Lun Shih-shen.

104) San-ming T'ung-huei, chüan 5, Lun Shang-kuan.

Table VIII

| heavenly yüan | official | | wealth | | seal | | food | | match shoulder | robber of wealth |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | proper official | one-sided official | proper wealth | one-sided wealth | seal- ribbon | one-sided seal | god of food | injurer of official | | |
| chia | hsin you | kêng shen | chi ch'ou wei | wu ch'en hsü | kuei tzü | jen hai | ping ssü | ting wu | chia yin | i mao |
| i | kêng shen | hsin you | wu ch'en hsü | chi ch'ou wei | jen hai | kuei tzü | ting wu | ping ssü | i mao | chia yin |
| ping | kuei tzü | jen hai | hsin you | kêng shen | i mao | chia yin | wu ch'en hsü | chi ch'ou wei | ping ssü | ting wu |
| ting | jen hai | kuei tzü | kêng shen | hsin you | chia yin | i mao | chi ch'ou wei | wu ch'en hsü | ting wu | ping ssü |
| wu | i mao | chia yin | kuei tzü | jen hai | ting wu | ping ssü | kêng shen | hsin you | wu ch'en hsü | chi ch'ou wei |
| chi | chia yin | i mao | jen hai | kuei tzü | ping ssü | ting wu | hsin you | kêng shen | chi ch'ou wei | wu ch'en hsü |
| kêng | ting wu | ping ssü | i mao | chia yin | chi ch'ou wei | wu ch'en hsü | jen hai | kuei tzü | kêng shen | hsin you |
| hsin | ping ssü | ting wu | chia yin | i mao | wu ch'en hsü | chi ch'ou wei | kuei tzü | jen hai | hsin you | kêng shen |
| jen | chi ch'ou wei | wu ch'en hsü | ting wu | ping ssü | hsin you | kêng shen | chia yin | i mao | jen hai | kuei tzü |
| kuei | wu ch'en hsü | chi ch'ou wei | ping ssü | ting wu | kêng shen | hsi you | i mao | chia yin | kuei tzü | jen hai |

it is said to be the upsetter of food of *chia*. This is a bad indication. A man who has it in his 8 characters will be a very poor and mean fellow or die immaturally.¹⁰⁵

5. A Conclusion

In the above, nine items of the scheme of the new method have been explained. Of the 10 stems one is the heavenly *yüan* and the 9 others are supposed to act upon it respectively according to these items. For example, if *i* is the heavenly *yüan*, then *chia* is the robber of wealth, *ping* is the injurer of official, *ting* is the god of food, *wu* is the proper wealth, *chi* is the one-sided wealth, *keng* is the proper official, *hsin* is the seventh killer, *jen* is the seal-ribbon, and *kuei* is the upsetter of food. When the same stem as the heavenly *yüan* is found in the 8 characters, it is called the 'match shoulder' 比肩. It is better to have the seventh killer to control it. Moreover, the branches are also supposed to have the respective relations. In Table VIII each stem is taken as the heavenly *yüan* once and the relations of all stems and branches to it are shown.

One's family is also predicted by the above-mentioned items. For a man the calculators first consider the wealth and the official. They say that when one has wealth, then one can have a wife. If one has the official, then one can have children. The seal-cord represents one's parents, because it produces the heavenly *yüan*; and the match shoulder represents one's brothers. If one of these items is destroyed, it predicts the sickness or death of the relative it represents. For a woman, the official is her husband. The god of food and the injurer of official represent her children, because they are produced by the heavenly *yüan*. The seal-cord represents her parents and the match shoulder represents her sisters¹⁰⁶.

VI. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

The above is but an outline of the two systems of Chinese fate-calculation. Yet it seems to suffice to show what it is in its essence. Having explained the whole system, the author would like to end with a few conclusive remarks.

In construction, the idea of the three powers of nature 三才, heaven, earth and man, is embodied in the system of the old method and they are made its skelton, i.e. the three *yüan*. The ideal life of the Chinese consists of happiness, emolument and longevity, which are idealized as

105) San-ming T'ung-huei, chüan 5, Lun Tao-shih.

106) San-ming T'ung-huei, chüan 5, Lun Ku-jen Li Yin Shih Kuan Ts'ai Ming-i. Cf. Chang Nan's Ming-li Chêng-tsung 張楠, 命理正宗 chüan 3, K'an-ming tsieh-chueh 看命捷訣.

three auspicious stars. The Chinese also say that the happiness is endowed by the Official of Heaven 天官賜福 and the wealth is produced by the Official of Earth 地官生財. The fate-calculators combined these ideas with the three *yüan*. However, the idea of happiness is too abstract; it is not found in the system of fate-calculation, but the emolument is connected with the heavenly *yüan*. Longevity becomes fate and body in fate-calculation; they are considered to be connected with the earthly and human *yüan*. Wealth and horse are two newly added elements; the former is based on the idea that what one can use, control or destroy is one's property and the latter on the idea that one receives help from the horse.

The center of the system of the new method is the official, which takes its origin in the idea that one thing can be made useful by another which can destroy it. Fire can melt metal and can make useful objects of it; a knife can cut wood and wooden objects cannot be made without a knife. This idea was applied to fate-calculation in very old times¹⁰⁷. The idea of wealth of the new method is inherited from that of the old method, and the other two items, seal and food, of the new method are directly derived from the official. Thus is the new method formed.

In reasoning, analogy plays a great rôle in the doctrine of the 5 elements, and it is inherited by the science of fate-calculation. The most important theory on which the old system of fate-calculation is based is the different phases of the 5 elements in the course of the year. As a point of fact, of the 5 elements, only wood undergoes during the year the changes the doctrine claims. Fire has only a similar nature with the weather of summer, that is the heat, but it cannot be said that fire is flourishing in the summer. Earth and metal have no changes at all during the year. It is especially absurd to say that water flourishes in the winter and dies in the 6th month or at the end of the 4 seasons. The birth and death of the other 4 elements is only an analogy with that of wood or plants. Hence we may say that the life of plants in the course of the year is the kernel of the doctrine of the 5 elements. This points to its agricultural background. The fate-calculation goes further on the same line. The cycle of life of the 5 elements as well as that of the 10 stems in the 12 months is compared to the life of a man from birth to death, and one's life is supposed to be represented by a stem. Consequently, the cycle of life of plants and that of man is combined by analogy. It seems that in the eyes of the inventors of fate-calculation there is an inner connection between them. This also betrays the spirit of an agricultural people.

Although being a new system on the base of the doctrine of 5 elements, fate-calculation includes in itself also some elements of ancient Chinese astrology, which will be dealt with in another paper.

107) Li Hsü-chung's *Ming Shu*, chüan shang, p. 1.