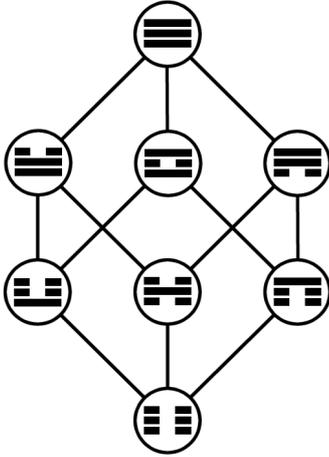


Relationships Within the Trigram Cube

The different energies we have explored are not separate; there are relationships between them at the symbolic level that are also interesting to consider from the physical perspective.



The principle relationship is between, at the base, Receptive ☷; and at the top, Creative ☰. Receptive ☷ is empty – containing no energy 氣 *qi*, but providing the neutral context for all the *jin* 勁 that can arise. Creative ☰ is full of energy 氣 *qi*, it is without gaps and containing all *jin* 勁. These two ideals create the main axis 太極.

Consider the relation between Root ☷ and Wardoff ☰. Visually, turning one symbol over gives the other: the direction of Root is downward, connecting you into the ground, and the direction of Wardoff is upward, diverting your opponent's attack – this relation is symbolized by saying ☷ = o(☷) – overturning Root gives Wardoff. We can also consider what the two energies have in common: using the cubic lattice structure shown,

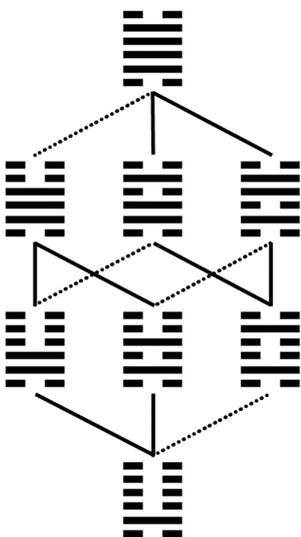
we would write ☷ & ☰ = ☵, which shows graphically that the Spine is what connects the Root to Wardoff. This can be seen on the diagram by noting that ☵ is the particular energy that joins ☷ and ☰ together. With regard to the direction of an energy, we can also consider Spine ☵ and Cohesion ☴. Notice that both of these symbols are the same when they overturn, P = o(P). This makes sense in terms of the *jin* 勁 – turning the waist, and likewise the energies of sticking and adhering, are essentially the same regardless of direction of application.

There are plenty of other relationships within the cube to consider if you have the inclination...

The Hexagram Context

Each of the trigrams represents a basic energy. But they also exist in the broader context of our physical axis, and we can represent that context by considering a cube of hexagrams. First we identify the base energy, the sacral end of the spinal spectrum, and represent this by the hexagram ☵.

This gives us the base of the cube; the rest of the structure arises by filling the third, fourth and fifth lines (the upper interlocking trigram) with the patterns of yin and yang from the trigrams we have already explored.



☵ The neutral energy is ☵. The single yang line is the sacral base and spine; with nothing added, this is as close to *wuji* 無極 as we can get. In physical practice, this is easy upright standing; being easy in stillness is the foundation of authentic movement.

☵ The first step requires development of the root, thickening; through practice, doubling the yang to give ☵. This is strengthening the heart. See this as two *yang* 陽 lines lifting one step; the initial ascension of intent maintained. In physical practice, this is deepening the symmetric standing, letting the mind remain empty.

☵ The second step takes the thickened root developed in the previous step and directs it: ☷ below and ☰ above together give ☵. See this as three *yang* 陽 lines lifting one

step. This is as much as anyone can lift in one go without touching excess; it requires determined practice to make progress. In physical practice, this is asymmetric standing.

☰ Go with the flow and experience ☰. The rotation of the lower body ☰ expressed as shock ☰ through the upper body – *jin* 勁 made of flow and strength. In physical practice, this is the flowing sequence of form and technique. It is also basic martial application.

☰ No path can avoid all adversity, here in ☰ the root ☰ in the third, fourth and fifth lines is raised above the spine ☰ in the first, second and third lines. This is too much *yang* 陽 too high relative to your base; in terms of physical practice this is being uprooted and exhausted.

☰ Personal fullness relative to the base energy ☰ gives ☰ – immediate excess! Persisting in the development of yang after the exhaustion of the previous step is harmful. See this as four *yang* 陽 lines raised one step: too much unsupported *yang* 陽. In the practice, this is persistent arrogance in the face of one's own failings.

☰ Clarity of insight opens the opportunity, remembering one's position in the shared well of lineage ☰ is the way to step away from this personal excess. In practice, this is continually returning to the basics, always refreshing and renewing the development of strength and the source of technique.

☰ The final step, the end of the spiralling path through this practice is ☰. Flowing and flowing! Never ceasing movement in the face of danger, always twisting and turning. But inwardly still. This is the goal of the training. All the steps to this point are the route to realizing this potential.

Chinese Glossary

1	站	<i>zhan</i>	to stand, to stop
2	拳	<i>quan</i>	fist; used to name styles of boxing
3	掌	<i>zhang</i>	palm; used to name styles of boxing
4	手	<i>shou</i>	hand; the common element in both <i>quan</i> 拳 and <i>zhang</i> 掌
5	無極	<i>wuji</i>	without polarity; followed by <i>zhan</i> 站 gives the foundation standing practice
6	太極	<i>taiji</i>	great polarity; followed by <i>quan</i> 拳 names a traditional style of boxing
7	陰	<i>yin</i>	shady side of the hill; one half of <i>taiji</i> 太極
8	陽	<i>yang</i>	sunny side of the hill; one half of <i>taiji</i> 太極
9	形意	<i>xingyi</i>	form (and) intent; followed by <i>quan</i> 拳 names a traditional style of boxing
10	八卦	<i>bagua</i>	eight symbols; followed by <i>zhang</i> 掌 names a traditional style of boxing
11	內功	<i>neigung</i>	internal work; the core practice of all the styles named here
12	練	<i>lian</i>	to practice, to perfect one's skill
13	氣	<i>qi</i>	energy; cultivated through consistent practice of <i>neigung</i> 內功
14	勁	<i>jing</i>	skillful strength; using intention <i>yi</i> 意 to direct energy <i>qi</i> 氣
15	易	<i>yi</i>	change; followed by <i>jing</i> 勁 names this style of movement practice
16	經	<i>jing</i>	classic book; follows <i>yi</i> 易 to name the ancient philosophical work
17	卦	<i>gua</i>	divinatory symbol; the abstract content of the <i>yijing</i> 易經
18	占卜	<i>zhanbu</i>	to observe and versify prophesy, to divine