

## **The Five Elements (Wu Xing)**

The Five Elements are Water, Fire, Wood, Metal and Earth. "Wu" means five and "Xing" means movement. The five elements are considered to be phases of a cycle of change.

## **Interrelationships of the Five Elements**

There are many different relationships between the Five Elements and some common relationships are shown in the table below.

**The Generating Sequence** (also known as Sheng cycle, generating cycle, creative cycle, nourishing cycle)

Each Element generates another and each Element is generated by one.

Eg: Wood generates Fire, Fire generates Earth, Earth generates Metal, Metal generates Water and Water generates Wood.

The Mother and Son relationship applies to the generating sequence. As an example this can be expressed as "Fire is the child of Wood and the mother of Earth."

**The Controlling Sequence** (also known as Ko cycle, controlling cycle, restraining cycle)

Each Element controls another Element and is controlled by one.

Eg: "Fire controls Metal, Earth controls Water, Metal controls Wood, Water controls Fire, Wood controls Earth".

Put another way, "Fire controls Metal but is controlled by Water".

**The Overacting Sequence** (also known as overacting cycle)

When the balance maintained in the generating sequence is disrupted this causes an Element to become excessive and "overcontrol" another Element.

**The Insulting Sequence** (also known as rebellious cycle, insulting cycle)

This sequence operates in reverse to the controlling sequence, in that when the balance is broken between two elements the Element usually being controlled will Insult the controlling Element.

Ex: "Fire insults Water. Water insults Earth. Earth

insults Wood, Wood insults Metal, Metal insults Fire".

### Concordances of the Five Elements

The concordances of the five elements is an important part of the theory. It shows how each element has related properties which together form an integrated whole.

	<b>Wood</b>	<b>Fire</b>	<b>Earth</b>	<b>Metal</b>	<b>Water</b>
<b>Season</b>	Spring	Summer	Late Summer	Autumn	Winter
<b>Direction</b>	East	South	Centre	West	North
<b>Colour</b>	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
<b>Taste</b>	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Pungent	Salty
<b>Yin Organ</b>	Liver	Heart	Spleen	Lungs	Kidney
<b>Yang Organ</b>	Gall Bladder	Small Intestine	Stomach	Colon	Urinary Bladder
<b>Sense Organ</b>	Eyes	Tongue	Mouth	Nose	Ears
<b>Tissues</b>	Sinews	Vessels	Muscles	Skin	Bones

### Causative Factor (C.F)

In Classical Five Element Acupuncture there is thought to be one main or root cause for most of a patients presenting symptoms. It is thought that through birth or early childhood that a constitutional weakness develops to the point where, through the law of Mother-Child it impedes the flow of energy around the Sheng or creative cycle. This weakness is one of the Five Elements, an element that is causing the presenting symptoms and stopping the growth of the person as a whole. This weakened element is known as the persons Causative Factor or C.F. Click [here](#) for a journal article providing more information on Causative Factors.